Course Goal
The primary goal of the capstone course is to provide Master’s in Public Administration (MPA) and Master’s in Criminal Justice (MCJ) students with an opportunity to integrate and synthesize what they have learned in the program. In completing the capstone, students are expected to demonstrate in the knowledge they have gained in the core curriculum and from their elective courses, bringing this theoretical knowledge to bear on a practical problem in a public agency or nonprofit organization.

Students work with an organization or agency, designated as the client, to complete a project for the organization that is of significance and practical use to the organization. By the end of the semester, the student will write a paper that will address the client’s needs and conform to the standards of graduate work. The student’s performance is evaluated by a committee: the course instructor, a second faculty member, and the client.

Project Parameters
The project should
- be related to public administration or criminal justice;
- be of sufficient scope and magnitude to challenge the student’s skills in public affairs;
- be doable during a 16 week semester, with the student devoting approximately 10-12 hours a week to it;
- not normally be conducted as part of the student’s ongoing work responsibilities; and
- not receive financial compensation.

Timeline
Ideally, students select their projects and make a start at the project prior to beginning the semester. Projects for the spring semester (end of January to early May) can be posted as early as October or November; projects for the fall semester (mid-August to early December) can be posted as early as May or June.

Client’s Role
The client’s role is to provide a project for the student, work with the student to understand the project, and help the student identify appropriate materials or contacts to research. The client should give feedback to the student’s written draft and final papers, as well as attend the student’s presentation at the end of the semester.

Posting Projects
Clients can post projects for students on the SPA Job and Professional Experience Portal at http://bamlas.cudenver.edu/SPA/Jobs/. Please contact Brendan Hardy at Brendan.Hardy@ucdenver.edu or 303-315-2896 if you have further questions.