



# AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SAUL NEWMAN  
INTERIM ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Susan Glover, Chair, SPA EPC  
Faculty Senate  
Jessica Waters, VPUG

*SN*

**From:** Saul Newman, Interim Associate Dean, SPA

**Subject:** Creation of SPA Honors Colloquium and Capstone Courses

**Date:** September 14, 2016

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This brief memo is designed to explain the attached paperwork creating a permanent SPA Honors Colloquium course and a two-semester permanent SPA Honors Capstone.

In AY 15-16 SPA created an SPA Honors Program. The first class was admitted in Spring 16 to begin the program in Fall 16. Admitted students spend their junior year taking either two one-semester SPA Honors Colloquia or one colloquium and a research add-on to an existing course. In their senior year SPA Honors students take a two-semester capstone experience. Although the SPA Honors Program was approved, SPA has not yet created permanent course numbers for the necessary courses. For AY 16/17 SPA has used the SPA396 number to offer the Fall and Spring colloquia. Since this is the first SPA Honors cohort we will not be offering the first semester of the two-semester capstone sequence until Fall 17.

For the SPA Honors colloquium, proposed as SPA300, we are proposing a rotating topics course. I spoke to Michael Giese about how to frame the proposal since it is a rotating topics course and he instructed me to base it on the first iteration of the course being taught in Fall 2016 by Derek Hyra as an SPA396. Clearly, the syllabus will change depending on the rotating topic. In the proposal, we have included learning outcomes specific to Hyra's topic and general outcomes that could apply to any version of SPA300.

As for the two-semester SPA Honors Capstone we would like to designate it SPA480 for the Fall semester and SPA481 for the Spring semester. The proposals outline the structure of each semester.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and feel free to reach out to me or Professor Lara Schwartz with any questions you may have.

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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[american.edu/spa](http://american.edu/spa)



**New Course**

**Catalog Course Title:** SPA Honors Capstone - SPA 480

**Name and contact information for future correspondence:**

Lara Schwartz    lschwartz@american.edu    202.885.6682

**Academic Unit - School/College:**

- CAS
- KSB
- SOC
- SIS
- SPA
- SPExS
- Other:

**Teaching Unit – Department or Program:** SPA

**Date effective:**

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Required Signatures	Name	Signature	Date
Teaching Unit Chair or Director	S. Newman		9/25/16
EPC Chair	S. Glover		10/27/16
Primary Academic Unit Assoc. Dean	S. Newman		10/28/16
Second Academic Unit Assoc. Dean			
Faculty Senate Chair			
Provost's Designee (VPUG or VPGR)			

**Date sent to the Office of the University Registrar:**



## New Course

**Note:** *Proposals are not necessary for a selected topics or nonrecurring topics course or project which is not a regular part of the curriculum of a department or school and is offered to a group of students on a nonrecurring or experimental basis. A course may be offered as a nonrecurring selected topics course a maximum of two times. If the academic unit wishes to make the topics course a permanent course, it must submit a New Course Proposal for full review.*

### Order of Review

After review by the academic unit, prepare the document for circulation and comments.

1. During the circulation and comment period (customarily 10 working days):
  - Send document to other academic units for comment.
  - Post the document for public comment. (Today@AU)
  - Respond to comments or make changes to the proposal as appropriate
2. At the end of the comment period:
  - If no adjustments are needed, the academic unit submits the proposal and compilation of comments and responses to [faculty senate@american.edu](mailto:faculty senate@american.edu).
  - If adjustments are needed, the academic unit rewrites and submits the proposal and compilation of comments and responses to [faculty senate@american.edu](mailto:faculty senate@american.edu).
  - *All comments to the proposal and responses to comments must be compiled into one PDF document and included with the proposal.*
3. The Faculty Senate conducts a formal review of the final proposal:
  - If the Faculty Senate returns the proposal to the unit for revision, every effort must be made to address its recommendations.
  - The Faculty Senate may reject a proposal if it is not satisfied with responses to its recommendations for changes to a proposal.
4. The Faculty Senate Chair submits the Faculty Senate's recommendation to the Office of the Provost.
5. The Provost or Provost Designee makes the final decision.
6. If approved by the Provost or Provost designee, the proposal is forwarded to the Office of the University Registrar via [curriculum\\_services@american.edu](mailto:curriculum_services@american.edu).

## Proposal Template

Copy and paste the questions below into a new MS Word document and address all questions asked. Please preserve the formatting (including numbering) to facilitate the review process.

### I. Identifying Information

a) Proposed effective date

**Fall 2017**

b) Academic Unit

**SPA**

c) Teaching Unit

**SPA**

d) Course Title (Generally a limit of 30 characters including spaces)

### **SPA Honors Capstone**

e) Course Number

f) Credits

**3 (first semester of a two-semester sequence)**

g) Prerequisites

### **Admission to the SPA Honors Program.**

h) Course description for University Catalog (Generally a limit of 50 words)

**SPA-480 SPA Honors Capstone (3)** A capstone experience for SPA Honors students. Designed to facilitate the integration of knowledge in a public affairs discipline. Development significant research question and produce and defend a research proposal. Usually offered every fall. This is the first semester of a two-semester sequence. Students must complete the entire sequence to complete the SPA Honors Program. *Prerequisite:* Admission to the SPA Honors Program.

i) Grade type

**i. A/F only**

ii. Pass/Fail only

iii. A /F and Pass/Fail

j) Expected frequency of offering **i.**

**Every Fall**

ii. Every Spring

iii. Every Summer

iv. Alternate Falls

v. Alternate Springs vi.

Alternate Summers

vii. Every term

viii. Irregularly

ix. Other

k) Note all that apply:

i. General Education course ii.

Online course

iii. Hybrid course

- iv. Rotating topics course
- v. Individually supervised course, such as Internship, Independent Study, Research Course, Thesis, Dissertation
- vi. Research Methods course
- vii. AU Abroad Programs course
- viii. Other study abroad course (offered directly by Academic Unit, not through AU Abroad)

## II. Rationale

- a) Please explain the main purpose of the new course, including whether it will be a requirement for an existing or proposed program or an elective, and how the new course relates to the existing courses in the program and department. *Note: if the course will be required for an existing program, submit a corresponding Minor Change to Program proposal.*

This course is a requirement for the SPA Honors Program. The purpose is to guide SPA Honors students in preparing, producing, defending, and presenting high-quality original scholarship as the culmination of their Honors curriculum.

All students in this course will take SPA Honors colloquia that prepare them for the advanced scholarship in the field.

- b) Will the course require students to pay a special fee associated with the course? If so, please provide a justification for this additional cost to students.

**No.**

- c) Has the course previously been offered under a rotating topics course or an experimental course number? **No.**

If so:

- i. Semesters/year offered
  - ii. Course number
  - iii. Instructor
  - iv. Enrollment
  - v. What observations and conclusions were derived from the previous offering(s) that now lead to proposing this course as a permanent part of the curriculum?
- d) Please indicate other units that offer courses or programs related to the proposed course and provide documentation of consultations with those units. **N/A.**
- e) Estimate the enrollment per semester.  
13-20

- f) Does your teaching unit's classroom space allotment support the addition of this course?

**Yes.**

- g) Are present university facilities (library, technology) adequate for the proposed course?

**Yes**

- h) Will the proposed course be taught by full-time or part-time faculty? **Full-time**
- i) Will offering the new course involve any substantial changes to the scheduling of existing courses?

**No**

j) What are the learning outcomes for the course?

Students in this course will:

- Establish sound project development and management skills;
- Identify an original research question;
- Develop and defend a research proposal;
- Deepen their knowledge of research methods;
- Practice critical reading, both through in-class and written peer review and through analysis of research materials; and
- Produce an organized, professional, original, and distinctive scholarly paper.

k) How will those outcomes be assessed?

- Interim written work product including annotated bibliography, project calendar, literature review, and proposal;

l) What are the competencies that students are expected to demonstrate for the course? Please attach a draft syllabus.

### III. Catalog Copy

a) Please attach a course description as it is to appear in the University Catalog, following the format of the current catalog.

**SPA-480 SPA Honors Capstone (3)** A capstone experience for SPA Honors students. Designed to facilitate the integration of knowledge in a public affairs discipline. Development significant research question and produce and defend a research proposal. Usually offered every fall. This is the first semester of a two-semester sequence. Students must complete the entire sequence to complete the SPA Honors Program. *Prerequisite:* Admission to the SPA Honors Program.

**American University**  
**SPA Honors Program Capstone Course**  
**SPA-480**

**Course Overview:**

This seminar provides SPA Honors Program students a framework in which to create and present their Capstone projects. The Capstone project is an in-depth, original product that demonstrates skill in oral and written communication, expository and persuasive writing, and research methodology. Students will select a problem in their SPA field and employ appropriate methodological techniques to analyze the problem.

This is the first semester of a two-semester capstone sequence. Students will prepare and produce a senior honors thesis in public affairs that makes a distinctive and original scholarly contribution to the field. The seminar combines a research methods course with a writing support group, and individual academic counseling.

During the first semester students will identify a topic, develop an annotated bibliography, conduct a literature review, and ultimately prepare and defend a research proposal. You will also identify a secondary faculty member to supervise their research.

During the second semester students will conduct and complete the project proposed in the fall. Please note that successful completion of the assignments in the first semester is a prerequisite to enrolling for the course in the spring.

Students will be required to present and defend their research at the SPA Research Symposium during the Spring semester.

Course Objectives

The course objective is for you to research, write, and defend an original project. This will include identifying and refining a question, conducting research of sources appropriate to the field of inquiry managing the project from beginning to end; and presenting findings both in writing and at a research conference in the spring semester.

Learning Outcomes

- Establish sound project development and management skills;
- Identify an original research question;
- Develop and defend a research proposal;
- Deepen their knowledge of research methods;

- Practice critical reading, both through in-class and written peer review and through analysis of research materials; and
- Produce an organized, professional, original, and distinctive scholarly paper.

**Required texts:**

- All materials will be posted online (see Course Assignments)
- Shives, Katie. "Using Project Management Approaches to Tame Your Dissertation." *Inside Higher ED*. N.p., 22 Jan. 2015. (<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/using-project-management-approaches-tame-your-dissertation>).
- The Writing Center. "Audience." *Audience*. UNC College of Arts and Sciences, n.d. (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/audience/>).
- Kinsley, Meagan. "Literature Review Tutorial." *Literate Review Tutorial*. American University Library, 29 Aug. 2016. (<http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/litreview>).
- "EndNote Tutorials." *Library Tutorial Playlists*. American University Library, n.d. (<http://www.american.edu/library/instruction/tutorials.cfm#endnote>).

**Course Requirements:**

- Weekly class meetings/class participation will consist of two major components:
  - (1) Workshops in project management; writing for public policy and law; pre-writing techniques; research; editing; and oral presentations; and
  - (2) Group discussions that apply Capstone skills to the students' projects as they develop.
- Written assignments:
  - (1) Project management tools including research calendars, status updates, and task indexes;
  - (2) Assignments that demonstrate progress in research;
  - (3) Components of the final product, such as annotated bibliographies and outlines, research design explanations, and preliminary data reporting; and
  - (4) Specific and useful critiques of peers' work in progress.
- Peer Review

Students will be paired with a peer for each peer critique assignment. Pairings will change through the semester so each project receives feedback from a variety of perspectives.

Partners will review their peers' work for research integrity, clarity, argumentation, and style and provide written comments to the author before class.

At each class, students will also present their research and writing challenges and questions to the group and sometimes in small groups. The professor will adapt



portions of class time to specific questions and challenges that present themselves as students pursue their projects.

### Grading

Proposal:	15%
Annotated bibliography:	15%
Literature review:	20%
Interim projects including updates:	20%
Peer review:	20%
Class participation:	10%

**Attendance and deadline policy:** Attendance is required. Your course grade and will reflect any unexcused absences. I will deduct a grade per day for unexcused late work, including peer review. If you know that you will miss a deadline due to illness, you must contact me to request an extension *before* the due date and contact your peer review partner as soon as you are aware of your conflict.

**Academic Integrity (AIC):** All students are required to follow the University's Academic Integrity Code. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the standards and requirements of the University's Academic Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and will be reported appropriately. Please see me with any questions on the Academic Integrity Code.

**Website:** <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

### **Emergency Preparedness:**

In an emergency, AU will use the communication tools the university has at its disposal in as timely a manner as possible using *AU Alerts*. These messages will provide information on what is happening, what to do, and links to available additional information.

Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies.

Our communication tools include text and email alerts, the university's [home page](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#), the general information line 202-885-1100, indoor yellow AlertUs emergency beacon boxes and outdoor speakers located throughout campus.

You can customize whether you receive alerts as e-mail and/or text messages. Add additional work or home phone numbers and e-mail addresses so AU Alerts reach you no matter where you are when an emergency occurs.

**Website:** <http://www.american.edu/emergency/>

**The Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC)** supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to providing access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community.

Academic Support & Access Center Location: Mary Graydon Center (MGC), Room 243  
 x3360 Fax: x1042 [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu) M–F: 9am–5pm Website: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>

<b><u>Course outline:</u></b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>August 30</b>	<b>Introduction – overview and course requirements.</b>	Come prepared to share your ideas for a research topic.
<b>September 6</b>	<b>Writing workshop: managing a large project.</b>	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Using Project Management Approaches to Tame Your Dissertation</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Written assignment:</b> Draft a short description (1-2 pages) of your field of interest and possible research questions. If you have identified a faculty adviser, give status of your meetings and decisions.</p>
<b>September 13</b>	<b>Research workshop: moving from topics to questions.</b>	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Writing for audience</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Academic voice</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Written assignment:</b> Draft questions related to your topic.</p>
<b>September 20</b>	<b>Information literacy workshop: SPA Librarians</b>	<b>Assignment:</b> Individual meetings with SPA librarian.
<b>September 27</b>	<b>Research workshop: moving from questions to research plan.</b>	<b>Assignment:</b> Research question with faculty sign-off.
<b>October 4</b>	<p><b>Research workshop: information literacy part II.</b></p> <p><b>Peer workshop: clarifying research questions and sharpening research plans.</b></p>	<b>Assignment:</b> research proposal, plan, and calendar due.

SPA Honors Semester 1 Capstone Course

<b>October 11</b>	<b>Individual meetings with Prof.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> : Research update. If you are doing your initial meeting on the 18 <sup>th</sup> , then make sure you meet with your faculty capstone adviser this week. Continue research.
<b>October 18</b>	<b>Individual meetings with Prof.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> : Research update. If you are doing your initial meeting on the 11 <sup>th</sup> , then make sure you meet with your faculty capstone adviser this week. Continue research.
<b>October 25</b>	<b>Writing workshop: preparing a literature review.</b> <b>Peer workshop: lit review samples.</b>	<u>Reading</u> : Library Module – <a href="#">Literature Review</a>  <u>Assignment</u> : submit your current list of sources and research notes.
<b>November 1</b>	<b>Writing workshop: preparing an annotated bibliography.</b>	<u>Reading</u> : <a href="#">Endnote Tutorial</a>  <u>Assignment</u> : lit review segment.
<b>November 8</b>	<b>Information literacy workshop: deciding when your research is complete.</b>  <b>Writing workshop: organizing findings.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> : Continue research.
<b>November 15</b>	<b>Peer workshop: annotated bibliographies.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> : draft annotated bibliography.
<b>November 22</b>	<b>Peer workshop: literature reviews.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> : draft literature review.
<b>November 29</b>	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>No Classes</b>
<b>December 6</b>	<b>Writing workshop: summarizing findings.</b>	<u>Assignment</u> :
<b>December 15</b>		<b>Final products due.</b>