

**School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP)
University of British Columbia
DRAFT COURSE OUTLINE**

Course Number	PLAN 528 A
Course Credit(s)	3.0
Course Title	Capstone (MCRP)
Term	Winter Term 1 Winter Term 2 Summer
Day/Time	N/A

Short Course Description

The major purpose of the capstone is to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of their planning education and to synthesize their knowledge of planning. The Capstone serves as a culmination of the MCRP degree program. It allows students to articulate and demonstrate the competency they have developed in their chosen focus area, through synthesis and/or application of the knowledge, skills, and capabilities they have gained in the program. It is expected that students will be able to use the Capstone output to demonstrate their professional competency to potential employers.

Course Overview, Content and Objectives

This course fulfills the Synthesis and Application of Knowledge to Practice skills component as established and required for program accreditation by the Canadian planning accreditation body, the Professional Standards Board (PSB).

The course also fulfills overall academic objectives of the MCRP program by providing students an opportunity to synthesize planning theory, methods, and practice in a Capstone report of their own design.

Registration in PLAN 528 continues until completion of the capstone. Submission of the Capstone Selection form (found at [FORMS](#)) **initiates registration in the course.**

The Capstone can take a range of forms. This flexibility allows students to define a Capstone that will best meet their individual educational objectives. Options include:

- A. **Professional portfolio** – The product of the Capstone course may be a portfolio of work produced during the MCRP degree program (e.g., from courses, internship, and/or studio) accompanied by a synthesis report. In this option, the student demonstrates competency through articulating a chosen focus area, reflecting on his/her explorations in the context of the pieces of work, and synthesizing various strands of thought into a cohesive, integrated approach to planning. The portfolio should include information to contextualize each piece of work, such as goals, outputs, and the specific role of the student in the case of team projects. The synthesis report should integrate knowledge developed in several learning environments at SCARP. The synthesis report should be approximately 5 to 10 pages in length (at 1.5 spacing), not exceeding 3,000 words. See below for Details.
- B. **Professional research report**– The product of the Capstone may be a professional report in which the student investigates a well-defined, practical planning-related question or problem. In this case, the student demonstrates competency through defining an applied problem in his/her chosen focus area and conducting appropriate research to address it. Further details are provided below. Reports should not exceed 30 pages (at 1.5 spacing) in length including

executive summary, tables, figures, and references. This is roughly equivalent to a word-count limit of 7,000 words. Appendices may be added and are not counted in this page limit.

Examples of the professional research report option include:

An internship extension report – A written report that builds on the student's internship experience. This could involve, for example, analyzing data that had been collected during the internship.

A studio extension report – A written report that builds on the student's studio experience. This could involve addressing a problem that is related to but outside the scope of the client-defined studio project.

An independent research report – A professional report that involves independent research outside the scope of courses, internship, or studio. The report may be undertaken for a real or hypothetical client. In some cases, it may be appropriate to conduct time-intensive activities that exceed the expectations of the 3-credit Capstone course; for example, a student may need to conduct a thorough literature review in an area where courses were not available. In these cases, a student may choose to take a Directed Study course (PLAN 550, 3 credits) in conjunction with the Capstone, particularly if this helps with meeting the 48-credit MCRP requirement.

With the approval of the faculty supervisor, a student may complete the Capstone in an alternative form, such as a film, other multi-media product, or website. The Capstone product must be commensurate with the portfolio or research report options in terms of general content and depth of exploration, and must be accompanied by a paper of approximately 5 to 10 pages in length (at 1.5 spacing), not exceeding 3,000 words.

Capstone Supervision

Each student is required to have a Supervisor who is a faculty member in the School. The Supervisor is to be selected and approved by the end of Year 2, Term 1 of the program.

- Normally, a student's first-year advisor will also be their Capstone advisor.
- In unusual cases, a student can, with appropriate justification, petition the master's program chair to switch advisors. This should be done early in Year 2, Term 1.

This procedure is formalized by completing a MCRP Capstone Selection Form (found at [FORMS](#)). The Supervisor must indicate his or her agreement to oversee the capstone by signing the student's capstone form. The form and outline (as appropriate; one page is adequate) must be placed in the student's file before he or she begins work on the capstone. Students are responsible for submitting their completed form and outline to the SCARP office.

Timeline

- Students must decide on the format and topic of their Capstone by the end of Year 2, Term 1. This timeframe allows students to consider the Capstone after having some understanding of what their studio projects will entail. Second-year students must submit a form accompanied by a brief description of their Capstone's focus and scope that has been approved by their academic advisor.
- There will be a set deadline in the spring (April) for second-year students to submit their Capstone reports. This means that students will be completing their Capstone reports in Year 2, Term 2 concurrently with completing the Studio course. Students who are unable to complete their Capstones due to extenuating circumstances must consult with the master's program chair well before the deadline.

- Students who undertake the Professional Research Report option (i.e., Option B) will be expected to make a short presentation on their Capstone reports on a set date in the spring (April). Students undertaking a Professional Portfolio option (i.e., Option A) will not be expected to make a presentation.

Supplemental Material

UBC has numerous research, pedagogical and health resources available to students. These include The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, the Writing Centre, Student Health Services and Student Counselling Services. Please make use of these resources or contact the instructor if you have any questions. Students new to UBC are especially encouraged to become familiar with the [broad spectrum of resources](#) that UBC provides.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading

MCRP CAPSTONE GRADING GUIDELINES

The following serves to clarify expectations and grading criteria for the MCRP Capstone (PLAN 528A, 3 credits), including how assessment would differ between the professional portfolio and professional research report options.

Criteria and Expectations

Professional Portfolio

The product of the Capstone course may be a portfolio of work produced during the MCRP degree program accompanied by a synthesis report. The portfolio should include information to contextualize each piece of work, such as goals, outputs, and the specific role of the student in the case of team projects. No restrictions are made on the number of pieces of work to be included. Students are encouraged to revise and improve key outputs as informed by instructor feedback, relevant insights and skills gained from other courses, and personal reflections. Students should take the opportunity to elevate the quality of previous work and to present their best work. The synthesis report should integrate knowledge developed in several learning environments at SCARP. The synthesis report should be approximately 5 to 10 pages in length (at 1.5 spacing), not exceeding 3,000 words.

Portfolio content

- *Variety* – The portfolio should include pieces of work that have been developed in several learning environments at SCARP (e.g., different courses, studio, internship).
- *Documentation* – The portfolio should include information to contextualize each piece of work, such as learning environment, goals, outputs, and the specific role of the student in the case of team projects. The documentation should note any improvements that have been made, such as revisions to a course paper or project.
- *Organization* – The portfolio should be well organized, with a clear structure that fits the narrative of the synthesis report.
- *Presentation* – The portfolio should have an attractive, professional presentation.

Synthesis report

- *Synthesis* – The student should articulate a vision and cohesive, integrated approach to his/her chosen focus area in planning, illustrated through reference to the pieces of work in the portfolio and the knowledge, skills, and experience gained in the program. This synthesis should enable the portfolio to be understood as more than the sum of the individual pieces of work.

- *Relation to theory* – The synthesis report should indicate the student's awareness of planning-related theory and research related to the chosen focus area. The student should be able to articulate his/her perspective on planning in relation to the larger literature.
- *Relevance to practice* – The report should discuss the relevance of the student's vision, ideas, approach, and pieces of work to planning practice, considered broadly.
- *Self-reflection* – The report should provide evidence of realistic and constructive self-reflection.
- *Communication* – Ideas should be communicated effectively. The report should be clearly and professionally written.

Professional research report

The product of the Capstone may be a professional report in which the student investigates a well-defined, practical planning-related question or problem. Reports should not exceed 30 pages (at 1.5 spacing) in length including executive summary, tables, figures, and references. This is roughly equivalent to a word-count limit of 7,000 words. Appendices may be added and are not counted in this page limit. Grading criteria and expectations are as follows:

- *Context* – The report should briefly describe the context for the study, including the client (either real or hypothetical), the need for applied research, and other relevant background.
- *Problem definition* – The report should identify a clear, answerable research question(s).
- *Research design* – The overall research design should be clear, coherent, appropriate, and justified. It should demonstrate the student's familiarity with the relevant literature.
- *Analysis* – The research should be well executed and sufficiently described. Data collection and analysis should be consistent with the research design and competently conducted.
- *Recommendations* – Findings from the study should be used to support actionable recommendations.
- *Communication* – Ideas should be communicated effectively. The report should be clearly and professionally written.

Students who undertake the Professional Research Report option will be expected to make a short presentation on their Capstone on a set date in the spring (April). This presentation will not be graded.

Alternative forms

With the approval of the faculty supervisor, a student may complete the Capstone in an alternative form, such as a film, other multi-media product, or website, accompanied by a paper. In this case, the supervisor and student should discuss appropriate assessment criteria, which are expected to be consistent with the learning objectives of the Capstone.

Grading

Letter grade	Numerical grade	Description	Explanation
A+	95 - 100%	Outstanding	Extraordinary performance. Extremely professional, thorough, original, and insightful.
A+	90 - 94%	Excellent	Consistently high quality work. Substantially exceeds expectations of SCARP students. Performance better than that of most peers.

A	85 - 89%	Very good	Fully meets and occasionally exceeds expectations of SCARP students. Work conducted on time, competently, and professionally.
A-	80 - 84%	Good	Generally meets expectations of SCARP students.
B+	76 - 79%	Fair	Some deficiencies; e.g., capstone submission late, instructions not followed, writing lacking professionalism, analysis superficial or problematic.
B	72 - 75%	Fair	
B-	68 - 71%	Fair	
C+	64 - 67%	Serious deficiencies	Serious deficiencies in work.
C	60 - 63%	Marginally pass	
F	0 - 59%	Fail	Does not meet minimum expectations.

Course Schedule

Students are expected to complete their capstone report by the set deadline in April in Year 2, Term 2 of their program. Exceptions may be granted to allow students to complete in Year 2 Summer.

Presentations

Students who undertake the Professional Research Report option will be expected to make a short presentation on their capstone report on a set date in April to the School and other invited guests. The objectives of the presentations are to inform the School of the results of your work and to demonstrate your presentation skills in a context that simulates common characteristics of professional practice. The Chair of the MCRP program chairs the proceedings.

Submission

Students submit a final copy of their capstone to their Supervisor and a grade is communicated to the Graduate Administrator for the student's academic record. Students who undertake the professional research report may request their supervisor's approval to publish the report on [cIRcle](#) – UBC's open access digital repository for published and unpublished material created by the UBC community and its partners. Contact the Graduate Administrator for information about uploading the report to cIRcle.

Special Needs

Please inform the course instructor as soon as possible if you have special needs and require accommodation of any kind. Please visit <http://www.students.ubc.ca/access/> for more information on campus resources.

Academic Integrity

1 Assistance with the creation of a course syllabus is available through the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, www.ctlt.ubc.ca Resources related to the development of assessable learning outcomes can be accessed through <http://ctlt.ubc.ca/resources/webliography/course-designdevelopment/> The

academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at

<http://calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>.