Tufts University

Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

Urban Studies Minor – Guidelines for optional Capstone Project

The Urban Studies Minor provides students with an opportunity to pursue their love of cities and communities and to study urban issues in depth. It requires the completion of five courses from at least three different departments. A capstone project is optional. The capstone will integrate the knowledge and methods of the relevant disciplines that contribute courses to the Minor.

**Topic:** The student should take the responsibility in determining a topic for the capstone project. Depending on the topic, the project can be a research paper, an oral presentation, a video, a photographic exhibit, a fictional narrative, or other forms of study. In the past, students have written research papers on a variety of topics, compiled best practices of urban disaster management, or developed artistic installations for their capstone projects.

**Project committee:** The topic of the project must receive initial approval from a Tufts faculty member with relevant expertise. This faculty member also will agree to direct the student’s work on the project. The project will be evaluated by at least one other faculty member, who will consult with the project advisor regarding the grade to be assigned. The student is responsible for selecting these faculty members, who then become the capstone project committee and will provide a letter grade for the project upon completion.

**Registration:** The capstone project will receive either one-half or one course credit. The choice of credit will not affect the nature and scope of the project – it is there to allow students some flexibility in registration. The student should register for UEP195 Urban Studies Capstone via the Student Services One-on-One Course Form with the project advisor as the instructor at the beginning of the semester in which they will complete the project work. If the project advisor is yet to be determined at that time, the student can register for UEP195-01.

**Format:** Research papers have been the most common format for the capstone project. A research paper may focus on an urban issue(s) or problem(s), and the length should be about 25 double-spaced pages excluding the bibliography. The purpose is to present a synthesis and critique of the relevant literature or other types of information. Students are encouraged to draw from the sources to develop a theme (e.g. one of the major problems facing Mumbai today is fiscal mismanagement rather than insufficient financial resources). The paper should have an introduction that raises the problem(s) to be discussed and its importance, and outlines the organization of the paper. The middle portion should contain the substance of the paper and some analysis, and should be divided into sections with subheadings. The summary or conclusion should summarize the major findings and give an answer(s) to the problem(s) raised.

**Questions:** Contact the Urban Studies Minor Coordinator, Justin Hollander (justin.hollander@tufts.edu)