SOSC 4110 **Capstone Project**

Spring 2022

Thursday, 9:00-10:20am

Rm 1032, LSK Bldg

Instructor: Dr. WANG, Hongbo (hbwang@ust.hk)

Office: Academic Building, Room 2372 (Ext. 7804)

Office Hours: By appointment

TA: Tsang Yau, Mitch (mitchtsang@ust.hk)
Office: Academic Building, Room 3005 (Lift 4), Ext.: 7809
Office Hours: By appointment

Description

For their capstone project, Quantitative Social Analysis (QSA) students are expected to produce a paper in which they conduct an original quantitative analysis of social data and report the results. You will make a presentation of the results in person before an audience or online.

Students may work on a topic related to the research of their Capstone Project advisor. If that is the case, you should work with their advisor to develop a plan for analysis and write-up, in which their role is apparent.

Advisor

Students may do their Capstone Project under the supervision of any Social Science faculty member who agrees to supervise them and endorses their proposal. Please inform the instructor once you have found a faculty member who has agreed to supervise you. We need to keep the information on record in order to keep track on your progress.

If you are not sure whom among our SOSC faculty would be the best fit, you are recommended to carefully review the research interests and field of SOSC faculty members (https://sosc.hkust.edu.hk/people/faculty), to find the professor who can advise you the best. You do not need to exclude faculty members who do not use quantitative methods for their own research – many of faculty members who do not use quantitative method can provide excellent guidance, especially in terms of theory and research design.

Student may choose a cross-disciplinary professor in other departments or divisions as your Capstone Project advisor, but you should discuss with the Capstone Project coordinator first, to confirm suitability.

Data Collection and Tick@lab

For those who engage in research involving **animals**, **human participants**, **artefacts**, and **safety issues**, there are additional compliance requirements by the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC), the Human and Artefacts Research Ethics Committee (HAREC), and the Safety Panel (SP), under the auspices of the Committee on Research Practices (CRP).

Students will need to discuss with their Capstone Project advisor and/or the Capstone Project coordinator whether their study needs to be submitted to HPRP for approval. Studies that make use of existing secondary data that is aggregated, public or whose subjects are all deceased will not normally need university approval. Proposals for research that involves collection of data on living individuals or use of non-anonymous or non-public data on living individuals will need to address issues related to the protection of research participants. Such research may need to be submitted for review by the university. Studies that involve collection of new data on individuals or contact with research subjects will almost certainly need HPRP approval. Students and/or Capstone Project advisors with questions should consult with the Capstone Project coordinator.

Please note that **you are NOT allowed to start any data collection effort before obtaining permission from the university Committee on Research Practices**.

The University has introduced a new system, Tick@lab, to streamline the approval-seeking process in recent years. You may refer the document titled Tick@Lab- New Guidelines (For Students).pdf for guidelines. Tick@Lab has actually created a range of different instructional videos for its users - (https://vprd.ust.hk/Policies-and-Forms/Research_Compliance_Management_Platform). However, as Tick@Lab is not designed for the Capstone Project only, there are some glitches and rather weird settings (e.g. the students had to manually change the default 'Principle Investigator' ('PI')). Feel free to contact the Tick@lab team for help in case of any technical difficulty.

Note that **the deadline for Tick@lab submission is <u>Week 4 (3/3)</u>**. But you are strongly encouraged to do so earlier.

Format

Paper

As much as possible, the paper should follow the structure and format of a publication in a major journal in the social science discipline most closely aligned with the topic. The goal should be a

manuscript that can be included in an application to a postgraduate program as a writing sample or even submitted to a journal.

The paper should be a self-contained presentation of the research and include all the usual elements of a published research paper, including an introduction, background, literature review, data, methods, results, and conclusion.

The word count should be in line with articles in academic journals that typically publish papers in the discipline associated with the Capstone Project. For reference, in many social science disciplines, a published paper is somewhere between 6000 and 8000 words.

The paper must be the student's own work. It may be a topic they identified themselves or a topic given to them by their Capstone Project advisor. If the topic is part of or related to the Capstone Project advisor's ongoing research project, the paper should reflect a distinct line of work that the student has done under the guidance of the supervisor, and the relationship to the advisor's research should be made clear.

If the Capstone Project is related to a paper that a student has already done for another class, or is doing for another class, this must be disclosed, and the differences described clearly. As a general principle, it is not acceptable to submit the same work for credit more than once. It is fine for a Capstone Project to build on previous work, or complement work being done in another class, but that needs to be disclosed, and there has to be a clear distinction between the Capstone Project and the other work. If the work is related to anything a student is doing in another class in which they are concurrently enrolled, this needs to be disclosed so that we can coordinate with their instructor of the other class.

Following the format of a typical social science journal publication, the paper should include the following elements:

Introduction
An overview of the paper that situates it within existing debates and literature, identifies the novel features of the paper, and outlines the remainder of the paper.

Background
This should review existing literature relevant to the analysis, and if appropriate, summarize relevant theory and provide relevant context on the setting of the study.

Hypothesis
This should summarize hypotheses, or at least general expectations, about likely outcomes of the analysis and how they would be consistent with different possible theories or explanations relevant to the topic.

Data

This section should summarize the data. Note that if you are using a public dataset for which there is documentation, you should not simply copy text from the documentation. The description of the data should be in your own words and should cite the documentation.

Methods

A summary of the methods you employ. Again, any text here should be your own. If you need to explain that you are using regression or some other method, explain it. Don't copy text from somewhere else.

Results

Summarize the results of your analysis here.

Discussion

Assess whether the results are consistent with your hypothesis or your expectations.

Conclusion

What are the key takeaways from the results of the analysis? This should tie back to the introduction.

References

You should have a complete reference section in the format of the journal associated with the discipline.

Make sure to provide complete references to the datasets that you have used if they

Appendices

Journal

The student should keep a weekly record of their progress on their Capstone Project, noting major developments, and meetings with their advisor.

Code

Include all the R or other code that you used to produce any tables or figures included in the paper, as well as any code used to prepare the data for analysis.

Presentation

Students will make a presentation of their work at the end of the term. The details will be announced in advance. The PPT should be for a presentation of **15** minutes long or so, that is the typical length of a conference presentation.

Timeline

Students are responsible for keeping in contact with the Capstone Project advisor to report on their progress. Students should also keep a project diary recording their work on the project. They will need to turn in their diary at the end of the semester and should also have it available in case their Capstone Project advisor or the coordinator want to look at it.

3rd week – Students should submit a project proposal endorsed by their Capstone Project advisor to the Capstone Project coordinator. This could be the proposal developed in SOSC 4100 but may reflect modifications suggested by their advisor. The proposal may be submitted earlier than the third week. If the advisor agrees that the proposal developed for 4100 is adequate, that may be submitted at the beginning of the term.

The proposal should follow the format of the one developed for 4100. It should include a specification of the topic, the data, and the methods. It should also indicate whether the data have already been acquired, have not yet been acquired but are readily available, or whether it still needs to be collected.

4th week – (If applicable) deadline for Tick@lab submission.

8th week – Students should submit a mid-term progress report endorsed by their Capstone Project Advisor to the Capstone Project Coordinator. In a few paragraphs, the student should report on the analysis they have conducted so far.

12th week – Students should submit their completed paper to their Capstone Project advisor. The advisor should review the paper and if they approve it, it should be forwarded to the Capstone Project coordinator to be filed with a brief evaluation from the advisor.

13th week – Students should make a presentation in front of a live audience or online, according to the specifications of the instructor. The presentation should be recorded.

Class Meetings

We will meet occasionally over the semester (See Schedule for specific dates). Students are invited to report on their progress, share any problems they are encountered and any solutions they have identified, and provide comments and feedback to other students. The goal is to replicate the experience of a postgraduate student working group in which students share their work in progress and provide help.

Schedule (Subject to adjustment)

Calendar Week	Topic	Meeting	Submission
Week 1 (2/10)	Introduction	√	
Week 2			
Week 3 (2/24)	Project Proposal	√	√
Week 4 (3/3)	Tick@lab submission (if applicable)		√
Week 5			
Week 6			
Week 7			
Week 8 (3/31)	Mid-term Progress Report	√	√
Week 9			
Week 10			
Week 11			
Week 12 (4/28)	Project Presentation	√	√ (Final paper & PPT)
Week 13 (5/5)	Project Presentation (cont'd)	√	