



**University of Maryland University College *Europe***  
**Bowie State University**  
*Graduate Programs*

Dear Student:

Great news! Starting in fall 2010 we are moving the comprehensive exam into your seminar paper/capstone course (PSYC 861, COUN 861, INSS 890, PUAD 704). We have redesigned this sixteen-week course to truly reflect your graduate-level writing, analytical, research, knowledge, and empirical understanding within your degree program. The capstone course will be taught in two parts; you will take the comprehensive exam at the end of your fourth week and have twelve remaining weeks to write your research paper. As now, the comprehensive exam will address your degree coursework and your paper will reflect your chosen focus area or specialty. Please allow me an opportunity to answer your questions:

**When do I take this class?** We will offer a capstone course in both the Fall I-II and Spring I-II terms so the class will be on the schedule when you are ready. You will enroll for this class:

- MPA - after 30 credits of coursework; 21 credits of core courses and nine (9) credits in your focus.
- Counseling - after 30 credits of coursework and not to be taken with your practicum (internship only by exception).
- MIS - after 30 credits of coursework.
- You must have attained Advancement to Candidacy (ATC), have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA, and removed all grades of incomplete.
- Unless you feel confident you can handle the increased workload, we recommend you do not take additional courses while taking this class.

**Why has Graduate Programs made this change?** We have redesigned the capstone to give you more timely offerings of the comprehensive exam. By putting it into an already existing course we hope it will be less disruptive to your schedule, make a more structured study environment, take some of the anxiety from when and how to take the exam, and provide confirmation of your skills before you write your professional paper. The professional paper will be written in the remaining twelve weeks of your course and be centered on your ability to write, research, analyze, organize, and design a project. This paper will include hypothesis, literature review, methodology, limiting factors, and conclusion. No empirical study will be performed.

**What if I fail either the comprehensive exam or seminar/professional paper?** If you fail to complete either portion of the capstone course you are eligible to retake that portion. If you fail for the second time, you may appeal in writing to the director, Graduate Programs for a third and final time. Appeals must be made within 30 days of the notification of the second failure.

EXAM	PAPER	COURSE PASS/FAIL	RETAKE	COST
Pass	Fail	Fail	Paper (week 5-12)	Pay to retake class
Fail	Pass	Incomplete	Exam (week 1-4)	No cost
Fail	Drop	Fail	Class	Pay to retake class

Note: Incompletes can only be given after satisfactory progress with 60% of course completion, and will be rarely granted for the seminar paper portion of the capstone course.

We truly hope this will be a positive change, which is a result of constant pursuit of better methods to serve you. It is our intention to provide a high quality education while offering ever better customer service to support your needs. .

Dr. Judy L. Smith  
 Director, Graduate Programs