

Application for Capstone Designation for an Existing Course

Course Subject and Number SPLD 491

Course Name Sports Leadership and Management Capstone

Contact Person Brandon Podgorski

Program(s)/Major(s) for which this course will serve as capstone if approved: B.S. in

Sports Leadership and Management (ACU Online)

List the course currently fulfilling this capstone requirement: None - new course and new program

If this application is approved, the capstone designation will be removed from the previous course and added to this new capstone course, beginning with the next catalog.

Include the following information in your application:

Explain how your course or courses will meet the learning outcomes:

- Habits of mind that foster integrative thinking between the liberal arts core curriculum and their major field of study.
- Achievement and demonstration through advanced research and/or creative projects the ability to frame questions, carry out critical analysis, and produce work of substantial complexity and quality related to their chosen field of study.
- Reflect and demonstrate their ability to think critically, globally, and missionally about their discipline.

Explain how your course or courses will meet the required assignments:

- Research assignment
- Faith and vocation assignment
- Comprehensive skills and accomplishments inventory

Attachments:

- Attach a course syllabus
- If necessary, attach additional explanatory material that might be helpful to faculty reviewing this course for capstone and writing intensive status, such as assignments or grading rubrics.

**Core Curriculum Implementation Team (CCIT) Recommendation
for the Senior-Year Integrative Capstone**
Approved by UGEC 11.14.2012, UUAC 12.5.2012

“In addition to other discipline-related course goals, the senior-year integrative capstone experience will challenge the student to critically analyze, reflect, and write about the major discipline from the perspective of Christian Worldview” (Liberal Arts Core Curriculum at ACU, p. 6.).

While it is understood that the senior-year integrative capstone will vary widely across the disciplines including a specific course or cluster of courses, it is important that there be some common elements across major fields of study. Each department will submit to the UGEC its plan for implementing the senior-year integrative capstone.

Students who complete their senior-year integrative capstone should have demonstrated the following student learning outcomes:

- ☐ Habits of mind that foster integrative thinking between the liberal arts core curriculum and their major field of study.
- ☐ Achievement and demonstration through advanced research and/or creative projects the ability to frame questions, carry out critical analysis, and produce work of substantial complexity and quality related to their chosen field of study.
- ☐ Reflect and demonstrate their ability to think critically, globally, and missionally about their discipline.

The student learning outcomes for the senior-year integrative capstone may be accomplished using a wide variety of assignments, projects, internships, research, performances, presentations, or other products; however, the following products are required of each senior-year integrative capstone and will contribute to the calculation of grades:

- A required paper with a minimum length of 2000 words (approximately 7 pages) and worth a minimum of 10% of the assessment for the course in which it is included. This paper provides an opportunity for a summative assessment of the student’s information literacy skills, including the proper citation of a minimum of 5 appropriate sources that support their research. Options to satisfy this prompt include, but are not limited to, a traditional research paper; an evaluative/reflective essay that accompanies a creative or scholarly work (such as a senior art show or recital), describing elements of the creative process; or a business plan that incorporates market research and analysis with the proposal of a specific entrepreneurial venture.
- An assignment that demonstrates the student’s ability to think critically about faith and vocation as it is expressed in a particular discipline met by a course or experience in the students’ degree plan or major.
- A comprehensive skills and accomplishments inventory reflecting the student’s scholarship (research and creative activities), accomplishments, co-curricular activities, service, leadership, internships, integrative thinking, knowledge, etc.

Meeting the Required Capstone Learning Outcomes

SPLD 491 requires students to synthesize knowledge gained throughout their BSSLM coursework (leadership theory, ethics, data analysis, communication), applying these interdisciplinary tools to a challenge based on their real-world experiences. This cultivates integrative thinking, aligning with liberal arts outcomes of critical inquiry and applied learning.

The Capstone assignment – whether the research paper, faith and vocation assignment, or personal portfolio – demands:

- Framing of relevant, complex sport industry questions.
- Application of leadership/management theories.
- Critical analysis supported by evidence.
- Production of a substantial work product (e.g. 2,000+ word paper)

SPLD 491 includes a dedicated Faith, Leadership, and the Mission of Sport assignment that prompts students to explore the ethical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of leadership in the sports industry. Through a multimedia project, students engage with Christian values – such as servant leadership, humility, justice, and stewardship – and analyze how these principles can guide ethical decision-making and mission-driven leadership in sport. Students are encouraged to apply these values to a global or justice-oriented issue in sport (e.g., inclusion, access, youth development) and articulate a response rooted in both their personal beliefs and professional goals.

Required Assignments

Research Assignment

Leadership in Practice: Analyzing and Solving a Real-World Challenge in Sports Management

This analytical research paper requires students to integrate knowledge from previous coursework, apply leadership theories, and propose a solution to a real-world challenge in the field of sports leadership and management. Drawing from your own practical experience – whether as a current or former player, coach, intern, or employee in a sports-related role – you will identify a complex leadership or management challenge and examine it through a scholarly lens.

You must critically analyze the issue using at least two leadership or management theories (e.g., transformational leadership, servant leadership, situational leadership, change management) and present a strategic, evidence-based solution that reflects academic rigor and professional relevance.

By completing this assignment, students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to integrate academic learning with real-world application.
- Apply leadership and management theories to analyze organizational challenges in sport.

- Construct a detailed and theoretically grounded solution that addresses both root causes and practical implementation.
 - Demonstrate advanced analytical writing skills consistent with capstone-level expectations.
1. Introduction (Approx. 150–200 words)
 - Introduce the challenge and its relevance to sports leadership or management.
 - Briefly preview the theories and the direction of your analysis.
 2. Description of the Real-World Challenge (Approx. 250–300 words)
 - Identify a real-world issue or challenge you observed or experienced in a sports context.
 - Describe the setting (e.g., high school athletics, professional organization, campus rec, youth sports).
 - Explain the individuals or systems involved and the complexity of the issue.
 3. Theoretical Analysis (Approx. 300–400 words)
 - Apply at least two leadership or management theories to the challenge.
 - Define each theory and discuss how they help explain or frame the problem.
 - Critically evaluate the leadership approaches used (or lacking) in the scenario.
 4. Proposed Solution or Improvement Plan (Approx. 300–400 words)
 - Present a well-reasoned, theory-based solution or framework for addressing the challenge.
 - Use insights from prior coursework, relevant case studies, and academic sources.
 - Discuss feasibility, key steps for implementation, and expected outcomes.
 5. Conclusion and Reflection (Approx. 100–150 words)
 - Summarize key insights.
 - Reflect briefly on how this assignment enhanced your understanding of applied leadership in sport.

Length: 1,000–1,500 words (excluding references)

Sources: Minimum of 5 credible sources (at least two scholarly) cited in APA 7th edition style

Faith and Vocation Assignment

Faith and Future of Sports Leadership: A Reflective and Ethical Inquiry

Students will produce a multimedia project (e.g., narrated presentation) exploring how sports leadership can serve a greater mission – personal, ethical, and/or societal – through the lens of Christian values. The assignment must demonstrate critical thinking, ethical awareness, and a global or missional outlook relevant to the sports industry.

Sports have a unique ability to unite people, inspire communities, and shape culture. In this assignment, you are asked to reflect on how your personal values, leadership philosophy, and professional goals in sport align with a mission-driven approach to leadership.

Drawing from Christian principles – such as servant leadership, humility, integrity, justice, and stewardship – analyze how sport can be a platform for ethical leadership and social change. Then, identify a specific issue or opportunity in the sports world (e.g., access and inclusion, mental health, NIL policies, global outreach, youth development) and propose how you, as a leader, could respond missionally to that issue.

Your response should:

- Reflect on how your beliefs and/or guiding principles shape your vision for leadership in sport.
- Reference at least one Christian value or Biblical principle – even if from a comparative or cultural perspective.
- Engage with at least one global or justice-related issue in sport.
- Propose actionable steps you would take as a sport leader to lead ethically and missionally.

Create a narrated reflection using Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides.

Length: Minimum of 10 slides and 6 minutes of presenting (excluding references)

Sources: Minimum of 3 credible sources (at least two scholarly) cited in APA 7th edition style

Compressive Skills and Accomplishments Inventory

Leading Through Experience: A Portfolio and Reflection on Sports Leadership Practice

This final capstone project allows students to demonstrate their cumulative learning in the B.S. in Sports Leadership and Management (BSSLM) program. Through a professional portfolio and a 2,000-word expository leadership reflection, students will analyze a real-world leadership or management issue or goal, connect it to SPLD coursework, and communicate their development as leaders in sport.

This assignment also includes an oral presentation to faculty (live or recorded), evaluating the student's interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills as they articulate their leadership growth and vision.

Students will write a formal expository paper that reflects on their development as a leader throughout the BSSLM program. The paper should:

- Describe your leadership philosophy and how it has evolved over time.
- Analyze specific moments, experiences, or courses that shaped your approach.
- Apply at least two leadership theories (e.g., transformational, servant, path-goal) to your personal journey and philosophy.
- Connect your experience to broader challenges or goals in the sport industry.
- Articulate your future direction and how you intend to lead with purpose.

Requirements:

- 2,000 words minimum (excluding references)
- APA 7th edition formatting

- At least five sources (including at least two leadership theory references)

Students will present their final project to faculty in one of two formats:

- Preferred: Live oral presentation (10 – 12 minutes) with visual aids (e.g., slides)
- If necessary: Recorded video presentation

The presentation should:

- Introduce the student and their leadership/management focus
- Walk through the professional portfolio
- Highlight key insights from the leadership reflection
- Demonstrate confident, clear, and professional verbal communication



SPLD 491: Sports Leadership and Management Capstone

2025 Section SPLD 491 3 Credits 05/20/2025 to 05/20/2026 Modified 12/02/2025

Mission Statements

University Mission Statement

The mission of Abilene Christian University (ACU) is to educate its students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

This mission is achieved through the following:

- Exemplary teaching, offered by a faculty of Christian scholars, that inspires a commitment to learning;
- Significant research, grounded in the university's disciplines of study, that informs issues of importance to the academy, church, and society; and
- Meaningful service to society, the academic disciplines, the university, and the church, expressed in various ways, by all segments of the Abilene Christian University community.

College Mission Statement

In the College of Leadership and Professional Studies our vision is to build engaging communities and empower students to become compassionate, ethical leaders who inspire positive change and drive innovation across diverse industries. Our exceptionally prepared and well-supported faculty strive to create an innovative, inclusive, and supportive academic environment where rigorous scholarship, practical experience, and spiritual growth converge to shape tomorrow's leaders. Through a commitment to excellence, ever-expanding educational opportunities, faith, and service, we seek to contribute to a more just and compassionate world, guided by the principles of Christian leadership.

Program Mission Statement

The mission of the BSSLM is to develop ethical, knowledgeable, and servant-hearted leaders who will impact the sports industry through excellence in leadership, management, and communication. Rooted in Christian values, this program prepares students to lead with integrity, inspire teams, and create positive change in professional, collegiate, and community sports settings. Students will gain expertise

in governance, facility management, sports analytics, and ethical decision-making. Upon completion of the program, graduates will be equipped to pursue careers in sports management, athletic administration, event planning, and community recreation, demonstrating Christ-centered leadership in all aspects of the sports industry.

Integration of Christian Faith

The Bachelor of Science in Sports Leadership and Management fits within ACU's mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership. The profession of leadership, especially within the sports industry, is a service. Coaches, athletic administrators, and sports professionals spend their days guiding people to greater athletic and professional ability, but also to become contributing members of society, while being good role models. Graduates of our program will be able to help others achieve goals and aspirations of athletic performance, sports business success, and academic achievement all while reflecting Christian values that were modeled during their time at ACU.

Course Description

Students will engage in critical thinking, strategic decision-making, and professional writing to develop comprehensive solutions for contemporary issues in the sports industry. This course prepares graduates to articulate their leadership philosophy, refine their communication skills, and apply best practices in sports leadership and management.

Outcomes

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
1	Integrate leadership and management theories to solve complex, real-world challenges in sports organizations through strategic analysis and decision-making.	Students will identify a complex leadership or management challenge observed through their practical experience. They will analyze the issue using at least two relevant leadership or management theories (e.g., transformational leadership, servant leadership, change management) and develop a proposed solution or framework for improvement.
2	Develop a comprehensive, evidence-based capstone project that demonstrates advanced professional writing, communication, and critical thinking skills applicable to sports leadership contexts.	Students will complete either a professional portfolio that demonstrates their cumulative learning. The project must include: 1. A clearly defined leadership or management issue or goal, 2. Evidence-based analysis or reflection, 3. Application of SPLD coursework and leadership theory, 4. A set of informed recommendations or conclusions.

Course Requirements

The requirements for this course include participating in online discussions and completing all of the assignments. General descriptions of the course requirements are below. See the Canvas modules for detailed assignment instructions.

Discussion Questions

In order to actively participate in discussions, you will need to log in multiple days each week. This will help you stay up-to-date on the discussions and allow you to make more thoughtful postings. You are expected to answer all of the discussion questions assigned in a week in a substantive manner. Please see your Canvas course for the due dates and times of the initial and reply posts. No late posting will be accepted. You are not allowed to post a blank post in a discussion to gain access to other students' work.

Weekly Assignments

Note: the full assignment description, due date and instructions for each are found in the Modules section in your online classroom (Canvas). Please pay careful attention to the instructions provided and the rubrics for each assignment.

Course Policies

Note: Please see the Canvas course for information on the faculty as well as all due dates.

Engaged Learning in an Online Format

This online course invites students into a community of engaged scholarship. The course consists of seven weekly modules, with a new module beginning each Tuesday morning in the Canvas LMS (Learning Management System). We expect students to log in to the course frequently, master the course material, whether written or in other digital media formats, and to engage the professor and fellow students through the Canvas medium.

Note: If a student fails to log in the course for the first 7 days of the official course, the student will receive an email notifying them that they are at risk to be administratively withdrawn from the course. The student will have 72 hours to log into the course from that email notification. If the student does not log into the course in that period of time, they will be administratively withdrawn. The last day to withdraw from a course is the Wednesday before the last week of class. Please reference the handbook calendar for a full list of dates. If a student has not participated in the course at any point, before the last week of class the student will be administratively withdrawn. An assignment is defined as a paper, quiz, discussion post, or project in the course. If a life situation occurs that will prevent the student from participating in the course for a brief period of time, the student is responsible for communicating this to their Student Success Advisor and instructor to make appropriate arrangements.

Technology Requirements

Students should ensure they meet the technology requirements as outlined in the ACU Online Student Handbook.

Paper Specifics

In this course, specific instructions for each paper are given in the assignment directions. Please pay attention to the instructions given, such as the number of resources needed and how to cite sources.

Papers should be submitted through the Canvas submission portal as a .docx, .doc, or .pdf files, no email submissions will be accepted. All papers should be neat, contain no misspellings, contain no typing errors, and employ proper grammar and syntax. If your paper contains pervasive grammatical errors, the professor may return the paper without grading it and ask for a rewrite for a maximum grade of 80%. Your faculty will determine the date for submission of the revised paper.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm Central Standard time on the due date. Refer to the Canvas Syllabus link or the Canvas Modules link for a list of all due dates. Penalty for late assignments is 10% per calendar day late. Weekend days are counted as late days. For administrative purposes, a zero will be placed in the gradebook for work not submitted on time. If an assignment is submitted after the zero is given or if an arrangement for late submission has been made with the instructor, the noted penalty percentage will be used to re-assess the assignment (removing the zero). Extensions are allowed at the discretion of the instructor and/or Program Director. No credit will be awarded for late discussion posts. Extra credit will not be available in this course.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined as academic work completed as assigned for each class by the individual or group responsible for the work. Academic work includes but is not limited to reading assignments, assessments and examinations, attendance at required out-of-class activities, written or oral presentations, laboratory experiments and research. Assignments may or may not be submitted through the TurnItIn plagiarism checker.

The Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy is available on the ACU Provost's Office [webpage \(https://acu.edu/academic-integrity\)](https://acu.edu/academic-integrity), where you may find detailed information regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty and resultant disciplinary actions. The student should seek clarification from the instructor regarding the re-use of work, as this may or may not be appropriate and is dependent on the assignment. Academic dishonesty may have, but not be limited to, the following consequences:

- losing points on an assignment.
- failing an assignment.
- failing a course.
- having a record of improper conduct in the dean's office which oversees the course in which the infraction was made.
- being dismissed from the university.

The process and timeline for appeals can be found on the ACU Provost's Office webpage.

Title IX Statement

All members of the ACU community have a responsibility to help create a safe learning environment on our Abilene Christian University Dallas Online campus. In addition, faculty have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to their role as a professor. ACU seeks to ensure all students feel safe to share information related to their life experiences in classroom discussions, written work, and in-person meetings. To the extent possible, faculty seek to keep the information students share private; however, they are not considered a confidential reporting source at ACU. As such, they are required to share with the Title IX Coordinator information regarding sexual misconduct or harassment, dating or domestic violence, or stalking that occurred during periods of student enrollment at ACU. Students wishing to share information in a confidential setting should access counseling services through TimelyMD or reach out to the Dean of Vocational Services. All of your options are available for review by clicking on the link to [ACU's policy \(https://acu.edu/human-resources/title-ix-and-sexual-misconduct-information/\)](https://acu.edu/human-resources/title-ix-and-sexual-misconduct-information/).

Anti-Harassment Policy

Harassment will not be tolerated at Abilene Christian University. As a Christian community, Abilene Christian University has committed itself, unequivocally, to ensuring a working and learning environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected. Harassment is defined as unwelcome behavior or conduct based on sex, religion, race, age, color, national origin, veteran's status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, or participation in University programs or activities, (2) submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for a decision affecting an individual's employment, education, or participation in University programs or activities, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for work, education, or participation in a University program or activity. Therefore, it is the purpose of the Anti-Harassment Policy to maintain a work and academic environment that is free of harassment, sexual or otherwise. This policy applies to all members of the ACU community, including trustees, faculty, staff, students, and volunteers at Abilene Christian University. For a more in-depth review of the university's anti-harassment policy, the full definition of harassment, and procedure for reporting, visit: <https://www.acu.edu/dean-of-students/required-legal-statements/anti-harassment-policy/> (<https://www.acu.edu/dean-of-students/required-legal-statements/anti-harassment-policy/>).

* ACU Learner Support, Resources, and Services

ACU Online Student Handbook

The current version can be found [here \(https://acu.edu/current-students/online-student-handbook/\)](https://acu.edu/current-students/online-student-handbook/).

ACU Dallas Student Code of Conduct

The ACU Online Student Handbook contains an online student Code of Conduct which describes appropriate and inappropriate forms of electronic communication and online behavior as well as information about student integrity in scholarly work. Students may be dismissed from the university for failing to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

ADA Compliance Statement

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call our office directly at (325) 674-2667 or alpha@acu.edu (<mailto:alpha@acu.edu>).

Library

Abilene Christian University provides library services to online students through the Distance Learning Portal at <http://guides.acu.edu/distance> (<http://guides.acu.edu/distance>). Students will use their single sign-on credentials to gain access to the library content. The Distance Learning Portal contains information about citation help, requesting materials, research guides, and degree program specific resources. Video tutorials on how to search the library's resources, including electronic journal titles, are available for students to view at any time. ACU also has dedicated staff that serve our online students, for help with refining topics, including dissertation and final project topics, searching databases, or other library help. To contact the online librarian, please visit <http://guides.acu.edu/c.php?g=824708&p=5887421> (<http://guides.acu.edu/c.php?g=824708&p=5887421>). For research assistance, you can visit <http://asklibrary.acu.edu> (<http://asklibrary.acu.edu>) and submit your question through the web form or get help via text or chat.

✓ Grading

Grades are awarded based on point accumulation. Each assignment has a maximum number of points that can be earned by successfully completing the assignment. Partial points will be awarded for meeting some but not all of the standards identified for each project or assignment.

Points Earned

Letter grades correspond to the percentage of points accumulated as outlined in the table below. No extra credit will be given.

Range	Grade Assigned

89.5% - 100%	A
79.5% to <89.5%	B
69.5% to <79.5%	C
59.5% to <69.5%	D
0% to <59.5%	F

Course Outline and Schedule

(Schedule subject to change; See the Canvas course for updated information on due dates.)