Capstone experience: overview

**Purpose:** The purpose of the capstone project is to provide an integrative experience for seniors that ties together the key learning objectives identified by the department that are consistent with the five dimensions as described in the mission of the University. Capstone projects are expected to demonstrate reflection, critical thinking, effective communication (including presentation, research and technological skills as defined by the nature of the project).

This experience is required for all seniors and will be incorporated in one of two places in the curriculum: Senior Seminar (CSDI 480 – 1 credit hour) or the Research Seminar (CSDI 405 – 1 credit hour) and Research Practicum (CSDI 406 – 1 credit hour) sequence.

**Capstone project options:** To fulfill the capstone requirement, students will be able to choose from several options:
  a. Research project – Student must work with a mentor in the department and must enroll in Research Seminar (Fall) and Research Practicum (spring)
  b. Reflective analysis of field experience (direct or indirect): Student may either do a reflective analysis of his or her own client or of a structured observation of a different client. This project is separate from and in addition to any clinical responsibilities associated with that client. Strict rules of confidentiality are to be observed at all times.
  c. Reflective analysis of a volunteer experience: Student may choose to do a reflective analysis of a volunteer experience within the current academic year.
  d. Case study: Student may choose to research a case study provided by the instructor. The student will be expected to field questions during the oral presentation.
  e. Research paper: Student may select a topic of interest and write a literature review. The topic and review must be selected and written this semester; topics that may have been researched in past classes are not permitted.
  f. Creative project: Student may create an original product, such as a video, CD or software artifact.

*Each project must be approved by the research mentor (CSDI 405/406) or instructor (CSDI 480) prior to initiation of the project (see timetable).*

**Research Project (a):** Students who choose to do a research project must enroll in the Research Seminar in the Fall and Research Practicum in the Spring (to be taken in lieu of the Senior Seminar course). Such students will need to work with a faculty member who has agreed to mentor the student in this capacity (see attached timeline). The final grade for the research project will be assigned by the student’s faculty mentor.

*Eligibility requirements for research project.* Students will need to write a letter of interest to the Chair and will need verification that student has met minimum requirements of cumulative GPA (3.3 or better) and B or better in major classes. Such verification will be provided by the student’s academic mentor.
Other options for capstone project (b-f): Students who choose to work on any of the other options must enroll in the Senior Seminar course spring semester. Capstone projects for senior seminar may be initiated in the fall or spring. If a student wishes to begin the capstone project in the fall, prior approval from the instructor must be obtained. The final grade for the capstone project will be assigned by the instructor of the course.

Revised course descriptions (7-7-08):

CSDI 405 – Research Seminar: This course is the first in a series of two courses that provide the opportunity for students to actively engage in human subjects research as a capstone experience. The project is expected to tie together the department’s learning outcomes based on these five dimensions: scholarship and knowledge, intellectual inquiry and communication, community building, leadership and service, and spirituality and values. Student arranges with an individual faculty member to carry-out a research project, including literature review, study design, IRB approval, data collection and analysis and APA style reporting. Recommendation by a faculty mentor is required.

CSDI 406 – Research Practicum: This course is the second in a series of two courses that provide the opportunity for students to actively engage in human subjects research as a capstone experience. The project is expected to tie together the department’s learning outcomes based on these five dimensions: scholarship and knowledge, intellectual inquiry and communication, community building, leadership and service, and spirituality and values. Student arranges with an individual faculty member to carry-out a research project, including literature review, study design, IRB approval, data collection and analysis and APA style reporting. Recommendation by a faculty mentor is required.

CSDI 480 – Senior Seminar: This course provides the opportunity for students to complete an integrative capstone project that ties together the department’s learning outcomes based on these five dimensions: scholarship and knowledge, intellectual inquiry and communication, community building, leadership and service, and spirituality and values. Students are required to complete assigned readings, to produce a capstone project, and to make an oral presentation and submit a paper providing an evidence-based summary of their project. Students may petition to the instructor of the course to work in groups of 2 - 3.

Grading: Letter grades (A through F) will be assigned and determined on the basis of performance on the capstone project. The pass-fail option is not available for the capstone experience.
Timeline:

**September TBA**  
(Undergraduate orientation)  
Students given information, options, guidelines, and timelines about the capstone experience.

**September 15**  
Students who wish to do a research project need to submit a letter of interest to the Chair as well as verification of GPA from academic mentor. Preliminary approval of research mentor is required; student must add Research Seminar (CSD 405).

Students who wish to begin other capstone project early must have approval from Chair at any point in the semester prior to beginning project.

**October 15**  
If student selects research project option, the following is due to the Chair:
- approval from research mentor and Chair
- documentation of a pass for the IRB training requirement
- brief description and timeline of the research project

**November 15**  
IRB proposal due to mentor

**December 1**  
Review of literature submitted to mentor

**December 15**  
Research option: IRB submitted

**January, 3rd week of classes**  
Other capstone options: description of the project and timeline due to Chair by 3rd week of classes, spring semester.

**February TBA**  
Department selects 1-2 student(s) for the Senior Legacy Symposium

**April TBA**  
Deadline for student submission form for Senior Legacy  
Senior Legacy Symposium