

Capstone Project Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook provides instructors, students, and mentors with resources to guide honors students through the successful completion of an Honors Capstone Project. The Capstone Project is a requirement of all honors students—both those who are pursuing the Honors ITQq0.00000912 0 612 792 reW*BT/F4 11.0

About the Norbert O. Schedler Honors College

Mission

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College identifies highly motivated students, immerses them in a learning community where they can examine who they are and practice who they want to become, and challenges them with opportunities for growth. The Honors College equips students from across disciplines with the tools and skills to lead flourishing lives and develops them as conscientious citizen-scholars prepared to make a difference.

Vision

The Norbert O. Schedler Honors College strives to prepare students to serve as global leaders ready to

Self-Authorship: examining and constructing one’s own beliefs, values, and internal commitments—a process that culminates in achieving personal authority.

Scholarship: practicing conversation and interdisciplinary inquiry—a process that culminates in academic research, writing, and oral presentation.

Citizenship: addressing real-world problems and finding ethical solutions—a process that culminates in reflective civic action.

Leadership: engaging as citizen-scholars exercising informed judgment and an ability to collaborate—a process that culminates in the capacity to guide social change for the common good.

Honors Program Students:

Social Responsibility: addressing social and environmental challenges and finding ethical solutions, a process that culminates in individual and collective interventions;

Expertise: practicing communication and inquiry, a process that culminates in academic research, writing, and oral presentation; and

Leadership: engaging as citizen-scholars exercising informed judgment and an ability to collaborate, a process that culminates in the capacity to guide social change for the common

we recommend that students meet with their mentors on a bi-weekly basis in order to ensure a strong proposal.

Course Objectives

Investigate procedures for engaging in exemplary or honors work in the student's major and/or minor departments.

Investigate multidisciplinary research approaches, designs, and methodologies.

Demonstrate understanding of research ethics and requirements for human-subjects research.

Choose research questions for a single-discipline, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary project through an investigation of alternatives considering both feasibility and personal significance.

Design and produce a plan for the project in the appropriate disciplinary or multi-disciplinary context based on the chosen research questions.

Forge a relationship with a faculty member who can serve as mentor, guide, and sounding board for the project; likewise, identify potential second readers.

Review pertinent literature or materials that form the scholarly background of the project as selected in consultation with mentors.

Practice formulating, developing, and assessing claims; also, learn to properly attribute sources.

- *If additional coursework is required for you to complete your project, you should provide that information in this section.*
- *If funding is required for you to complete your project, you should describe your plans to apply for funding in this section.*

You should plan to apply for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) grants first, if possible, as those application materials will automatically support applications for the Travel Abroad Grant (TAG), Undergraduate Research Grants for Education (URGE), and Experiential Learning Funds (ELF).

5. A **Gantt Chart or other timeline** with specific deadlines and deliverables for the project lifespan (1-3 semesters,

the proposal components). The mentor's essential role throughout the HONC 3320/HONP 3320 experience is to act as a pedagogue—to “walk with” the student by providing an example of how to ask insightful questions.

As students move into the advanced research and writing stages, they should expect to retain their mentors as the primary advisors for their Capstone Projects. During this time, mentors are students' sounding boards and are expected to ask questions, guide students, and push them to do as comprehensive a review of the relevant material as possible.

Mentors need not necessarily be subject-matter experts, but they should have some knowledge of the fields and the kinds of questions and answers that are appropriate for students' projects. Mentors may encourage students to take research courses in their own departments or apply for undergraduate research and experiential learning grants, as applicable.

Students and mentors should update scheduled meetings and deadlines each semester and should sign a Capstone Project Mentor-Mentee Agreement that specifies these details. Generally, it is expected that students make substantive contact with their mentors each semester. Capstone Project Mentor-Mentee Agreements that give only vague indications of meeting schedules will not be accepted (see examples and explanations in Appendix C and Appendix D). During the HONC 3320/HONP 3320 course semester, when mentorship begins, we recommend bi-weekly meetings. After mentoring three students through the entirety of three capstone projects, mentors are entitled to \$300 in travel funds and should contact the Honors Undergraduate Research Coordinator to arrange a transfer when they are interested in using these funds (see Appendix G for contact information).

Honors Capstone

The Honors Capstone courses (HONC 4320/HONP 4320) fulfill the second of two course requirements for completion of the Honors Capstone Project. These courses support students as they finalize and present their Honors Capstone Projects. Their most important function is to ensure that students contribute new knowledge through completion of their projects. The heart of these courses is the workshop, which consists of writing, sharing, reading, and commenting on one another's work.

Course Objectives

Integrate knowledge to express insight and originality through single-discipline, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary methodologies.

Analyze new problems and situations to arrive at informed opinions and conclusions.

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9. Appendices/Figures

Note that the character of some of these elements may vary—and some of these elements may be combined—depending on the type and disciplinary perspective(s) of the project being completed. However, *each of these elements must be represented in every project.*

Thesis Capstone

Project generally consists of five parts: an introduction to the topic/work, including its inspiration or source; a review of relevant literature; the design of the project; documentation of the project's production; and a reflection on and analysis of the project (also see the list of basic project elements above).

The literature review for Experiential/Creative Projects should explore the relevant influences and common themes inherent in similar works/creations; define basic concepts and terminology

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Proposal Cover Page

**Raising the Dead:
A Study of Ethics in Science**

Senior Honors Capstone Project Proposal
submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the Norbert O. Schedler Honors College

by

Eager McLearner

University of Central Arkansas

Conway, Arkansas

Fall 2024

Proposal Committee:

Mentor: **Victor Frankenstein, Ph.D.**
Professor

Instructor: **Theophrastus von Hohenheim, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor

Abstract: *[single spaced and no more than 100 words]*

NOTE: The appendix title shown above should not be included and all red text should be appropriately replaced/removed when this sample is incorporated into students' proposals.

Appendix C: Sample Capstone Mentor-Mentee Agreement

Norbert O. Schedler Honors College

Capstone Project Mentor-Mentee Agreement

(all red text below represents sample information)

Mentee Name: Eager McLearner

Mentor Name: Dr. Victor Frankenstein

Project Title: Raising the Dead: A Study of Ethics in Science

Current Semester: Fall 2024

Expected Semester of Capstone Completion: Fall 2025

Semester Meeting Schedule: We will meet on the first Monday of every month at 1:00 p.m.

Project description:

We will pursue a study of the possibility of creating a sentient being out of recycled human elements, during which the student will attempt to gain an understanding of and insight into the ethics of such attempts, giving special attention to the responsibilities of the scientist towards the being that she has animated.

Project work goals:

Mentor-Mentee expectations: During regular meetings, the mentee will relate understandings, opinions, and elaborations on research. The mentor will question, clarify, and criticize the mentee's efforts with the goal of advancing the mentee's understanding and helping the project progress.

Reading and research: The mentee will read works suggested by the mentor and other works that the student may find relevant to the study. These works are identified in the mentee's working bibliography/references list. This semester, specific works include:

Frankenstein, Victor. *Corpse Reanimation for Dummies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006

Strausman, Igor. *The Ethics of Reanimation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Semester goals: Our goal for the semester will be for the mentee to complete the reading and research listed above, prepare an annotated bibliography, and finalize a Proposal. Specific deadlines include:

The mentee will submit a rough draft of the Proposal to the mentor by Friday of week 12.

The mentor will provide feedback on the rough draft within two weeks, or by Friday of week 14.

The mentee will submit the final Proposal in the student portal for the mentor's review by Monday of week 15, the final week of classes.

Mentee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mentor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix

Appendix E: Troubleshooting

Students and mentors simply do not work well together.

Sometimes personalities do not mesh. If this happens, students and mentors should discuss the problem openly. If both mentors

Appendix F: Assessment & Grade Recommendation Criteria

Mentors will be asked to indicate the achievement level that best matches student performance on the Honors Capstone Project via a rubric and to recommend a final letter grade from a drop-down box. General descriptions of the assessment criteria are below. Mentors will choose from four achievement levels for each criterion: Mastered, Proficient, Developing, or Beginning. Also see the below image of the assessment screen from the Honors College Information System (HCIS), which mentors will access via emailed assessment links corresponding to individual mentees.

Assessment criteria general descriptions:

Integrative Scholarship. Independently transfers skills, abilities, theories, and/or methodologies acquired in a disciplinary or multidisciplinary instructional situation to new situations to solve complex research and/or creative problems in a project of one's own design.

Central message. Central message is compelling, reinforced, and strongly supported.

Organization. Organizational pattern is clear and consistent, polished, and makes the content cohesive.

Supporting Material. Employs timely and relevant material to provide effective support in a way that reflects a thorough understanding of the topic/thesis.

Context & Audience. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context; uses compelling language appropriate to the audience.

Syntax & Mechanics. Demonstrates clear and fluid control of syntax and mechanics that skillfully communicates meaning to readers and is nearly error-free.

Knowledge. Shows both a broad and deep understanding of the concepts/principles and their relevance to important questions in the discipline.

Information. Selects information from the most relevant and credible sources, without critical omissions of key sources.

Analysis. Justifies a position and/or draws a logical conclusion using appropriate disciplinary analysis on a significant question or problem.

Appendix G: Contact Information

Devon Hawkins
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501-450-3198