

CAPSTONE RUBRIC

Approved *5/5/2007*

Capstone Seminar 3 Credits (For All Capstone Seminar Courses)

The Capstone Seminar is the demonstration of the students' mastery of the undergraduate discipline and its synthesis with the liberal arts. Through a culminating research project, students demonstrate the ability to write and effectively communicate depth in the discipline, integration of liberal arts, and an understanding of Mercy values. The class should be taken in the senior year.

The assessment criteria assess the level of proficiency students demonstrate for each competency. The goal for all students at the college is to achieve a rating of 17 – 20 on a 20 point scale for each competency. These criteria are descriptive and other creative approaches might meet goals. Some criteria may need additional modification in order to address specific requirements of discipline (i.e. style and format).¹

Evaluate each criterion according to the 20-point scale and place the value in the Score column (you may provide additional feedback in the Comments column). Sum the scores for each criterion within a Competency and place the value in the associated Total cell. Use the Weighting Conversion Table (last page) to weight the Competency Totals and calculate a Grand Total (out of a possible 380 points) by following the instructions within the table.

Competency	Assessment Criteria																				Score	Comments		
	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			0	
I. Demonstrates Effective Writing and Communication (20%)																								
1. Writes clearly and appropriately with proper style	Sentences are clear and vary often and appropriately; style is appropriate and consistent throughout; and style consistently meets requirements of discipline (APA, MLA, etc.).				Sentences are clear most of the time; style is mostly consistent and appropriate; and style meets requirements of discipline most of the time (APA, MLA, etc.).				Sentences are often unclear, very little variation, style is often inconsistent or inappropriate; style meets requirements of discipline some of the time (APA, MLA, etc.).				Sentences are frequently unclear, very little variation, style is mostly inconsistent or inappropriate; style rarely meets requirements of discipline (APA, MLA, etc.).				Sentence structure is incoherent, does not vary, and style is inconsistent or inappropriate; style does not meet requirements of discipline (APA, MLA, etc.).							
2. Demonstrates use of correct syntax	Final product is free of grammar, spelling, usage, and punctuation errors.				Final product has 1 to 4 mechanical errors.				5 and up to 10 mechanical errors.				11 and up to 15 mechanical errors.				More than 15 mechanical errors.							
3. Writing characterized by appropriate tone and voice	Writer uses the appropriate voice and tone consistently throughout that shows an understanding of audience; writer communicates ideas effectively and uses creative conventions and originality that enhance rather than distract from communication of ideas; the writing shows that the writer is engaged or deeply committed to the topic.				Writer uses the appropriate voice and tone most of the time that shows an understanding of audience; most of the time, the writer communicates ideas effectively and uses creative conventions and originality that enhance rather than distract from communication of ideas; the writing shows that the writer is engaged or committed to the topic.				Writer uses the appropriate voice and tone some of the time that shows some understanding of audience; some of the time, the writer communicates ideas effectively and uses creative conventions and originality to enhance communication of ideas, but these are sometimes distracting; the writing shows that the writer is interested in the topic, but not completely engaged with it.				Writer rarely uses the appropriate voice and tone and does not adequately consider the audience; the writer often does not communicate ideas effectively; demonstrates some creative conventions and originality to enhance communication of ideas, but these are often distracting; the writing shows that the writer has a modest interest in the topic, but is disengaged with it.				Writing fails to use appropriate voice and tone and does not demonstrate effective communication to an audience; lacks creativity; lacks sufficient interest or engagement with the topic.							

Competency	Assessment Criteria						
4. Organization is clear and effective	The organization enhances and develops the problem/question; sequencing is clear and effective and perhaps creative; transitions are consistently smooth and clear among all elements.	The organization enhances and develops the problem/question; sequencing is clear and effective and perhaps creative most of the time; transitions are somewhat inconsistent among some elements, but not so much to render the writing confusing.	The organization enhances and develops the problem/question, but sometimes tends to lose focus on the problem/question; sequencing sometimes unclear making the writing more difficult for the reader to follow; transitions are sometimes lacking and movement between ideas seems forced and unnatural and therefore confusing at times.	The organization attempts to develop the problem/question, but often loses focus; sequencing often unclear making the writing difficult for the reader to follow; transitions are often lacking and movement between ideas seems forced and unnatural and therefore confusing most of the time.	The paper lacks clear organization and does not maintain adequate focus on the problem/question; lack of effective sequencing renders the writing confusing; consistent lack of effective transitions to move from one idea to the next; writing seems incoherent most of the time, thus consistently obscuring the main point.		
Total for Competency I:							

Competency	Assessment Criteria																Score	Comments				
II. Demonstrates Depth in the Discipline (30%)	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5			4	3	2	1
1. Identifies, summarizes and develops problem/research question governing research	Identifies problem/question governing research, identifies subsidiary or implicit aspects of the problem; clearly identifies relationships integral to an analysis of the problem/question; articulates why stated problem/research question is important or necessary to address in discipline.	Identifies problem/question governing research, but some details and nuances are missed or glossed over; identifies relationships integral to an analysis of the problem/question most of the time; articulates why stated problem/research question is important or necessary to address in discipline.	Identifies problem/question governing research, but key details and nuances are missed or glossed over; does not clearly identify relationships integral to an analysis of the problem/question; not clear why this is an important or necessary problem/research question to explore.	Summarizes issue, but fails to articulate problem/research question governing research.	Fails to identify problem/research question.																	
2. Understanding and integration of problem/research question relative to discipline	Justifies own problem/research question to others with enough clarity and precision to be convincing or plausible; expresses relationship to other positions/hypotheses in discipline with appropriate depth.	Justifies own problem/research question to others with some clarity, but lacks some depth; expresses relationship to other positions/hypotheses in discipline, but sometimes in simplistic terms.	Attempts to justify own problem/research question, but is somewhat vague; attempts to express relationship to other positions/hypotheses, but often in simplistic or superficial terms.	Attempts to justify own problem/research question, but in very vague terms; attempts to express relationship to other positions/hypotheses, but lacks depth and is consistently superficial or simplistic.	Fails to justify own problem/research question relative to other problem/research questions in discipline.																	
3. Demonstration of general comprehension	Student is able to use the discipline appropriate vocabulary in written and oral communication 95% of the time; presents more than one idea and argues challenging ideas in some depth relevant to main problem/question; able to clearly articulate less obvious and/or more challenging ideas.	Student is able to use the discipline appropriate vocabulary in written and oral communication 85% of the time; presents more than one idea and argues challenging ideas but sometimes simplistically or superficially; able to articulate less obvious and/or more challenging ideas, but with some lack of clarity or focus.	Student is able to use the discipline appropriate vocabulary in written and oral communication less than 75% of the time; presents more than one idea and argues challenging ideas but often simplistically or superficially; able to articulate less obvious and/or more challenging ideas, but often with lack of clarity or focus.	Student uses discipline appropriate vocabulary less than 75% of the time; presents one standard or established idea with little or no reference to challenging ideas and does not go into any depth to explain them; engages some ideas that are obvious or agreeable and often in improper terms.	Student uses discipline appropriate vocabulary less than 60% of the time; presents one standard or established idea without reference to challenging ideas; engages ideas that are obvious or agreeable and does so in very vague or improper terms.																	
Total for Competency II:																						

Competency	Assessment Criteria																Score	Comments				
III. Demonstrates Effective Integration of Liberal Arts (15%)	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5			4	3	2	1
1. Identifies and considers influence of context and assumptions	Analyzes issue with a clear sense of context and assumptions – both the student’s own and those of established authorities; recognizes influence of own bias; addresses assumptions underlying the ethical implications of the problem/question.	Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions; includes other authorities on the topic, but sometimes relies too heavily on established authorities; recognizes assumptions underlying ethical implications, though sometimes in a limited way.	Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions; includes other authorities on the topic, but often relies too heavily on established authorities; recognizes assumptions underlying ethical implications, though often in a limited way.	Approach to issue identifies other contexts but does not connect to them; recognizes personal bias, yet maintains grounding in absolutes; does not adequately recognize assumptions underlying ethical implications.	Approach to issue is egocentric or socio-centric; does not consider connections to other contexts; little to no analysis that is grounded in absolutes with little or no recognition of personal bias; does not recognize assumptions underlying ethical implications.																	
2. Develops, presents and articulates own position to address problem/question	Position presents a clear analysis of other positions in concert with one’s own; position demonstrates originality of thought and execution; position is consistently argued throughout.	Position clearly acknowledges, refutes and/or synthesizes other positions; presentation of position is occasionally inconsistent and/or unclear.	Position acknowledges, refutes and/or synthesizes other positions though sometimes unclearly or superficially; presentation of position is often inconsistent and/or unclear.	Position demonstrates very little originality by acknowledging other arguments or assertions, and relies too heavily on them; presents position inconsistently throughout and often lacks clarity.	Presents a position that is unoriginal and clearly inherited from another source; addresses only one argument relevant to the problem/research question; position is unclear; fails to justify argument presented.																	
3. Integrates other perspectives and positions	Fully integrates ideas and perspectives from a variety of different sources; compares and contrasts these ideas with own ideas.	Integrates ideas and perspectives from a few different sources; compares and contrasts these ideas with own ideas, though sometimes in a limited or superficial way.	Only partially integrates some other ideas and perspectives; compares and contrasts these ideas with own ideas, but often superficially or simplistically.	Very rough mention of other ideas and perspectives, but poorly integrated; offers no comparison or contrast with own ideas.	No other perspectives or ideas raised in addition to personal opinions; no evidence that alternative ideas were considered.																	

Competency	Assessment Criteria						
4. Identifies and articulates conclusions and summary	Presents an analysis of implications that extend beyond disciplinary boundaries; conclusions are clearly related to problem/question and provide answers and/or questions for further study.	Discusses implications with support of evidence or data; conclusions are sometimes vague even if they extend beyond scope of discipline; relates conclusion to problem/question consistently.	Discusses implications with some support of evidence or data; conclusions are often vague even if they extend beyond scope of discipline; relates conclusion to problem/question, but lacks consistency.	Identifies possible conclusions or implications, but does so simplistically or superficially; conclusions are vague and only tangentially related to problem/question at best.	Fails to identify conclusions or implications, simplistic summary; presents conclusions as absolute and may attribute to an external authority		
5. Demonstrates understanding of and integrates other disciplines (e.g., history, social sciences, quantitative and scientific reasoning, aesthetics, and humanities)	Demonstrates an understanding and integration of more than two disciplines outside of disciplinary focus of problem/research question; integration of other disciplines enhances focus and depth of writing and adds clarity to writing.	Demonstrates an understanding and integration of no more than two disciplines outside of disciplinary focus of problem/research question; integration of other disciplines enhances focus and depth of writing and adds clarity to writing most of the time, but is sometimes unclear or forced.	Demonstrates an understanding and integration of no more than one discipline outside of disciplinary focus of problem/research question; integration of other discipline enhances focus and depth of writing and adds clarity to writing some of the time, but is often unclear or forced.	Demonstrates an understanding and integration of no more than one discipline outside of disciplinary focus of problem/research question; integration of other discipline is forced and distracts from the main problem/research question.	Does not demonstrate an understanding or integration of any discipline outside of disciplinary focus of problem/research question.		
Total for Competency III:							

Competency	Assessment Criteria																				Score	Comments
	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
IV. Demonstrates Good Research Practice and Use of Information (20%)																						
1. Use of sources and resources (Note that some styles require integration of all references in text)	Identifies and annotates 20 or more appropriate primary and secondary sources and integrates 10 or more; uses appropriate style consistently (APA, MLA, etc.)	Identifies and annotates 15 – 19 sources and integrates at least 7; uses consistently appropriate style (APA, MLA, etc.)	Identifies and annotates 10 - 15 and integrates at least 5; uses appropriate style some of the time (APA, MLA, etc.)	Identifies and annotates 5 - 9 sources and integrates at least 3; rarely uses appropriate style (APA, MLA, etc.)	Identifies and annotates fewer than 5 sources and integrates fewer than 3; fails to use appropriate style (APA, MLA, etc.)																	
2. Identifies and synthesizes a variety of types and formats of potential sources	Demonstrates the use and importance of primary and secondary sources and demonstrates the construction of data from primary sources; synthesizes material from both secondary and primary resources throughout.	Demonstrates competency with different kinds of resources and media; differentiates between primary and secondary sources and effectively integrates them, but synthesis of them is occasionally unclear.	Identifies the value differences of potential resources and different media but still relies almost exclusively on local and print resources; relies almost entirely on secondary sources, but synthesis of them lacks clarity most of the time.	Identifies the value differences of potential resources and different media, but relies exclusively on local and print resources; relies entirely on secondary sources.	Does not recognize that knowledge is disseminated into various media and cannot locate information beyond local and print resources.																	
3. Acknowledges the use of information sources	Consistently cites sources in an appropriate style and posts permission granted notices for copyrighted material, where applicable; contains no syntax errors.	Acknowledges sources in an appropriate style with minimal syntax errors.	Acknowledges sources in an appropriate style most of the time with minimal syntax errors most of the time.	Inappropriately acknowledges sources using incorrect style and/or contains numerous syntax errors.	Does not acknowledge sources.																	
4. Use of technology	Student is able to identify, use, and integrate library resources and databases, effective word-processing skills, and credible Internet resources; student demonstrates appropriate and effective means to disseminate, communicate, or present information.	Student is able to identify and use technological tools for more than one purpose (e.g., research and communication), demonstrates at least an average proficiency in appropriate and effective use to communicate ideas.	Student demonstrates a marginal proficiency in the use of technological tools for research and communication of ideas; use of technology tended to be misplaced or inappropriate at times.	Student demonstrates a marginal proficiency in the use of technological tools for research and communication of ideas; use of technology was ineffective or distracting.	No demonstration of competency using technological resources or tools.																	

Competency	Assessment Criteria		
	Total for Competency IV:		

Competency	Assessment Criteria																				Score	Comments
	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
<p>V. Demonstrates Understanding of, Integrates, and Applies Values of Mercy, Service, Hospitality, and Justice (15%)</p> <p>1. Integrates values of mercy, service, hospitality and justice with problem/ research question</p>	Articulates college values and expresses relevance to problem/ research question and integrates 2 or more in project; integration is clear and focused and enhances articulation of problem/ research question.				Articulates values, can identify relevance but for no more than 1; integration seems appropriate and well placed in reference to problem/ research question most of the time enhancing the articulation of the problem/ research question.				Articulates values, can identify relevance but for no more than 1; integration seems appropriate and well placed in reference to problem/ research question some of the time, but lacks some clarity.				Articulates values, but does not clearly articulate relevance; integration seems forced, unnatural, or distracts from problem/ research question.				Fails to identify and articulate relevance of values.					
<p>2. Applies values of mercy, service, hospitality and justice to life of service and compassion</p>	Demonstrates a clear application of values to problem/ research question; very clearly extends beyond scope of discipline; clearly articulated in terms of problem/ research question enhancing the main ideas and even demonstrates creative expression further clarifying main points.				Demonstrates a clear application of values to problem/ research question most of the time; extends beyond scope of discipline but sometimes unclearly; articulated in terms of problem/ research question, but occasionally lacks clarity.				Demonstrates application of values to problem/ research question some of the time; extends beyond scope of discipline but often unclearly; articulated in terms of problem/ research question, but often lacks clarity.				Application of values is somewhat vague or forced and does not extend beyond scope of discipline very well; relates to problem/ question, but vaguely or superficially.				Fails to apply values to the research topic.					

Competency	Assessment Criteria					
3. Demonstrates clear reflection on ethics.	Demonstrates clear reflection on ethics, professionalism, and application of values to problem/research question; clearly articulates ethical significance of problem/research question not only in terms of disciplinary focus, but also addresses significance beyond disciplinary scope.	Demonstrates reflection on ethics, professionalism, and application of values to problem/research question, but occasionally lacks clarity or focus; articulates ethical significance of problem/research question not only in terms of disciplinary focus, but also addresses significance beyond disciplinary scope.	Demonstrates reflection on ethics, professionalism, and application of values to problem/research question, but often lacks clarity or focus; articulates ethical significance of problem/research question in terms of disciplinary focus, and addresses significance beyond disciplinary scope, but sometimes in a forced or unclear way.	Offers a brief consideration of ethical issues, but lacks clarity or focus in relation to problem/research question; does not attempt to extend ethical significance beyond scope of discipline; writer communicates ethical considerations in a forced, unclear, and/or superficial manner.	Fails to address ethics in relation to problem/research question.	
Total for Competency V:						

Weighting Conversion Table

Multiply total from each competency by the corresponding weight to produce the weighted total for each competency. The sum of all five weighted competency totals equals the grand total out of a possible total of 380. Individual faculty will specify the grade for this total according to the goals and outcomes described in their syllabus.

Competency	Total (from above)	Weighting	Weighted Total (Total X Weighting)
I.		.95	
II.		1.9	
III.		.57	
IV.		.95	
V.		.95	
Grand Total (Add Weighted Totals)			/ 380

ⁱ Portions have been adapted from the Washington State Critical Thinking Project. Available: <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ph.htm>

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