

IVSP420 Capstone Guidelines

IVSP420 Capstone Definition:

The Capstone is the culmination of your IVSP program. It is a significant research project, synthesizing the interdisciplinary course of study of an IVSP major. The choice of subject is flexible and entirely up to you and your Faculty Mentor, and should be thoroughly engaging and stimulating. Designing, organizing, researching, and writing a major independent study project all contribute toward a significant, even exhilarating, learning experience. You are encouraged to approach the Capstone Project with that spirit.

Papers: Most IVSP420 final projects are papers--*significant* written works of research and/or analysis. A capstone paper must be at least 30 pages in length.

Projects: Other modes of presentation are also possible (in some cases a performance, exhibition, or community service project might be appropriate). If you choose another mode of presentation, you still must write a significant reflection/analysis of the experience. You and your Faculty Mentor will determine the exact nature of the written work.

Capstone Proposal:

In consultation with your Faculty Mentor, you must draft a written prospectus describing the Capstone Project. This prospectus must be signed by your mentor and handed into the IVSP office before you can register for the course.

The prospectus should include, but is not limited to, the following information:

- An introduction to your project: What are you studying? What issue(s) are you addressing? What is the main goal of your project?
- Justification/Rationale for your project: Why is this project important? How does it fit into your academic field? How does your project fit into existing scholarship? How does your project differ? How does this project represent a culmination of your unique IVSP major? How will the project contribute to your development?
- Identify the sources to be used for conducting your project.
- Describe the format of your project: What are the major components of the project? What is the estimated length of the project? Are there any special requirements for conducting your work? What will the end result of your Capstone be?
- Identify two faculty readers in addition to your Faculty Mentor (*see Readers and Grading*).
- Provide a timeline for the semester: What are your deadlines (include preliminary deadlines)? How often will you meet with your mentor to discuss the progress they have made throughout the semester? *You must meet with your Faculty mentor at least twice per month.*
- When will you submit your project to your faculty readers and Faculty Mentor? *Allow ample time for feedback.* What is the final due date for the completed project? *Allow at least three weeks between the first submission and the final submission to give your readers time to provide feedback and yourself time to make proper revisions.*

Readers and Grading:

The final paper or product will be reviewed by your Faculty Mentor, who has sole responsibility for grading, but must also be read by two other faculty members with expertise in the area of study. These faculty members are selected by you and your Faculty Mentor. The outside readers will send their comments to the Faculty Mentor, who then forwards them along with her or his own evaluation to you and to the IVSP Director. You will then adjust and edit the work as necessary before resubmitting. This process allows you to revise and perfect the project before submitting it for a final grade. The Faculty Mentor may also request that you formally present your work in an oral presentation or a forum for discussion. The Individual Studies Office is happy to help facilitate such an event.

Before you give your paper to your readers, check with your Mentor when he or she needs to have the evaluations from the two other faculty members. See how he or she wants the evaluations sent (most are OK with email, but your Mentor may prefer something else) and what the expectations or guidelines (if any) for the evaluations are. The evaluations may be just comments sent in an email (or any other format your Faculty Mentor prefers). The comments are meant not to be grades but rather to help the Faculty Mentor assess the value/quality of the work and to provide helpful suggestions, etc., for you in the future. The Faculty Mentor will submit the final grade for the course. Just FYI: The grade is due when all grades for the semester are due.

Checklist for Completing IVSP420:

Before you start:

- ☐ Complete your proposal, have your mentor sign it, and turn it into the IVSP office.
- ☐ Register for IVSP420 with the section number that the IVSP office gives you once you have been given permission to enroll in the course.

During:

- ☐ Work with your mentor to complete your paper. Be sure to check in with him or her frequently!

After you finish:

- ☐ Send or give copies of your work to the two other faculty members and your mentor to evaluate. Let them know when the evaluations are due to your Faculty Mentor and any guidelines for the evaluations.
- ☐ Forward copies of the outside readers' comments along with his or her own final evaluation both to you and also to Dr. Joan Burton (jbarton1@umd.edu). Your mentor may choose to send them.
- ☐ Incorporate your readers' and faculty mentor's comments into your final written paper.
- ☐ Have all evaluators (Faculty Mentor and the two other readers) sign a copy of the Evaluation Form, and must bring (or mail) the signed sheet to the IVSP office. The Evaluation Form is available at <http://www.ivsp.umd.edu/forms.html>
- ☐ Bring a paper copy of your capstone to the IVSP office. Do not put any staples or holes into the paper. Nicer paper is preferred as this is the copy that will be bound for our office.

Be sure to thank your Faculty Mentor and the other faculty evaluators! A nice note is always appreciated and appropriate! You will also have a wonderful opportunity to thank your Faculty Mentor again at the graduation ceremony (when you may also thank your parents, etc.—you will all have a moment at the podium with your Faculty Mentor).

Rubric by which IVSP 420 Capstone Project prospectuses will be assessed

Learning Outcome: Through a final capstone project, students will demonstrate their ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply scholarship relevant to their fields and articulate the process from planning to executing to revising and perfecting a successful project.

Assessment Method: Each student's prospectus on the IVSP 420 capstone thesis or project will be evaluated according to this rubric scored 0 1 2 3 4 5. (This prospectus is submitted when the student registers for IVSP 420.)

Criteria	Exemplary 5	Good/Adequate 4-3	Needs Significant Improvement 2-1	Inadequate 0
Student demonstrates ability to select, critically evaluate, & apply relevant areas of scholarship to examine a question, problem, or phenomenon.	Brief shows the Capstone Project applying key concepts from at least three areas of study & the critical evaluation of scholarship.	Brief shows the Capstone Project applying concepts from at least two areas of study and evaluating scholarship.	Brief only vaguely suggests that the Capstone Project involves applying concepts from different areas of study and evaluation of scholarship.	Brief does not show the Capstone Project applying concepts from different areas of study & lacks evidence of intent to critically evaluate scholarship.
Student can articulate process for producing a successful project, from planning/modeling/preparing to critiquing, revising, & perfecting.	Brief demonstrates clear understanding of the skills, tools, & process needed to implement the project & outlines plan for critiquing, revising, & perfecting work.	Brief mentions tools, skills & process needed to implement & complete the project but does not demonstrate clear understanding.	Brief is vague or confusing regarding the skills, tools, and process needed to implement & complete the project.	Brief does not mention skills, tools, or process needed to implement & complete the project.
Student effectively communicates application of scholarship through ancillary material.	Brief is clearly written and effectively organized; it demonstrates excellent control of language, awareness of audience, & use of ancillary materials in final product.	Brief is mostly effective in organization and presentation, flaws in grammar and diction are minor, and mentions use of ancillary materials.	Brief contains significant errors in organization, presentation, grammar and diction, and/or is unclear about ancillary materials to be used.	Brief is incoherent.
Student produces original work reflecting knowledge relevant to and culminating the student's IVSP major.	The design of the capstone project shows meaningful, holistic engagement with the student's academic field & outlines original work.	The design of the capstone project shows adequate engagement with at least two key areas of the student's IVSP major and adequately outlines original work.	The design of the capstone project is vague regarding the project's function as a culmination of the student's experience in IVSP and the original work involved.	The design of the capstone project does not reflect the student's experience in IVSP or creation of original work.