



# Capstone Experience

## Department of Modern Languages

### Spanish Section



“A capstone experience to be completed by the end of the senior year. Each major department designs its own capstone experience to help students synthesize and demonstrate competent learning in their fields. The capstone experience includes both oral and written presentations.”  
(G.B., <http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/forms/marshallplan.doc>)

## Undergraduate

### Core Outcomes 2,3,4,9 & Capstone Experience (year 2006)

#### MU GOALS:

1. To develop critical thinking;
2. To develop ways of communicating;
3. To introduce students to the kinds of knowledge housed within the academic disciplines;
4. To demonstrate to students the methods by which knowledge is created and used within a discipline;
5. To show how knowledge from a variety of sources can be selected and synthesized to solve problems, make decisions, or create new knowledge;

#### MU OUTCOMES:

*When a student completes the General Education Requirements at Marshall University, she/he should have the following abilities:*

1. Critical Thinking/Creative Thinking Skills
2. Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills
3. Collaborative Working Skills
4. A need for Life-Long Learning

## Definition

The Spanish capstone experience is the crowning point of the student’s education. Basically, this is a research problem-solving activity organized in a systematic and methodical way. By developing a personal research project, students have the opportunity to creatively analyze, synthesize, and evaluate learned knowledge that spans several topic areas in different aspects of Latin American and Spanish cultures and literature. Thus, students must integrate facets of their area of concentration (Spain, Latin-America, culture, literature, etc.) with relevant concepts from related sub-areas (different subjects). In a few words: the capstone model can be summarized as follows: Research → Knowledge → Understanding → Application.

Because the Capstone Experience requires that students engage in explorations in which the outcomes are unknown, synthesizing and integrating their knowledge into a research experience, faculty supervision and mentorship is critical to ensure a successful completion. Consequently, students must expect to spend many hours of research and work on the final artifacts throughout the entire semester.

## Goals

Students are expected to meet the following objectives:

- To communicate fluently in Spanish both in written and oral communication;
- The project must require that the student engage in a creative, inquiry-based learning experience that deepens the student’s knowledge and integration of the discipline;
- To conduct a personal academic research either on cultural artifacts, events, or literary texts from Latin America or Spain;



- To distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources (such as cultural artifacts versus critical works; hard data articles versus analytical/interpretive works; literary texts versus critical works);
- To apply concepts from more than one sub area (literature, culture, films, etc.);
- To apply some theoretical framework;
- To integrate the principles, theories, methods and knowledge learned in the courses required throughout the major in Spanish and other College requirements; engaging them with complex contemporary 'real world' issues.
- To look ahead to their **transition** into new professional pathways and/or post-graduate study.

## Components

The fulfillment of the Capstone Project may include but it is not limited to the following components:

- ✓ The project must be completed individually;
- ✓ To create a portfolio (in a neat and well organized binder) compiling all the articles consulted, outlines, brain-storm notes, and drafts. Deadline to turn it in is during Week 15. All articles, drafts and final versions must be edited, typed and hard copy;
- ✓ Present the work using a formal oral presentation and a written essay:
  - To write a short essay (10-20 pages) according to academic standards using MLA format;
  - In addition to the essay the student must present the project results from his/her investigations in a public, formal oral presentation that incorporates other media (e.g. Power Point, video clip, a piece of art, creative writing, video, etc.) relevant to the student's area of concentration. The student must expect to share his/her results in an active way rather than by simply reading the essay; the student must keep in mind that the oral component is an exercise in communicating to the audience in an engaging way; it is not an exercise in public reading;
- ✓ To work on a project large enough to require research on primary and secondary sources (at least five academic critical sources consulted and at least one theoretical approach);

## Evaluation

The final evaluation must be based on the fulfillment of the goals and the rubric. Both the quality of the product of the student's investigation and the process of research will be evaluated.

The evaluation will be conducted by a committee of three members: the professor of the course, a professor nominated by the student, and a third member nominated by the departmental chair. The main purpose of this committee is to provide advice in complementary areas taught in the department and in the assessment of the progress of the project during the semester. By the eighth week of the semester the committee will give feedback to the student providing suggestions or corrections in the course of the research and progress of the final product.

In case of conflict with the nomination of the committee members the departmental chair will decide.

## Presentation

According to the policy of the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Modern Languages, this presentation will be open to others in the department (majors, minors, professors) to attend. The public presentations will take place during class time during the last two weeks of classes. Please encourage and invite other majors, minors, and professors of your choosing to attend, as well as family and friends. This may take place at some point during the last two weeks of the semester.



## Other matters

### Regarding your invitation to guests:

Design an eye-catching announcement with title of the presentation and pertinent info (time, place, etc.)

### Regarding the *Capstone Presentation*:

- Your presentation should be one of 20-30 minutes in length, via power point or other artifact, in Spanish.
- Try to find some engaging images to include in your power point (be certain to cite where you found those images, etc. on the power point slide for each image chosen).
- Though you may pursue a chosen topic of inquiry, be certain to include your responses to the following questions within your presentation:

#### A. Opening questions

- ✓ What triggered you to study this topic (was there a quote that sparked your interest, an issue, etc.);
- ✓ what were some questions that came up in your mind while you were considering the topic;
- ✓ what did you find in relation to those questions;
- ✓ How did you go about finding answers to those questions (your process of investigation, in other words). (Put those same questions up for the audience to make them pause and ponder before you start your presentation...)

#### B. Other questions that should be addressed at some point during your presentation:

- ✓ What critical sources did you consult and which ones did you find most helpful (and why did you find them helpful?);
- ✓ what made the texts or cultural artifacts you focused on challenging for you;
- ✓ why do you think the cultural artifacts or texts are important for Latin American/Spanish majors to study;
- ✓ has the reading of these primary sources enlightened you in some way in terms of your knowledge of Latin American or Spanish culture or literature?;
- ✓ How can the /artifacts/texts/issues that you concentrated on link up to current society — either specifically to Latin America / Spain or in general terms regarding global issues?

### Provide the following hand-outs/ materials for audience:

1. Questions to ponder...
2. a list of vocab. that you might use in your discussion with which the other students might not be familiar
3. Reproduce for the audience a list of quotes that you will be referring to in an effort to support yourself/argument/thesis, etc. This includes any quotes from primary texts that you mention in your presentation as well as any quotes from critical texts
4. a bibliography
5. a survey/evaluation form for the audience to respond to after your *Capstone Presentation* in regards to what you personally hope the audience gains from your presentation -- some possibilities might include issues of content, issues of clarity, and any other issues that might be important to you personally as the presenter.

### NOTE:

Be certain that issues of grammar, spelling, etc. are well edited on both your Power Point slides, as well as on the hard-copy documents that you include in your *Capstone Project Folder*.



Regarding the **Capstone Project Folder** to be turned in after the day of the presentation.

- 1** — Cover Page (design your own)
- 2** — Copy of Announcement/Invitation to Guests
- 3** — Table of Contents
- 4** — Project progress grid (signed and dated at least by the professor of the course)
- 5** — Abstract
- 6** — Detailed Outline of issues covered in the presentation (in Spanish)
- 7** — Opening Questions to Ponder (in Spanish)
- 8** — List of Quotes referred to during the presentation
- 9** — Copy of all articles consulted
- 10** — Notes and informal brain-storm ideas
- 11** — All drafts (signed and dated by the professor)
- 12**—Final version of the essay (typed)
- 13** — Bibliography in MLA format
- 14** — A version of the final artifact (Power Point, video-clip, score, creative writing, etc.)
- 15** — Copy of the Evaluation form for the presentation (unanswered)
- 16** — Copies of audience’s completed evaluations
- 17** — Completed Capstone Forms



# Schedule of the Capstone project progress

By Week(s)	Activity	Student's description	Initials	Date
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Completion of the form (intention & Abstract)			
5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Corpus + Portfolio</b> review (primary sources articles)			
6 <sup>th</sup>	Trigger question			
7 <sup>th</sup>	Completion of the primary sources (corpus)			
8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Portfolio</b> review (critical sources) + definition of theoretical framework			
10 <sup>th</sup>	First draft due			
12 <sup>th</sup>	Reviewed version			
13 <sup>th</sup>	Final version (complete oral & written portion)			
14 <sup>th</sup>	Evaluation of the entire project			

