

## Guidelines for the Anthropology Capstone

The Anthropology Capstone provides an opportunity for students, over the course of a semester, to conduct an independent research project on a topic that interests them, while working one-on-one with a faculty supervisor. The project culminates in a research paper and a presentation to the faculty and assembled students. All Anthropology majors who are not pursuing the Honors program must complete the Capstone project and must enroll in 3 courses, ANTH 493/ANTH 494/ANTH 495, in their senior year, unless they are December graduates.

The Anthropology Capstone includes the following classes:

- ANTH 493 (Senior Research Preparation), a one-credit course in the Fall semester
- ANTH 494 (Senior Research Seminar), a one-credit course in the Spring semester
- ANTH 495 (Anthropology Capstone), a three-credit course in the Spring semester.

### Goals

*Through the capstone course, students will:*

- Integrate their anthropology coursework into a rigorous individual research project.
- Develop professional skills, such as research, writing, and oral and visual presentation, which will be applicable in many careers.
- Engage deeply with a topic they care about.
- Work closely with a faculty member to define, develop, and present their research.

### Guidelines and Expectations

#### *General expectations*

Students should design a project that relates to the topical, theoretical, and methodological issues of their selected area of emphasis (social-cultural anthropology or anthropological archaeology). Projects must be based on original library or field research, analysis of archaeological datasets, or a combination thereof. While students are encouraged to conduct field research or original data analysis, they should be aware that advance preparation and planning is necessary. If a student will pursue field research they should meet with their faculty advisor as soon as possible in order to coordinate submission of an IRB Protocol and establish a feasible research design.

#### For students working on a capstone in social-cultural anthropology:

- Projects should demonstrate commitment to a clearly defined theoretical framework and an understanding of the interplay of theoretical and empirical materials.
- Projects should be situated within an anthropological genealogy; that is, students will be

expected to demonstrate how their project contributes to or relates to one or more subfields of the discipline (e.g., anthropology of art, anthropology of science, economic anthropology, medical anthropology, legal anthropology, etc.).

For students working on a capstone in anthropological archaeology:

- Students should strive to work with an archaeological dataset. These may be provided from published material, research conducted through ANTH 362 (Archaeological Field Techniques), faculty research projects, or data collected from a summer field school. Students choosing not to work with an archaeological dataset will be expected to formulate specific research questions that can be addressed with existing literature.
- Projects should be situated within a suitable literature, and use that literature to both provide a context for the capstone project, as well as generate questions that the project will address.

**Work with faculty supervisor**

Students should identify their faculty supervisor by the beginning of the fall semester of their Senior year, and should begin meeting regularly with that faculty supervisor no later than the end of the Fall semester. The details of the meeting schedule are to be worked out individually with the supervisor. Meeting monthly is advisable. Students should come prepared to meetings, complete drafts and any other assignments on time, and be sure to understand and respond to the supervisor's feedback.

**Paper**

The final paper should be at least 20-25 pages long, double-spaced with a complete bibliography of works cited; the bibliography pages are not included in the 20-25 page length. Citation and formatting should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Author-Date): <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

For social-cultural anthropology capstone papers: The paper will derive from each student's original ethnographic research or, if ethnographic research proved unfeasible or undesirable due to the nature of the project, a substantive engagement with the existing theoretical, geographic, and methodological literature on the chosen topic. In each case, capstone papers must have a carefully established and argued thesis and evidence. For projects involving field research, the paper should also describe the methodological approaches and research design utilized.

For anthropological archaeology capstone papers: The paper will include a background and literature survey, clearly-articulated research questions, an overview of the data used and the methods employed, and an analysis of the data and conclusions drawn. Papers will commonly include tables and figures as necessary.

## **Presentation**

During the scheduled final exam period for ANTH 495, or another time previously coordinated, all students enrolled in the capstone course will make a 15-minute oral presentation of their research to the assembled faculty and students. Presentations should summarize the project in a clearly understandable form and should also include a visual presentation (i.e., a poster or PowerPoint presentation) that enhances and elaborates the oral presentation. Presentations should be delivered in a polished, well-rehearsed, professional manner. They will be discussed and evaluated by the entire faculty and these evaluations will be calculated into the student's final grade. The presentation will comprise 30% of the course grade.

## **Planning for the Capstone**

### *Securing a Faculty Supervisor*

Students MUST secure a faculty supervisor for the capstone no later than the 3rd week of their Senior year, but are strongly advised to contact potential faculty supervisors at the end of their Junior year. Students should contact an Anthropology faculty member with a proposed topic and, if the faculty member agrees to supervise the capstone project, the student and supervisor must complete the Faculty Supervisor Registration Form (attached, and also available on the department website). The student is responsible for returning the completed, signed form to Altha Rodgers in the Anthropology administrative office, Sewell Hall 572, by 5pm on Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the fall semester of their Senior year. At their discretion, faculty may request a meeting with a student to discuss a potential project and/or require a written proposal for the project.

Students must have secured a faculty supervisor before they register for ANTH 495 and then must register for their faculty supervisor's section of ANTH 495. If a student fails to register for the capstone course by the above deadline, s/he must petition the departmental Undergraduate Committee to permit late registration. It is strongly advised that students initiate contact with a potential supervisor as early as possible in the spring of the Junior year, as the number of capstone projects faculty are able to supervise in any given semester is limited, and a student's desired faculty supervisor may be on leave or otherwise unavailable during the student's Senior year.

### *Registering for 493*

Students must register for ANTH 493 in the Fall semester. This one-credit course includes preliminary support from Fondren Librarians, discussion of the nature of anthropological research, assistance with IRB approval, and training with the Center for Written, Oral and Visual Communication, a process that continues throughout the spring capstone semester.

## **Human Subjects Review**

Students who plan to conduct research involving human subjects must complete several additional steps. First, they must successfully complete the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) Training Tutorial online at <http://sparc.rice.edu/irb/irb-citi> . There are different levels of training depending on the nature of research. Nearly all students requiring human subjects review will complete the training for Students Conducting No More than Minimal Risk Research. This consists of three online modules and quizzes. Documentation of IRB training is required to complete ANTH 493 in the fall of the Senior year. Students who have already passed the IRB training do not need to repeat it. Second, after completing IRB training, students must complete, in conjunction with their faculty supervisor, an Application for New Protocol Review to be submitted to the IRB. Once students have registered in the IRBnet system, the protocol form is available at <http://irbnet.blogs.rice.edu>. Because the Institutional Review Board may not meet during the summer, students planning to take the capstone during the fall semester to facilitate December graduation and who wish to conduct ethnographic research are strongly encouraged to complete both of these steps during the spring semester of the Junior year.

## **Scheduling**

### Junior Year

- Begin thinking about possible projects in the spring semester and contact potential faculty supervisors to discuss ideas and plans.
- Register for ANTH 493, Senior Research Preparation, for Fall semester of Senior year.

### Senior Year

#### *First Semester*

- Complete all requirements for ANTH 493, including:
  - Third week: Completion of supervision form with faculty supervisor.
  - Mid-semester: Meet with supervisor to discuss fall research plans and IRB protocol, if conducting research with human subjects.
  - Tenth week, approximately: Submission of IRB protocol, if conducting research with human subjects.
- Register for ANTH494 Senior Research Seminar
- Register for ANTH495 *in your supervisor's section*

#### *Capstone semester*

- First or second week of semester: Meet with faculty supervisor to agree on a timetable of meetings and assignments.
- Meetings with faculty supervisor (sample schedule):
  - *Meeting 1*: define the contours of the topic and data; begin drafting a bibliography.
  - *Meetings 2, 3*: discuss readings and/or archaeological data/ethnographic materials
  - *Meetings 4, 5*: first draft due, discussion of draft.

- Final presentations to the faculty and assembled students will be held during the scheduled final exam period for ANTH 495. The final paper will be due 2 days after the presentation. Complete drafts should be submitted well in advance of the presentations to ensure ample time for feedback.

**ANTH 495 Faculty Supervisor Registration Form  
Capstone Students**

When a faculty member agrees to supervise your capstone project, complete this form with them and ask her/him to sign it. **YOU** are responsible for turning in the signed form to the Anthropology Office in 572 Sewall Hall.

**The deadline for turning in the form is 5:00 pm, on the last business day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the fall semester of your Senior year.**

If you do not secure a faculty supervisor and turn in this form by the deadline, you will **NOT** be permitted to register for ANTH 495, which is a requirement for a major in anthropology, without petitioning the Departmental Undergraduate Committee.

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ ID \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative capstone project title (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check the boxes to indicate that you have discussed the following with your faculty supervisor:

What questions you want to answer with your project.

Key texts of relevance to your project.

How you will conduct research and/or collect data.

The rough timeline of your research and writing.

The schedule of meetings with your faculty supervisor.

Planned capstone semester: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty supervisor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_