Guidelines for the Anthropology Capstone

The Anthropology Capstone is a summative experience for Anthropology majors. The capstone offers students an opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty supervisor over the course of their final semester on a research project that engages both enduring and current perspectives in the field and makes an original scholarly contribution. In most cases, the project will be based on a paper or other work the student has prepared for a previous class, though, in consultation with their supervisor, students have the option to do entirely new work. Students are required to present preliminary material from their project at RURS. The Capstone culminates in a written research article suitable for submission to a peer reviewed journal of undergraduate research or as a graduate school admission essay, as well as 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 2 courses, ANTH 493 and 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 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.
● Create original scholarship that evidences a refined understanding of current literature and enduring analytical perspectives in Anthropology.
● 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 will usually take as their starting point a paper or project students completed for a previous course. Such papers should be based on original library or field research, analysis of archaeological datasets, or a combination thereof. Students wishing to pursue an entirely new project, or conduct new or supplementary field research or original data collection must meet with their faculty advisor as soon as possible to determine the feasibility of new research. In cases involving field research, coordinating timely submission of an IRB Protocol is essential.

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

● Projects should demonstrate facility with a clearly defined theoretical and analytical framework and an understanding of the interplay of theoretical and empirical materials.

● Projects should develop the student's own previous work into a more rigorous paper that is clearly and comprehensively situated in relevant literatures, and engages those literatures to explore original scholarly questions.

● 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 and students are responsible for keeping with the meeting-plan they have developed with their supervisor. Meeting at least monthly is advisable, and students are also responsible for timely submission of a RURS abstract for comment by their Supervisor. 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.

RURS

Students are required to present preliminary portions of their capstone project at RURS (Rice Undergraduate Research Symposium), usually held in the second week of April. By mid-term of their Spring semester, students should meet with their supervisors to decide on the most appropriate focus for their RURS presentation. Students should also contact Dr. Elizabeth Festa (eaf2@rice.edu) at the Center for Written Oral and Visual Communication (CWOVC) to arrange at least two consultations with CWOVC staff in preparation for the presentation. The RURS presentation will serve as the foundation for the final department presentation for all Capstone students at the end of the year.

Paper

The final paper should be roughly 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 substantive engagement with the existing theoretical, geographic, and methodological literature on the chosen topic. In consultation with their supervisors, students should familiarize themselves with leading journals in their field as well as various undergraduate research journals to get a sense of the possible formats, styles, and conventions that may serve as models for their own paper. They should also take advantage of the CWOVC throughout the writing process. Throughout the semester, students will hone and develop their previous work into fully fledged articles and final papers should demonstrate nuanced and synthetic understanding of the relevant conversations in the literature, and make clear the originality and value of their own original contributions. 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. The final presentation grade is an average of all faculty evaluations. 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 the Fall Semester 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 Department 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 3rd week of the fall semester of their Senior year.

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 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 training with the Center for Written, Oral and Visual Communication, support from Fondren Librarians, discussion of the nature of anthropological research, and assistance conceptualizing possible projects. The course is also an opportunity for each cohort to learn from each other and develop peer supports.

Human Subjects Review
Students who have secured support from their Supervisor to conduct research involving human subjects must complete several additional steps related to institutional ethics review. First, they must successfully complete the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) Training Tutorial online at http://sparc.rice.edu/irb/irb-citi (usually the module entitled Students Conducting No More than Minimal Risk Research). 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. Students are strongly encouraged to complete these steps in the Spring semester in their Junior year, especially as the IRB may not meet over the summer. In any case, IRB approval should be secured no later than week 10 of the Fall semester of their Senior year.

Scheduling

Junior Year
· Begin thinking about projects or papers from other courses to develop into the capstone project. These may be from courses outside anthropology.
· 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. If student wishes to conduct new field research or data collection, they must assess the feasibility with faculty supervisors at this point.

· Mid-semester: Meet with supervisor to discuss fall research plans, begin developing reading lists, meet with librarians to discuss topics and library research management strategies. *If IRB approval is necessary, it should be secured by week 10.*

· 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. *It is your responsibility to establish a regular schedule of meetings.* It is advisable to set up a concrete schedule of at least one meeting per month at this initial meeting.

· 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 other data
> *Meetings 4*: Discuss RURS proposal and outline of Capstone paper.
> *Meeting 5*: Discussion of Capstone draft.

> · Eighth week of semester: Discuss RURS with Supervisor. Set up at least two consultations with CWOVC to work on RURS presentation.

> · Second-to-last week of semester: Submit draft of Capstone paper to Supervisor for comments.

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 before the end of classes to ensure ample time for feedback.*

FURTHER QUESTIONS?

Students seeking further information about the Honors Program may consult either of the undergraduate advisors, Dr. Jeffrey Fleisher (Archaeology) or Dr. Zoë Wool (Social/Cultural).