

The MAPW Capstone

All students must complete a capstone project to graduate from the Program, and to do so, they must enroll in PRWR 7960: MAPW Capstone Project for a minimum of 6 semester hours.

Students in PRWR 7960 receive a grade of "S" or "U". "S" indicates that credit has been given for satisfactory completion of degree requirements other than academic course work. "U" indicates unsatisfactory performance or progress in an attempt to complete degree requirements other than academic course work.

PRWR 7960: MAPW Capstone Project (6 Credit Hours)

1-6. Prerequisite: Completion of 27 credit hours in the MAPW program and at least 4 courses in the concentration; approval of capstone project.

A project designated as a thesis, portfolio or practicum and accompanied by a rationale for its purpose and design that involves electronic and/or print media and is relevant to the student's concentration in professional writing. After submitting an approved capstone proposal, the candidate works under the direction and advice of two faculty members to produce the project. The candidate must submit the capstone project at least two weeks before either (1) a discussion about the project with the faculty committee or (2) a public presentation about the project or a reading from the project for an audience of faculty and peers. The candidate will consult with the capstone committee chair and committee member about which option to choose.

We strongly recommend that students enroll for three semester hours of PRWR 7960 in two succeeding semesters, not six hours in one semester.

After completing 27 credit hours and at least 4 courses in the concentration, students may begin the capstone process.

All students must be aware before beginning the capstone process that it is their responsibility to make sure that they follow all of the steps required by the MAPW Program and the University.

Procedures

- 1. Complete and Submit the Petition to Graduate through Owl Express.**
- 2. Complete the Capstone Proposal.**

The proposal is due **the last day of class of the semester prior to the one in which you'll begin the capstone**. For Fall semester this date is the last day of classes for summer semester.

To complete the capstone proposal, follow the steps below.

Step 1: Form a committee.

Faculty who have been your instructors and who will, consequently, know you and your work are much more likely to be willing to work with you than those who don't know you at all.

It is composed of two members of the MAPW faculty.

Preferably, both members, but **at least one member**, must teach in your concentration.

The faculty who have agreed to be on capstone committees are responsible for advising the student in terms of:

- drafting, completing, and filing the Capstone Proposal before the last day of classes in the semester before the student enrolls in PRWR7960: MAPW Capstone Project;
- suggesting and discussing the capstone's focus and format;
- suggesting and discussing the introductory essays' focus, shape, and content;
- suggesting a reading list or avenue of research, if needed;
- arranging and/or approving a timeline for the student's completion of research, documents, or media presentations; and
- reviewing and amending the schedule of tasks and the timeline and monitoring the schedule and timeline, taking into account the official incomplete policy in the Graduate Catalog.

Faculty who have agreed to be on capstone committees are also responsible for facilitating the completion of the capstone by:

- reading drafts of documents, annotating the drafts with suggestions or corrections, and suggesting revision in the writing;
- conferencing with the student in terms of specific tasks in the timeline for completing the capstone;
- conferencing with the student regarding theoretical issues and/or readings attendant to the capstone;
- reading and approving the final draft of the capstone;
- advising about and approving the public presentation of the capstone; and
- signing and distributing all attendant documents on time.

Step 2: Write the proposal.

The committee members may want to see your proposal before agreeing to be on your committee, so writing the proposal may actually be the first step in the capstone process for some.

The proposal must include the following:

1. a detailed statement of the rationale for the capstone project;
2. a list of the parts of the project (including the introductory essay);
3. a plan for the revision and/or production of the parts of the project;
4. a detailed timeline for the completion of the parts of the project, which will include the dates when the student will give committee members work and the dates when faculty will return the student's work with comments;
5. a detailed plan for how the student will get advice from committee members and for how the student will respond to that advice (i.e., face-to-face, via email, etc.);
and
6. a cover sheet.

Step 3: Submit the proposal.

Your committee members may want you to revise portions or perhaps even rewrite the whole proposal before signing it.

Once your committee approves your proposal, you should fill out the “Capstone Project Proposal Cover Sheet,” which is available online at this site, and submit it to your committee members to sign.

Submit the cover sheet *and* the proposal to the Program Coordinator by email before or **on the last day of class of the semester before the one in which you plan on beginning your capstone.**

After you've submitted the proposal, the Program Coordinator will enter an override for you so that you may enroll in PRWR 7960: MAPW Capstone Project. The capstone **class will always be listed as closed, and you have to register this way with the overrides in place.**

You must enroll in PRWR 7960 each semester during which you're working on the capstone and enter your credit hours whether 3 or 6.

4. Write the capstone.

Points to remember:

- All work by students on capstones must be original.
- All capstones will be a thesis, unless the student's committee decides otherwise, and this should be thoroughly discussed with the committee members. Given the unique qualities of the capstone, the committee may decide that the student should do a portfolio or a practicum instead of a thesis.
- The Program doesn't require an introduction for the capstone, but a student's committee may.
- Capstones must be double-spaced and in a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman.
- The required page length, which varies depending on the type of capstone, does not include front or back matter.

The Thesis

There are two forms of thesis: the research thesis and the creative thesis.

The Research Thesis

The research thesis will probably be the capstone of choice by students concentrating in comp/rhet and perhaps by students concentrating in applied writing. It will demonstrate a student's ability to carry out independent research in the student's concentration and to contribute to the knowledge in the field.

The student should select a research topic and discuss it thoroughly with his or her committee during the proposal process, taking into consideration the following:

- his or her background and interest,
- ability to handle the problem,
- accessibility of research materials, and
- the probable significance of the project to the professional community for which it is intended.

The research thesis must begin with an introductory essay that contextualizes the project for its readers.

The total length of the research thesis may vary depending on the field and genre in which the writer is working. The final length should result from consultation with the student's thesis committee, as this committee will ultimately approve or reject the project. For students whose concentration is comp/rhet and applied writing, the research thesis should be a minimum of 50 pages. For students working in interactive nonfiction and new media genres, the project length should be negotiated with the committee.

Note: Students are required to follow the procedures established by the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** for all research involving human participants.

The Creative Thesis

Typically, the student should think in terms of a book, when writing a creative thesis, although the committee will not require the student to submit a completed book. Because creative writing is the most varied of the three concentrations, the length for theses in it are quite varied. The committee may or may not require a critical introduction or reflective essay as a part of these projects.

Creative nonfiction: The committee will require two or three chapters, up to, but no more than, 70 pages, followed by an annotated, story by story list of what will follow.

Novel: The committee will require two or three chapters, up to, but no more than, 100 pages maximum. The student will also include an annotated, chapter by chapter list of what will follow.

Novella: The committee will require up to but no more than 75 pages.

Short story collection: The committee will require up to, but no more than, 100 pages followed by an annotated, story by story list of what will follow.

Poetry: The committee will require a minimum of 60 pages of poetry, one poem to a page.

Plays: The committee will require a completed, two-act script of up to, but not more than, 125 pages or several one-act plays of up to, but no more than, 125 pages.

TV scripts:

- For a one-hour script (typically a drama), the committee will require a completed script up to 60 pages plus a beat sheet or story outline.
- For a half-hour, single camera TV script, the committee will require two completed scripts of 30 to 40 pages each, plus beat sheets or story outlines for each.
- For a half-hour, multi-camera script (typically a sit-com), the committee will require two completed scripts of 40 to 50 pages each, plus beat sheets or story outlines for each.

Feature film script: The committee will require a completed script of 90 to 125 pages, with a beat sheet or story outline.

Interactive storytelling or new media genres: The project length should be negotiated with the committee.

The Portfolio

A portfolio is a compilation of a student's best work that includes self-assessment and reflection and that is gathered according to some plan or argument for use by an identified reader or readers for specific needs or purposes. A portfolio may be used to demonstrate a student's writing competence or versatility.

In addition to assembling the portfolio and revising the pieces to be included, the student may be required to write an introductory essay in which he/she reflects on his/her relation to the MAPW course work and make an argument about some aspect of professional writing.

The student will also write intertexts or interchapters that will reinforce the thread and progress of the argument that holds the portfolio together. In addition, students may include an assessment of a piece of writing rather than a revision. The portfolio may include work that has been accepted for publication while the writer has been a student in the MAPW program.

It should be kept in mind that the portfolio is a substantive project and should reflect the highest quality of writing the student has produced. Ideally, a student finishing the portfolio will have several pieces that may be submitted for publication and/or that may be used to provide evidence of the student's expertise in professional writing to prospective employers.

The Practicum

The practicum must be a writing project that demonstrates the student's expertise in developing an actual workplace document or text, such as a company's or organization's website, a corporate intranet website or electronic training module, or a consulting project, such as the editing of a major work or design of a website. For such projects, the student must contract with a client—who may be the employer—to deliver a document or set of documents for use by the client. Obtaining the client's permission is necessary as the document(s) may be published as content in the student's final practicum, either in part or in whole.

The practicum must begin with an introductory essay that explains the rationale and purpose of its design. Moreover, in reflecting on the success of the project, the student will want to discuss the client-student relationship in the development of the project. For projects such as a website, the capstone committee will also require a chapter of a minimum of 25 pages that reveals the student's research and technical practice and the relationship of each to the rhetorical choices the student made during the creation of the project.