

## Department of Psychological Sciences Capstone Course Requirements

The capstone is intended to engage psychological science seniors in the application of their accumulated knowledge of psychology via a specified project or course. A capstone is a culminating college experience enabling students to reflect critically on the knowledge gained during their entire undergraduate curriculum in the Psychological Sciences.

Students will be considered seniors once they achieve 90 hours. In addition, students should have completed their core psychology courses including PSYCA303 (Statistics and Methods).

The goals/objectives of the capstone experience are to:

- Apply psychological concepts to one's experience in the community, in daily life, or to a future career
- Engage in critical reflection on what has been learned and accomplished as a Psychological Sciences major
- Apply critical thinking/research skills and be able to disseminate information through written/oral communication

In completing the capstone, students will have the choice of the following options (each option is described in further detail later in this document):

- Completion and presentation of a Senior Thesis project (PSYC G489). Honors students should enroll in Senior Thesis as per the honors requirements.
- Completion of a non-paid **psychology-related** internship (PSYC G497)
- Completion of the Practicum in Applied Psychology course (PSYC G485)
- Completion of a faculty guided psychology Independent Study (PSYC G499), Directed Readings (PSYC G496), or Special Project (PSYC G495)
- Completion of a psychology course involving community engagement, beyond what is required of non-senior or non-major students, during the senior year.
- Completion of History & Systems course (PSYC G470) or other department designated capstone course.

Students should plan and discuss their capstone experience with their respective academic advisors to determine which capstone option is appropriate for their individual goals and/or interests. Students will be required to sign an agreement/contract (see Appendix A) with their academic advisor, the supervising faculty member, and the Department Chair before beginning the capstone – preferably by the end of the Junior year during the early advising period. All capstone projects are at the discretion of and must be approved by the Department Chair. Changing the capstone is discouraged, but may be possible with the input and agreement of all involved parties.

As part of the requirements for the capstone and for graduation as a Psychological Sciences major, students will need to write a reflective paper (see Appendix B). This reflective paper is in addition to any other requirements that might be in the course. The capstone can be completed in either semester of the senior year (or over both semesters) unless specified in the agreement.

### **Detailed Capstone Options**

#### **PSYC G470 History and Systems of Psychology 3 crs.**

This course addresses those historical antecedents to contemporary psychology as well as the several systems or schools of psychology that have given direction to the discipline.

#### **PSYC G485 Practicum in Applied Psychology 3 crs.**

This course involves supervised clinical field experience in cooperation with New Orleans area agencies. On-campus weekly meetings with supervising psychology faculty and written assignments are required. Assignments will be determined by the supervising faculty member.

#### **PSYC G489 Senior Thesis**

This course involves the completion of an empirical research project and writing of an undergraduate thesis. Student must enroll in PSYCA488 (Senior Research) as a pre-requisite. When this course is used toward the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) assessment, only one reflective paper need be written to suffice for both the capstone and the QEP.

#### **PSYC G495 Special Project, credits vary**

Learning experiences are designed to meet the special needs of advanced majors. Content, activities, and credit are variable. On-campus weekly or bi-weekly meetings with supervising psychology faculty and written assignments are required. Assignments will be determined by the supervising faculty member. The project MUST be related to a field in psychology.

#### **PSYC G496 Directed Reading 3 crs.**

Course content varies and is keyed to student and faculty interest. On-campus weekly or bi-weekly meetings with supervising psychology faculty and written assignments are required. Assignments will be determined by the supervising faculty member. The project MUST be related to a field in psychology.

#### **PSYC G497 Internship, credits vary**

This course involves supervised field experience in cooperation with New Orleans area agencies. On-campus weekly or bi-weekly meetings with supervising psychology faculty and written assignments are required. Assignments will be

determined by the supervising faculty member. The internship MUST be related to a field in psychology and should include, at a minimum, 80 hours. Internship should also be evaluated by the agency supervisor.

**PSYC G499 Independent Studies, credits vary**

For the capstone, students engaging in independent study must have on-campus weekly or bi-weekly meetings with supervising psychology faculty and be involved in either a student or faculty derived research project. Assignments and research hours will be determined by the supervising faculty member.

**Community Engaged Course:**

Student will complete 40 hours of service learning in a psychology course. The number of hours for capstone completion may exceed those required by the course. The course MUST be taken in the senior year. No exceptions will be given for students taking the course in an earlier semester.

Current courses that offer service learning include:

PSYCG215 – Psychology and Law

PSYCG240 – Social Psychology

PSYCG250 – Educational Psychology

PSYCG255 – Adolescent Psychology

PSYCG327 – Studies in the Psychology of Women

PSYCG430 - Psychology of Human Aging

The required reflective paper will be in addition to any reflective assignments already used in the course.

**Appendix A: Please download capstone agreement form under “resources”.**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Reflective Paper**

Papers should be 2-3 pages, double spaced, and stapled. You should use Times New Roman (size 12) font with 1-inch margins. Papers should be clearly written with appropriate grammar and spelling. Your paper should include:

1. A brief summary of what your capstone entailed (i.e., what did you do?)
2. How does what you learned in the capstone experience exemplify or contradict what you have learned over the course of your psychology career? Did your experiences make what you have learned clearer?
3. Explain the ethical, cultural, or social justice issues you needed to consider during your capstone completion.
4. How can you use what you learned through experience in your future coursework or in your future career?