

Department of Psychological Sciences
Capstone Proposal
PSYCA401

The capstone (PSYC A401, 0-credit, Pass/In Progress check off) 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 A489). Honors students should enroll in Senior Thesis as per the honors requirements.
- Completion of a non-paid **psychology-related** internship (PSYC A497)
- Completion of the Practicum in Applied Psychology course (PSYC A485)
- Completion of a faculty guided psychology Independent Study (PSYC A499), Directed Readings (PSYC A496), or Special Project (PSYC A495)
- 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 A470) 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 involved if the capstone is satisfied via a for-credit course. The capstone can be completed in either semester of the senior year (or over both semesters) unless specified in the agreement. Note that the capstone experience does not necessarily result in credit towards the major or credit towards a degree from Loyola University New Orleans. A grade of "P" in the capstone is necessary for graduation with a B.S. degree in Psychological Sciences.

Detailed Capstone Options

PSYC A470 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 A485 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 A489 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 A495 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 A496 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 A497 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, 40 hours. Internship should also be evaluated by the agency supervisor.

PSYC A499 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:

- PSYCA215 – Psychology and Law
- PSYCA240 – Social Psychology
- PSYCA250 – Educational Psychology
- PSYCA255 – Adolescent Psychology
- PSYCA327 – Studies in the Psychology of Women
- PSYCA430 - Psychology of Human Aging

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

APPENDIX A

PSYC401- CAPSTONE AGREEMENT FORM

Student information:

Name _____

SWID _____

Agreement is for: Fall Spring Summer

Year:

Capstone Experience (circle one):

PSYCA470 (History and Systems)

PSYCA485 (Practicum)

PSYCA489 (Senior Thesis)

PSYCA495 (Special Project)

PSYCA496 (Directed Readings)

PSYCA497 (Internship)

PSYCA499 (Independent Study)

Community Engaged Course: _____

Define the objectives for your capstone experience:

Means to achieve capstone objectives (outline of work assignments as jointly determined by the student and faculty supervisor):

Means to evaluate capstone objectives (e.g., weekly meetings to evaluate performance, faculty evaluation of assignments, etc...)

Student responsibilities:

1. Perform the tasks listed on this agreement, assigned by the faculty supervisor, and/or listed in the course syllabus.
2. Complete the required reflection paper.
3. Take the Psychology ETS exam on the specified date.
4. Inform the Department Chair immediately of any problems arising related to the capstone experience.

Signatures (a signature below indicates acceptance of this agreement - must be signed by all parties to be valid):

Student: _____ Date: _____

Academic Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

A copy of this signed Capstone Agreement Form is to be provided to the student, the advisor, the faculty supervisor, and the Department Chair.

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?

EXAMPLE Grading of reflective paper

Content	<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Very Good</i>
Application of Knowledge	Identifies various items of information, but makes few or no connections between those items of information or their relevance to the experience. 0	Identifies various items of evidence and makes reasonable connections between the evidence and its relevance to the experience. 5	Draws relevant conclusions by combining examples, facts, methodologies, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective within psychology. 10
Connections to Ethical and/or Justice Issues	Student is unable to recognize any ethical issues. Identifies connections as similar to one's own perspective. 0	Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues. Compares experiences and academic knowledge to identify perspectives other than one's own. 5	Student can accurately apply perspectives to an ethical question and is able to consider full implications. Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences to broaden own worldview. 10

Future Plans	Unable to envision a future self or to apply experiences to future plans.	Attempts to apply knowledge to demonstrate comprehension and performance in future situations.	Envisions a future self and makes plans to build on past experiences. Evaluates changes in own learning over time.
	0	5	10
Grammar and Spelling	Multiple grammatical errors. Didn't use spell check.	A few grammatical errors, but it's clear the paper has been proofread. Few spelling errors.	Almost no grammatical errors. No spelling errors.
	0	5	10

TOTAL = /40

A grade of P in the capstone requires a minimum of 25 points on the reflective paper and a minimum final grade of C- in the chosen option. If the option does not require a grade, the supervising faculty member will assign a grade based upon completion of project requirements.

Students may rewrite the reflective paper until the minimum point threshold is reached.