

Prospectus Assignment: Senior Capstone

The capstone prospectus enables you to crystalize and communicate your idea in order to win its approval. Partially-completed prospectuses will not be graded. **The completed prospectus must be reviewed, graded and approved by me before you begin work on your capstone project.** No pre-approvals are given without a fully-completed prospectus. The due date is January 20, however you may turn it in as early as December 1. I will take prospectuses for review between December 1 and December 18 (not December 19-January 3). Then I will resume availability between January 4 and the final due date of January 20. Think 3-5 pages, single-spaced. SEE THE COURSE SYLLABUS for notes on approved capstone-project genres and other requirements.

The prospectus is not expository. It is a persuasive essay. Your goal is to convince me that this project is suitably ambitious, yet sufficiently feasible to complete in a short period of time. Not all ideas are acceptable (see syllabus). Allow for this possibility without declaring your instructor evil. Do not promise a prospective client that you will be working with them until and unless your prospectus is approved. Some ideas may be worthwhile to pursue in addition to, or after, your capstone, especially if you are graduating next fall. All such work benefits the learning process and strengthens your portfolio of work.

Eligibility: (1) You may not complete a project in a genre if you have not had specific coursework in that genre. Examples: You must have completed PR strategies if your project is in promotions. You must have completed video production and should have completed advanced broadcast practicum if your project is a television broadcast. (2) You may not complete a project that you have never done before. For example, do not propose a content analysis research project if you have not completed a content analysis in communication research methods. IRB approval for human subjects research is due by January 4.

The following items constitute a complete capstone prospectus. Use narrative form (complete sentences and paragraphs; not an overt outline such as you see below), single-spaced with consistent font and size and effective composition and grammar. You may organize the prospectus as you wish, but use headings and address each of the following touchstones:

- I. **What you intend to learn from the project.** This is the big idea. Tell me what you hope to gain from the project intellectually. Also identify the genre from the list of project genres in your syllabus. This assignment may be your last chance in life to learn for the sake of learning.
- II. **Justification.** Provide evidence of the value of the project. This should include a description of the problem/topic/issue that deserves to be addressed, salient research on the subject (needed for all projects, including fiction-scriptwriting), the need presented by a prospective client or audience, and value to the target audience or community served by the project. Answer the “so what?” question to prove that this project is worth your time. What intrinsic value will your project yield?
- III. **Academic background:** Prove that your previous coursework prepares you for this project genre. List all courses that directly support your choice of project, including any salient minor courses and/or electives.

- IV. **Methods and means.** Include a description of the methods you plan to use to pull off your project, such as field cameras, Adobe Premier, content analysis, scriptwriting, RSU Library, use of public or private locations, Will Rogers Auditorium, Performance Studio, etc. Also note any personnel you need to employ, or expenses you need to budget, if applicable. **Important:** Prove that this project is feasible, one that you can successfully carry out in a short period of time. It is the student's responsibility to obtain approval to use facilities, recruit personnel, utilize human subjects in a study, obtain media releases, and/or secure any rights and clearances to copyrighted or trademarked works (see syllabus). Like life after college, excuses do not apply here, so think ahead.
- V. **Artifacts.** Name the tangible products resulting from this capstone project, if approved. For example, all PR plans should include not just the plan itself but desktop publications *and* associated broadcast productions (minimum: one) you will complete by the due date. Regardless of genre, tell me how and when you will make your artifacts take flight immediately, such as via your professional webpage, press-releases, publication, scholarly conference, Youtube account, your client's storefront, etc. Producing quality artifacts is a major consideration in project approval. It can't just be an idea without tangible artifacts.
- VI. **Failsafe plan.** In one thorough paragraph, describe a project that you could turn to if this project is not approved. A good failsafe plan will not jeopardize your main proposal; it will only help your prospectus grade.
- VII. **Introduction and conclusion, formatting.** Your prospectus should use proper English usage and grammar; provide a coherent introduction, conclusion, and transitions; conform to APA format (not AP). Regardless of the genre, include a bibliography of 5-10 sources.