

COMM 4913 Senior Capstone

Jeff Gentry, instructor

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Office hours: Claremore: Monday & Wednesday 10:00-11, Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 10:00-12:00;
Bartlesville: Monday & Wednesday 1:45-2:30. Additional office hours available by appointment.

Required text: Seguin, James. *Media Career Guide*, Boston: St. Martin's, 10th Edition: 2016.

Course description: "Specialized projects emphasizing the student's cumulative academic experience. Will include portfolio preparation, exams, and oral reports. Senior status required in communications."

Note: DO NOT enroll in this class if you cannot complete your degree requirements in this calendar year.

Program objectives: 1) Students completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication will demonstrate progress in their written, oral, and communication skills, as well as the ability to think creatively and critically. 2) Graduates will demonstrate proficiency in basic Communications theory, research methodology, and production. 3) Graduates majoring in Communications will indicate they are satisfied with the instruction they have received. 4) Graduates will be prepared to enter and perform satisfactorily in entry-level communication positions.

Class Format: The format of the class involves formal textbook readings, informal seminar discussions, student presentations, and outside readings assigned as needed.

Senior Capstone Is Designed For:

The best work of your career
A high-quality capstone project
Contemplating your career options
Developing your knowledge
Assembling a strong portfolio of work
Providing classroom synergies for all
A project appropriate to your coursework
Quality via rewriting, re-shooting, re-editing

Senior Capstone is NOT Designed For:

Coasting toward graduation
A massive capstone project
Getting you a job
Validating prior knowledge
Portfolio as busy work
Going it alone
An obligatory or easy project
"One and done"

Course Success Notes

1. **Due dates:** Due dates in the class are firm. The "due date" is not the first day the assignment must be turned in. Rather it is the *last* day. Early completion is encouraged. Any late assignments result in the loss of at least one letter grade, and **none will be accepted more than seven days after the due date**. Moreover, no one turning in late work can receive a grade higher than the lowest grade of a student who completed the assignment on time. Anyone missing an in-class presentation will be permitted a make-up opportunity only if the absence resulted from a documented emergency. I do not accept make-up work on live performances.
2. **Typing/RSU email.** All written assignments must be typed, saved, and submitted via attachment from your official RSU email account. The attached file-name should include your name. Monitor your email weekly, as some important information from your instructor will be delivered exclusively in this manner.
3. **Reading:** To be prepared for class, reading assignments should be completed in advance of the class in which they are discussed, not after.

4. **Attendance.** Successful students attend class faithfully. History demonstrates a high correlation between absences and excuses. Those who faithfully attend class also strengthen their credibility as serious students. Out of the 30 days I could schedule class, each individual student has up-to 5 days out-of-class to focus on their assignments. This leaves 25 days I expect you to be present and on-time. I reserve the right to add back classes, if needed, with one-week's notice (see schedule). Avoid "senioritis" if you plan to complete the class successfully.
5. **Academic Integrity.** Students are responsible for understanding [RSU's Student Code](#): Falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism are not acceptable and are easy to detect. Any violation will result in an "F" for the course in addition to any penalties imposed by the university. RSU provides the following definition of plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own, including: direct quotation without both attribution and indication that the material is being directly quoted; e.g. quotation marks; paraphrase without attribution; paraphrase with or without attribution where the wording of the original remains substantially intact and is represented as the author's own; expression in one's own words, but without attribution, of ideas, arguments, lines of reasoning, facts, processes, or other products of the intellect where such material is learned from the work of another and is not part of the general fund of common knowledge.
6. **Americans with Disabilities Act.** Rogers State University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal access to educational programs and services. Any student who has a disability that he or she believes will require some form of academic accommodation must inform the professor of such need during or immediately following the first class attended. **Before** any educational accommodation can be provided, it is the responsibility of each student to prove eligibility for assistance by registering for services through Student Affairs. Students needing more information about Student Disability Services should contact the Director of Student Development in the Office of Student Affairs at Rogers State University, 1701 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore, OK 74017 (918) 343-7707.
7. **Educational privacy.** Information about your progress in the class is protected by federal law and instructor-student confidentiality. I will not discuss other students' progress or grades with you, nor will I discuss yours with them or any other person. Please respect these rights.
8. **Logistical notes:** a) RSU's inclement weather policy is clear: classes go on as scheduled unless the Tulsa network TV stations report a closure. Do not assume that the university is closed because of a storm; b) as a department head I am sometimes required to come to class late. Never leave without checking with Lisa Hancock in the Communications office (343-6825).
9. **Grading***** All grading is the responsibility of the instructor. The respective weights are as follows:

A. Prospectus:	20 points
B. Capstone project:	100 points (must pass with C-or-higher)
C. Career essay:	10 points
D. Resume:	20 points
E. Best paper in major:	10 points
F. Portfolio:	<u>40 points</u> (must pass with C-or-higher)
Total: 200 points	

***The student must receive a grade of C-or-higher on both the Capstone Project and Portfolio in order to pass the class.

10. **Early Alert.** This course uses the Early Alert notification system. Early Alert identifies students who are having difficulty in a given course via email notifications to the student and adviser. The goal of Early Alert is not to penalize students, but to address problems—incomplete work, lack of attendance, etc. If addressed early in the semester, students can improve their standing before it is too late.

Class Assignments

Assignments must be submitted electronically, via attachment. When assignments are to be discussed in class, always bring two hard copies: one for you and one for me. I am happy to look at a draft before the due date (it's the kind of thing they pay me for). But make time to visit with me in the office if you expect feedback.

1. **Essay** describing career choices: 1-2 pages describing employment opportunities (and possibly civic/service responsibilities) that interest you. You may want to consult some career guides in the library, as well as pay a visit to [RSU Career Services](#). Must be typed attractively, with correct grammar and composition; letter format is best, single-spaced.
2. **Resume:** 1-2 pages, for the purpose of submitting to potential employers; include awards & honors and names and full contact information for 3 references. "References available upon request" is not sufficient for this assignment. See the career counselors at Career Services for help. Proofread it carefully, and print it on quality paper.
3. **Best research paper** in the major: can be from any communications class. Submit a *clean* copy: one that has incorporated all proofreading and instructor-suggested improvements. On the title page indicate the grade you received from your instructor and 1-2 sentences describing what improvements you've since made, if any. You may also utilize our English tutors to help you strengthen the paper. Your capstone instructor will grade the paper independently of your previous instructor.
4. **Portfolio** requirement: Each student will accumulate items for their portfolio. This portfolio should help prepare you for the opportunities and responsibilities of a college graduate. It will be graded on its quality and completeness, meaning that it should provide excellent artifacts of student learning, as well as a sufficient quantity of such works. Your portfolio must include at least one research paper, your capstone project/presentation and at least one other production/performance on DVD (preferably several), and all "portfolio-required" assignments from your major professors. (An example is your argument briefs from COMM 3253 Argumentation & Persuasion.) Your instructors have notified me of your portfolio-required assignments. See those syllabi. If you have done a poor job of archiving assignments, you may need to complete additional work to produce a passing portfolio. The portfolio should be well organized, with a table of contents and (in the case of a hard-copy portfolio) tabs to indicate different categories of work. Each individual project (not just genre) should be clearly indicated in the table of contents. Your DVD should come with a clear statement of your exact role(s), preferably in a credits-roll at the end.

Your completed portfolio should be accessible online. I encourage you to include additional items such as newspaper articles about you, theatre playbills, etc. The portfolio is designed to house your work done in various classes, and may include your scholarly and creative works done outside of

class and outside the Communications Department. Be sure to add new items to your portfolio from classes *this* semester, including your capstone project.

5. **Capstone project.** This assignment allows you to produce a new project according to your major option and interests. Eligibility: (1) You may not complete a project in a genre unless you have completed specific coursework for that genre. Examples: you must have *completed* PR strategies if your project is in promotions. For a television project you must have completed COMM 2003 Video Production, and should have completed advanced broadcast practicum. Scriptwriting class is prerequisite to an entertainment-oriented scripted project. (2) You should not complete a project in an area that you have never done before. For example, do not propose a content analysis research project if you did not produce content analysis in communication research methods. You may undertake entirely-new genres for your *portfolio* this semester, but not for your capstone project. (3) Your capstone cannot be a rehash or improvement on a previous project, whether produced for class or not. It needs to be a new project. Your prospectus must be approved prior to beginning your project, and not all project ideas will be approved.

A. Prospective Project Genres (in no particular order):

1. Television/radio program: New fully-produced media production of 5-8 minutes, depending on type of program. Projects may not be improvised or simply an interview. Newscasts are not feasible for this project, but feature stories are acceptable. The project requires your primary authorship rather than simply documenting others' content, which negates concert, comedy-club, or reality shows. Themes may be documentary, informative, persuasive, entertainment, comedy, tragedy, etc. Interviews and radio board shifts with music are not approved, as the project must be original and scripted. The time needed for your project will vary by genre. For example, a feature story/short documentary should be 7-8 minutes, whereas a fully-produced music video of your original song would likely be 5-6. Straight interview content cannot constitute more than 20% of the project. Any journalistic or documentary work requires your appearance on camera and you must provide significant voice-work. In other words, your overall communication skills should be on display, rather than merely the technical production skills you would obtain from a trade school. Remember the importance of signed media releases by everyone appearing on the program.
2. Research: New research study in the major, producing an original research paper that effectively utilizes a recognized research method and APA style. These projects require *early* prospectus approval if using human subjects, due to IRB approval requirements.
3. Promotions: New public relations or advertising project, using desktop publication and required media production. Must have a realistic client—not your regular employer or organization—and preferably off-campus. For example, please do not propose to promote the Communications Department or your student club.
4. Advocacy: New memorized persuasive speech performance of 8-10 minutes, with additional desktop publication.
5. Theatrical: Production of an extended monologue (8-10 min.), one-act play, or full-length play. Themes may be historical/biographical, comedy, tragedy, etc.

6. Media writing: Completed script for documentary, television/radio drama, one-act play, full-length play. Themes may be documentary, informative, persuasive, entertainment, comedy, tragedy, etc.
7. Other, if appropriate and approved.

B. Capstone project rules:

1. Prospectus dates: The last day you may turn in your graded prospectus is January 20. Instructor approval is required by January 25. Do not wait until nearly January 20 to submit your prospectus, and do not expect me to rubber stamp your initial idea. My purpose is to hassle you into your best performance.
2. You may not have submitted any portion of this project to any other class. All work must be new and independent of previous coursework and freelance work. However, the capstone may be inspired by previous work. Example: you may decide to produce a fully-staged production of a play script that you wrote for COMM 4513 Scriptwriting but have not produced.
3. Students may choose from various project genres (see above). Advance approval is required to begin work. **Not all projects are acceptable for the capstone.** If you must pursue a certain project to make your life feel complete, by all means do so and include it your portfolio. But the capstone must meet criteria that your favorite project may not fulfill.
4. Your project should be grounded in appropriate coursework. Do not propose a television production if you have not already passed COMM 2003 Video Production. PR plans should only be conducted by students who have already passed COMM 3113 Public Relations Strategies. No screenplays or stage plays should be proposed unless you have already completed COMM 4513 Scriptwriting.
5. Publication rights. This class respects copyright and trademark law. No sounds, images, music, or video may be used without the express written consent of the copyright or trademark holder. **This may be a new policy to you.** Rights and clearances are not difficult to obtain if you plan ahead, and they demonstrate your professionalism. All projects will therefore be your property and legally publishable. Students are encouraged to publish them through contract with a media company for pay, or via the World Wide Web or public performance as a pre-professional production. **“It’s just for class”** is not an excuse for using copyrighted material, and neither is “This website says the music is public domain.” In addition to rights and clearances, the songwriter and all musicians must receive **credit in the production itself** (no exceptions). For musical accompaniment I encourage you to tap area songwriters and musicians to lend you their original works, with express written permission.
6. Protection of human subjects. Any research using human subjects must be approved by the OU Institutional Review Board before research begins. If you conduct such a study you will need a faculty mentor to be listed as the principal investigator. The fact that you may decide not to present your research publicly is not an acceptable exception to this rule. A student conducting research with human subjects needs to submit the prospectus early to receive IRB approval in time to complete the project before the due date.

Recommended submission of prospectus and OU IRB application: **December 10.** OU IRB approval due January 4.

7. You must do your own technical work. If your capstone is a television production, you must do your own editing. If your capstone is a research paper, you must do your own research and writing. If you produce a PR plan, you are required to do your own desktop publishing and video production. Many projects do invite collaboration, but all roles must be clearly credited and the instructor reserves the right to reject projects in which your role is too small.
8. Media productions must use RSU's editing equipment. Just as math students are required to show their work, you need to be able to verify that you are the editor of your project. Mac Lab BH 224 is open many hours-per-week during business hours, plus evenings and weekends via card-reader access.
9. Final completion of the capstone project is recommended by February 24, and **due no later than February 29.** During the rest of the semester you will complete other assignments and plan your life after college. Students are wise to share their progress with the instructor **early** for feedback. This feedback (essential to student learning) may result in beneficial rewriting, re-shooting, re-editing, etc. before the project achieves a passing standard. Allow for this probability when planning your production schedule. An "oh well, I've already shot it" approach is a prescription for a failed capstone. Professionals understand that they often must take the time to do it again. This requires planning.
10. Students will present their capstones for grading in the afternoon or evening between the dates of February 29-March 3. They will present them again for the Communications faculty on the dates of March 28-April 4.

Class Schedule

*Class Schedule and Due Dates

Jan. 11	Introduction to class; imagining life after college; prospectuses may be turned in any time between December 1-18, 2015, and then again between January 4-20, 2016
13	Discussion of the effective capstone prospectus and project; set groups for Teams Alpha, Beta, Gamma
	<i>Jan. 18: Martin Luther King Holiday-- no class meeting</i>
20	Prospectus due: hard copy in class and electronically before class; Calli Knight
25	Prospectuses returned & discussed; approval required to begin capstone project
27	Group work: Team Alpha meets in class
Feb. 1	Group work: Team Beta meets in class
3	Group work: Team Gamma meets in class

8	Dates set for live graded presentations on February 29-March 3 (invited audience required); set this week's individual 10-min. appointment times with instructor
10	Organizing capstone presentations
15	Delivering capstones; dates set for departmental presentations on March 28-April 4
17	Using 21st century communications technologies— Lynn Wilson
22	In-class coaching for all
24	* Instructor available for coaching (no class meeting); completion of capstone project recommended
	February 29-March 3: Live capstones presented for grade in afternoon or evening
29	ALL STUDENTS' CAPSTONE MATERIALS DUE and discussed in class
Mar. 2	*Capstone presentations this week in afternoon or evening (no meeting at 8:30 a.m.)
7	*Instructor reviews capstone materials for return (no class meeting)
9	Capstone projects returned and discussed; departmental presentations coaching for all
	<i>March 14-18: Spring Break</i>
21	Creating effective portfolios and online portfolios (VisualCV, etc.)
23	Career essay assignment (+see syllabus); preview departmental capstone presentations
28	Departmental capstone presentations: Day 1 —100% attendance expected
30	Departmental capstone presentations: Day 2 —100% attendance expected
Apr. 4	Departmental capstone presentations: Day 3 —100% attendance expected
6	Departmental capstone presentations: Day 4 —100% attendance expected
11	Introduction: <i>Media Career Guide</i> ; Discuss chapter 1 led by Brent, Hanna, Mike & Ranma; and chapter 2 led by Jacob, Devon, Katie, & Jake.
13	Discuss chapters 3 led by Katsy, Houston, Laura, & Preston; and chapter 4 led by Taylor, Anna, Kelsey & Jaina.
18	Career essay and resumes due & discussed (bring 2 copies)
20	Discuss chapter 5 led by Lars, Niall, Addy, & Kessiah; and chapter 6 led by Sarah, Jordyn, Fred & Gloria. Best paper due and discussed (bring 2 copies).

25	Discuss chapter 7, led by; Tim, Nique, Randa, & Veronica; portfolio completion recommended.
27	Portfolios due and discussed
May 2	@ <u>8:30</u> a.m.: Final exam period. Portfolios returned; other content to be announced

***The instructor reserves the right to add back class meetings with 1-week's notice.**