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Directors of Honors Programs

HONR330: Honors Capstone Tutorial

In your junior or senior year, you may elect to do an independent, interdisciplinary project. The Capstone Tutorial, HONR330, offers you the opportunity to demonstrate a new, higher level of intellectual maturity, beyond the kind of thinking modeled and nurtured in the earlier parts of the program.

Honors students who have done capstones typically have found them to be some of the more challenging and satisfying work they have done. Working with a teacher of your choice as a mentor, you will propose and then craft an appropriately rigorous, polished, and creative product—usually, but not always, an original, well-researched scholarly paper. This work should exemplify the best of your capabilities, exhibit interdisciplinary scholarship appropriately mobilized to answer a thoughtfully conceived research question.

All Capstone Tutorials must be approved by the Honors Committee and thus must be submitted in advance of registration for the term in which you plan to take HONR330. Your project cannot duplicate efforts for the senior project/seminar in your major or minor field of study.

**The student's obligations:**

1. At least one term before you register for HONR330, you must contact a faculty member to propose your project. If you are not sure of your project or the faculty with whom you’d like to work, contact one of the Honors Directors or a professor from your first- or second-year Honors courses. These people can help you identify a likely faculty tutor.
2. Also before registering for HONR330, you and your faculty tutor must create and sign a Capstone Tutorial Proposal and Contract. The proposal and contract must include the following:
3. **Investigators:** Include the names of the principal investigator (you, or in the event of a joint project, your student partners) and your tutor.
4. **Research question:** Your description should begin with an explicit, focused question that sets forth the direction of your inquiry.
5. **Project description:** This section (usually about 2 pages) more closely defines the problem or research question and should be written for an audience of knowledgeable readers who may or may not be familiar with your field (in other words, the Honors Committee). You may need to give some brief background information to explain the problem. What are the questions associated with this topic? What conversation between scholars are you entering into? What is the significance of your project to the academic area it is a part of (what addition, large or small, are you contributing to what we know?) Here, too, you may legitimate your preparedness for this project (due to past coursework and research or future goals). Clarify your intentions in investigating the topics you have chosen and outline any sub-questions, hypotheses, arguments, or creative themes that will be central to your work. Finally, describe the proposed outcome of your research: a paper of a particular length (generally at least 15 pages), a work of art, a project to be carried out on a particular schedule and documented in a particular way, etc.
6. **Research methods:** This section (about 1 page) can help you demonstrate that your work is original and interdisciplinary as you explain how you'll go about your research. How will answering your question necessitate drawing on the methods or materials of two or more disciplines? This might include a list of class sessions you will audit (include with the instructor’s signed permission), travel, interviews, or research intended to inform research or creative efforts (along with a method of documenting this effort), etc. Be as specific as possible about your plans and the structure of the final product. If your research will require IRB approval, make note of your plans to do the necessary paperwork.
7. **Schedule:** Include a schedule of planned meetings between you and your faculty tutor that makes note of what evidence of ongoing work (texts read? journal entries? draft pages?) required at each meeting.
8. **Bibliography:** A substantial list of intellectual resources that you will draw upon to enrich the project. This list should clearly exemplify the interdisciplinarity of the project and directly pertain to the research question. These resources might include a bibliography of books and articles to be read, films to be viewed, lectures or performances to be attended, interviews to be completed, etc.
9. **Presentation Plan:** A date and place where you will present and explain the final project. The Honors Committee has designated the spring term Celebration of Learning as the preferred forum for Honors Capstone students to present their projects.
10. **Evaluation method:** Include a chart, rubric, or list of criteria for evaluating the final product. This should be worked out together with your tutor.
11. **Agreement:** The proposal must be signed by you and your faculty tutor.

3. You must submit your **signed** Capstone Proposal contract to the Honors Committee for approval in the term before you register for HONR330, **no later than Monday of the sixth week of the term before the term that you register** for HONR330. Because of the duration of these projects we strongly encourage you to propose the project before the spring term of your senior year. A copy of the proposal must be submitted electronically via email to [cyruszargar@augustana.edu](mailto:cyruszargar@augustana.edu) and [ericstewart@augustana.edu](mailto:ericstewart@augustana.edu) for distribution to the other members of the committee.

4. You must attend any advisory meetings for Capstone students.

5. You will provide the Director of Honors with both a hard and electronic copy of your project when it is completed.

The Honors Committee realizes that as you work your questions and focus may change. However, we ask you to write a careful contract/proposal so that we know that you are off to a good start and have not taken on a subject that won’t challenge you enough or that is too big to do well in the time you have.

# The faculty tutor's responsibility:

The faculty tutor is crucial in guiding you as you pursue your independent research. The faculty tutor will

1. give you regular and genuine support during the project. This will include lengthy written feedback on the project during weeks 5 and 7 (at least) of the Capstone term;
2. act as liaison between you and any faculty member whose course might offer you class sessions or lectures to audit;
3. assist you in finding and using other educational resources;
4. evaluate your final Capstone project.

# Arriving at the final grade

The final grade for the project (and thus, for the three credits of HONR330) will be assigned by the faculty tutor. If the faculty tutor feels it would be helpful, he or she can consult with the Honors Committee.

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