

THE CAPSTONE COURSES (SENIOR PRACTICA) FOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS:

Psychology 410R, 420R, 430R

January 2008

Definition: A capstone course is an educational experience for advanced students (seniors and, in rare cases, juniors) that integrates classroom activity with supervised practical experience in instructional, community, or more formal research settings. Students enrolled in a capstone course must meet the following prerequisites: and completion of Psychology 101, 111, 210, 301, 302, and 304 (or be concurrently enrolled in 302 or 304), one core course from Cluster A, B, or C, and three other 300-level psychology courses (or concurrently enrolled in the third course). Exceptions to this policy must be personally approved by the capstone course instructor but should be rare.

Graduation Requirement: A 3-credit capstone course [or a combination of capstone courses totaling 3 credits] is required for all students who declared a Psychology Major in Fall 2002 or thereafter. For students who declared the major prior to that time, the completion of a capstone course is optional.

Availability: Many faculty offer a capstone course at some point during the academic year. In some cases, they may require a year-long commitment from the students who enroll. On average, about 15 capstone opportunities will eventually be available each semester and fewer each term.

Catalog Listings: The capstone courses are listed as follows:

Psychology 410R: Senior Practicum: Teaching of Psychology

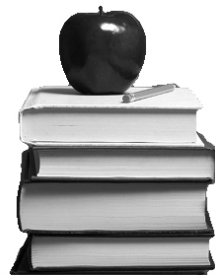
Psychology 420R: Senior Practicum: Community Projects in Psychology

Psychology 430R: Senior Practicum: Research in Psychology

NOTE: The integrative nature of the capstone course, reflected in its requirements and format, differentiates it from Psychology 492R: Supervised Instructional or Research Experience, Psychology 495R: Independent Readings, and 499R: Independent Research. As a result, it is possible that, on a given research team, for example, there may be some students who are receiving 492R credit, others who are working for pay, and those who are enrolled in a capstone course. Students on the team who receive capstone credit will participate in an integrative academic experience with requirements that may differ from those of the other research team members.

Sections: Each faculty member who offers a capstone course is assigned his or her own section and is responsible for determining the structure and content of the course: for example, the enrollment ceiling, the course requirements, the course format, the course meeting frequency, the grading policy, additional prerequisite courses or skills, etc., as well as the syllabus.

The grade rule for the capstone courses allows for a letter grade A-E or a P/F grade. This option is available to the faculty members who teach the courses, and the decision for one option or the other is theirs to make. However, since the decision may have implications for students' GPAs, it is important to state the grade option in the course syllabus and to call it to students' attention at the outset of the seminar.



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Advertising: Not all sections of a capstone course may appear in the class schedule, but all will appear on AIM, together with brief headers that specify their topics. A more complete description of each section will be found at the department office (1001 SWKT), at the Undergraduate Advisement Office (1005 SWKT), and at the department's Web site.

Registration: Admittance to a capstone course may require the signature of the faculty member on an Add/Drop card that is available in 1001 SWKT, 284 TLRB, or B-150 ASB.

Credits: Three capstone credit hours are required for graduation. However, each section may offer variable credit of 1-8 hours. The number of hours for which a student is registered should be determined jointly with the faculty member. Alternatively, a fixed number of credit hours may be specified by the faculty member and will apply to all students who enroll in her or his section.

Workload: As a general guideline, students must perform an average of at least 3 hours of work per week throughout the semester for each credit hour earned. Spring and Summer Terms require 6 hours per week for each credit hour.

Other Standards: A capstone course should include at least a weekly meeting with the faculty member, a formal syllabus, and assignments adequate to serve as a basis for the evaluation of student performance in the course.

Capstones Involving a Non-departmental Supervisor: If the student is involved with an off-campus entity that provides supervision as part of the capstone experience, then an orientation that includes the following should be provided as part of the capstone course:

- a. Instructions regarding the academic work that will be accomplished by the student as part of the supervised experience
- b. Grading procedures
- c. Standards of personal conduct
- d. A description of the nature and extent of contact between the supervisor and student
Health insurance options for the student
- e. University liability insurance coverage
- f. An official agreement that outlines the obligations of the student, the University, and the supervising entity (the form is available from the Capstone Coordinator)
- g. Provision for the unanticipated termination of the student
- h. Grading: The faculty member will be responsible to assign the final grades, not the supervisor
- i. However, supervisors should be consulted regarding the performance of the students before final grades are determined.