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THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF GEORGIA®

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Capstone Toolkit

Capstone Toolkit

1. Introduction to the Capstone Experience

Definition of Capstone: What Makes Capstone Experience a High-Impact Practice?

The most basic goal of a capstone experience is to guide students toward a synthesis of and reflect on what they have learned throughout their program. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) describes college capstones as "culminating experiences [that] require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they have learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of 'best work,' or an exhibit of artwork." Although the capstone is, on the surface, a test to ensure the mastery required for a credential, the rigor of creating a capstone project – a relatively original product that meets capstone standards – can catalyze further (crucial) cognitive development for students in the final stage of their program. If designed strategically, the capstone elicits a demonstration of growth and mastery and serves as a deep learning tool. Because a capstone requires students to use research practices, critical and creative thinking, and field knowledge to create a relatively original product, it can foster their transition into mature thinkers, professionals, and citizens.

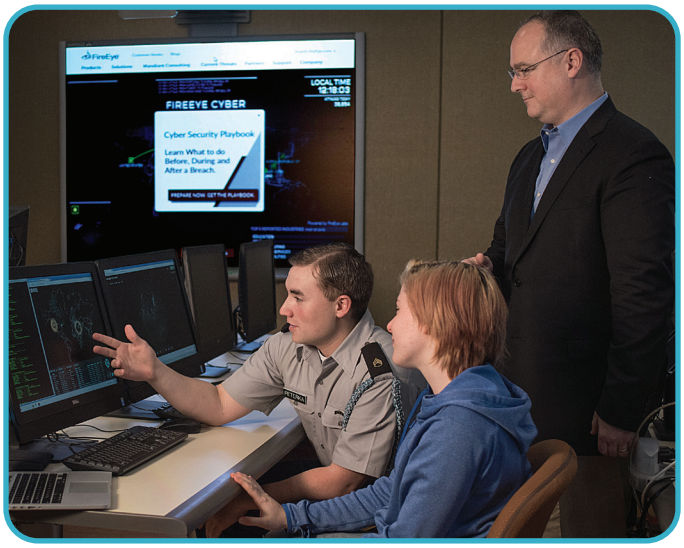
To promote High-Impact Practices (HIPs), UNG defines capstones this way:

> **Capstone courses or projects** are climactic opportunities for students nearing the end of their educational programs. The discipline-appropriate product encompasses a wide range of skills and knowledge. It allows students to integrate key concepts and practices and demonstrate competence across general education requirements acquired while completing their degree program. Students work closely with a supervising faculty member to develop creative projects, activities, or theses that are a significant time investment component of the course.

Moving Students Toward a Semi-Professional Role

A capstone course or project should be completed toward the end of a program, so it should not only test students' accumulated knowledge and skills but also enhance their understanding of themselves as budding professionals.

When designing a capstone experience, it is important to integrate opportunities for students to take responsibility for their work and its impact. Presenting projects in campus-wide or even public venues is one way to nudge students toward this professional identity. Another requirement is to work closely with an academic or professional mentor as they create their project. Building a professional persona and network can be intimidating for undergraduates so that the capstone instructor can boost this transition with carefully considered assignments and parameters.



Common Capstone Options

Independent Study

Some undergraduate programs require an independent study capstone project like many graduate programs. With this model, a capstone coordinator often serves as the primary contact for students registering for capstone credit. The coordinator can initiate the semester's work with an email or in-person meeting, sharing important capstone documents that clearly outline the process and parameters of the culminating project. (See Appendix A: Sample Independent Study Capstone Syllabus and Portfolio Assignment). The coordinator can, if necessary, serve also as the sole instructor/mentor for capstone students. A common alternative, however, is for the coordinator (who coordinates this course as part of their regular course load or with a course release as compensation) to guide each student in selecting a mentor or small committee with the specific expertise to support the student's proposed project. The coordinator and/or mentor(s) should work together to

guide and support the student and ultimately evaluate the student's performance with a grade. (The sample course represented in Appendix A utilizes a graduate capstone coordinator and a two-person faculty committee selected for each student enrolled in the course.)

Capstone Class

Many undergraduate programs require students to complete a capstone class, which is structured more like a traditional class. In this case, the instructor is primarily responsible for facilitating class meetings, guiding students through course materials and the capstone project process, and evaluating student work. However, even with this model, additional faculty mentors can be employed to support each student's particular project. (Appendix B contains sample syllabi for two undergraduate capstone classes that utilize an instructor and a faculty mentor for each student.)

Capstone Outcomes

While each program and instructor may pursue unique outcomes and employ individualized practices to reach the goals, they have determined are important, some key outcomes should inform any capstone experience. The following are adapted from the AAC&U's list of important common Learning Outcomes:

1. Inquiry and Analysis: Within designated parameters, students should determine the focus and shape of their capstone project based on a question, issue, problem, or concept they are passionate about. The project goals should require analysis of primary research, secondary research, and/or contextual factors in order to compose/create the original final product. Even a creative project can and should require a demonstration of these skills. For example, a senior exhibit of original student photography could be presented in the context of research on the work of other photographers and/or movements that influenced the student's project.

2. Written and Oral Communication: Whether the capstone project is a research paper or a creative product, such as a musical performance, the capstone process should require students to articulate the insights of their project through written and/or verbal communication. A written or verbal reflection on the completed project and process is also important to foster maximum growth in the student.

3. Critical and Creative Thinking: For many years, the pinnacle of Bloom's learning taxonomy was Critical Thinking, which entails reading and thinking "against" accepted ideas and perspectives or continuously testing ideas. This skill is still central to mature cognitive function, but in recent years, the hierarchy of Bloom's learning levels has been revised to place Creative Thinking at the top (Armstrong, 2010). This kind of creativity is not simply a mode of behavior, it is not exemplified by simply "playing" with color or rhyme, for example (though it can certainly include play). In the context of Bloom's revised taxonomy, the term refers to thinking that depends upon and generates deep knowledge of a subject (or materials) through original combination or creation. An effectively composed capstone project assignment guides students toward the complex cognitive activity of both critical and creative thinking. (See Appendix D for a visual representation of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of Learning.)

4. Synthesis and Advanced Accomplishment. According to AAC&U, academic performance at this level occurs "across general and specialized studies and is demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems." Requiring this level and type of synthesis beckons students beyond simple mastery of skills and knowledge in their discipline to consider the broader effects and implications of their program and project. To illustrate, a student studying the environmental impacts of factory waste on box turtles might go a step further in their capstone project to recommend interventions for protecting this species from such deleterious effects. Ideally, the student would make a case for why the protection of the species is important, ecologically and ethically. This argument would require the student to practice gathering and processing data, drawing objective conclusions from that data, and considering the meaning and value of their findings in the context of ecological, social, and ethical frameworks. This step challenges and develops the student cognitively, professionally, and civically.

5. Engagement with Big Questions, Both Contemporary and Enduring. Big Questions provides an "umbrella" for students' work throughout their capstone and, ideally, helps students view their program from a philosophical perspective: How can improving elder care systems

benefit society as a whole? What are our responsibilities as literary advocates (librarians, teachers, publishers, writers, bookstore owners)? How can the US improve its approach to incarceration? How can restoring local ecologies benefit humanity (and/or the ecosphere) long term? Such questions may arise naturally from a student's capstone topic. If the capstone is an independent study, instructors and/or mentors can help the student identify a relevant Big Question at the project's root. On the other hand, a well-designed capstone class can utilize an overarching Big Question to generate pedagogical coherence and to provide a global professional and/or ethical context for students' individual inquiry-driven pursuits. For example, the question, "What are our responsibilities as literary advocates?" could be employed as the driving theme for an English literature capstone class, unifying assignments and materials and student capstone projects as both an individual and team inquiry enterprise. The team aspect of this tool can remind students that they are participants in the scholarly community, working together for a better understanding and/or a better world.

Keeping these outcomes at the center of capstone design and practice ensures that students are strategically challenged to 1) demonstrate the knowledge and skills developed by their program and 2) continue growing.

2 Assessment, Revision, and Evaluation

Assignments to Foster and Assess Student Growth

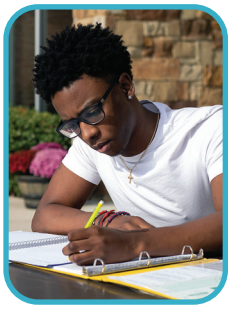
Low-Stakes Assignments

Whether a capstone is carried out by independent study or in a classroom, students will benefit from having the capstone project process broken down into low-stakes assignments to guide them toward the final product. The instructor should assess these low-stakes assignments promptly and regularly, providing feedback that will help students improve their knowledge and skills along the way. Below is a list of such assignments:

1. Annotated Bibliography of peer-reviewed sources for the research paper or creative project
2. Abstract of the proposed research paper or creative project
3. Proposal for the research paper or creative project
4. Brief individual class presentation evaluating a work related to the Big Question
5. Weekly notes from mandatory meetings with the project faculty mentor
6. Sample of work for a final exhibit or recital
7. Draft of a group-composed service project plan

Capstone Project Assignments

While the senior thesis research paper is perhaps the most commonly assigned capstone project, each program should determine what kind of projects effectively measure its specific outcomes and continue fostering student development relevant to the discipline. Here are a few examples of capstone projects that can align with the capstone definitions above:



1. Grant proposal
2. Piano recital
3. Art exhibit
4. Curated history archive exhibit
5. Teaching portfolio
6. Creative writing portfolio
7. Business plan
8. Team-produced community mural

Revision and Its Benefits

Regardless of how many courses students have previously completed in their program, revision of key assignments during the capstone experience can help them continue developing their understanding and skills. This practice may seem counterintuitive in the context of the capstone's use as a proficiency measurement tool. However, even in professional settings, revision is often built into protocols to ensure quality and success. For example, many nonprofit granting agencies offer feedback and revision opportunities on grant proposals to improve submitters' chances of receiving an award to support their projects. Similarly, corporations create supervisory structures for vetting products and reports to sustain their standards and protect their reputations. Importantly, the chance for revision can improve the quality of students' work and reinforce effective revision practices. These revision opportunities can take a variety of forms. Here are a few examples:

- Peer Review Exercise: Each student brings a draft of their project for review by a peer or peers. These sessions can be guided by a peer review form that asks reviewers specific (and strategic) questions about the draft. At the end of the session, students collect reviews of their own draft and consider their peers' feedback as they revise.
- Grade/Revision/Restoration: This process motivates students to do their best work both on the original and the revised submission. To illustrate, the instructor grades an annotated bibliography, issuing a grade of 80%. The instructor then offers the student a chance to complete a "Writing Effective Summaries" lesson and revise the annotated Bibliography summaries. If the student submits both the completed lesson and a revised annotated bibliography, they can earn back up to 8 points on the assignment grade.
- Self-Guided Review: Each student brings a project draft for the review exercise. Using a self-guided review form, the student writes out responses to the questions designed to help the student evaluate the effectiveness of key elements of their project. The student then uses the completed form to guide the revision of the draft.
- Response to Mentor/Instructor Feedback: Each student is required to submit a rough draft of the assignment to their project mentor or instructor. Then, in the final draft, they are encouraged to respond to and incorporate the feedback they have received. Note: The mentor/instructor should avoid editing the draft. Posting carefully crafted questions, discussing logical weaknesses, and/or pointing out where the project needs strengthening to achieve the desired effect will do more to foster the student's development.

Evaluation: Function and Impact

The grade earned for a capstone experience usually indicates both a student's proficiency level in the field and their work ethic. An academic department often uses Capstone projects to collect data on program effectiveness, which may be required for accreditation purposes. In determining how the grade will be calculated, instructors may need to balance these accreditation considerations with other important functions of grades. Anyone who has taught for a long time understands the delicate balance of the carrot/whip scale: Most students are motivated by the desire to achieve high scores and are chastened into action by flagging grades. However, if students lose confidence, they may become disheartened and unmotivated to continue their efforts. We want to uphold the standards of our field, but we also care about student motivation and success, and these two goals are sometimes at odds.

Of course, one might wonder whether such a problem could be of concern in a capstone class when, ostensibly, the students enrolled have already proven their basic disciplinary proficiencies by passing the prerequisite courses meant to scaffold the capstone. Perhaps it is the conditions produced by the strange, post-Covid times we live in or our mission to serve students from a wide variety of preparation levels; whatever the reason, we certainly do encounter capstone students who are not proficient in some of the basic skills needed for engaging in such a project. When this happens, we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place: Do I allow the student to fail and risk implying that our program does not adequately prepare students for the field? Or do I fudge the student's grade, justifying the decision based on the student's earnest efforts? These are the questions we do not like to ask aloud but which many of us struggle with in today's social and academic environment.

The good news is that, if implemented effectively, the practice of Grade/Revision/Restoration can help us navigate this challenge. If, for each low-stakes assignment, we issue a grade that reflects the actual quality of a submission and then offer the student a chance to earn back a modest (strategic) number of points for revision, we can use the revision phase to spur real learning and development, guiding students to fill the gaps they may still be addressing even late in their program.

Ultimately, if we are to maintain the standards of higher education that will help society meet its present and future needs, we must evaluate student work honestly, according to the standards of our disciplines. However, to carry out our commitments to students from the beginning to the end of their time with us, let us remember that they can continue to learn and grow even after they submit their "final" capstone project. To these ends, revision should go hand in hand with our evaluation practices.

3 Questions and Concerns

This section addresses some of the questions and problems common to capstones as a High-Impact Practice before providing a brief step-by-step guide to establishing one.

Is it a Capstone Only If It is a Senior Thesis?

Considering UNG's working definition of a capstone, the answer to this question is "no." While this guide presumes that most capstones are culminating senior projects, the HIP coding tool in Banner, where instructors can indicate which HIPs they employ in their classes, challenges this presumption.

For example, one Human Services Delivery and Administration professor required her upper-level group counseling class to work in teams to produce a set of group counseling questions that could be employed in practice in a professional situation. (See the assignment guidelines in Appendix C). This assignment aligns with UNG's expectation that a capstone project provides "climactic opportunities for students nearing the end of their educational programs[, that] the discipline-appropriate product, which encompasses a wide range of skills and knowledge, [allows] students to integrate key concepts and practices and demonstrate competence across general education requirements acquired while completing their degree program[, and that] students work closely with a supervising faculty member to develop the creative projects, activities, or theses that serve as a major time investment component of the course."

Suppose the goal of implementing capstone projects is deep and impactful learning for students. In that case, there is no reason to discourage instructors from designing assignments like the Group Counseling project or to prevent them from coding it in Banner as a High-Impact Practice. As long as the naming of courses prevents students, faculty, and administrators from confusing one type of capstone context with another, instructors should be encouraged to employ capstone principles for effective student development where appropriate.

How Can We Reward Faculty for Serving as Capstone Mentors or Committee Members?

A faculty member listed as an instructor for a capstone course will be compensated for that instruction. However, additional project mentors or committee members are not usually listed in Banner as instructors for the course. Instead, they are rewarded in various ways.

For example, some graduate capstone mentors, such as master's thesis committees, are compensated monetarily. Generally, service on the committee is not considered the equivalent of teaching a fully enrolled class, but in some departments, committee members receive a small stipend for their service, and the committee chair usually pays the higher stipend.

However, for mentors and committee members who do not receive monetary compensation for this work, there are still rewards that can indicate the importance of their contribution to student learning. Faculty Annual Reviews ask instructors to list instances of teaching "beyond the classroom." This formal recognition of teaching and student mentorship beyond an instructor's regular teaching load indicates that promotion and tenure reviews consider such contributions extremely valuable.

If a department finds that faculty are resistant to serving as mentors and thesis committee members due to insufficient compensation and there is no chance of a compensation increase, it might consider creative ways to incentivize instructors, such as small gifts paid for by departmental Foundation funds, departmental newsletter recognition, or an annual celebration to express appreciation of their service.

Many professors express that supporting students in capstone projects is the best reward for working in higher education. Usually, capstone students are motivated, curious, and hardworking, and their projects allow faculty to explore ideas on a level of sophistication that gratifies their intellectual drive.

4 Establishing a Capstone: A Brief Guide

Program- or Departmental-Level Steps

While it might be tempting to dive right into the course proposal phase, a more fruitful process begins with conversations at the program or departmental level. Administrative and faculty constituents with expertise in the field should be involved in discussions about why a capstone is needed and how it should work. These conversations should

1. Identify program outcomes. These should indicate primary disciplinary skills and knowledge that all program graduates will be able to demonstrate.
2. Determine various types of "culminating" assignments through which students might demonstrate those outcomes. Most programs will choose the most fitting one (or two) from the list and designate it as the capstone requirement moving forward. (See Resources for Capstone Design in Chapter 5.)
3. Determine whether designing the capstone as an independent study or a regular course best serves the program and/or department.
4. Facilitate design (by committee or single faculty member) of a sample course syllabus. Be sure that the proposed syllabus meets program parameters and needs and UNG Registrar parameters. The designer should present the syllabus to the program/departmental faculty for feedback, then revise and present it again for approval. Once this phase is completed, the course will need to be approved at the institutional and system levels before it can be implemented. (See Appendices A and B for sample capstone syllabi.)

Instructor-Level Steps

1. Syllabus Design: Using the course proposal syllabus as a basis, revise to make the course your own. Honoring the outcomes of the program and basic capstone project parameters that have already been established, consider the flexible aspects of your class.
2. Big Question: Craft a question that will create a shared line of inquiry for the class and enable students to pursue the answer through their capstone projects.
3. Content: It can be helpful to require a textbook to guide the type of projects your students are working on. Readings that address the Big Question can inform both the general class inquiry topic and individual projects. This content can fuel class discussions while students continue working independently on assignments pertaining to their own projects.
4. Scaffolding or Low-Stakes Assignments: Here, you can be creative. Students can compete against one another in a library database scavenger hunt or create and present a brief video on their "pet" interest in the field, explaining how it addresses the Big Question. These assignments can build student skills, generate coherence in your course design, and build comradery among the students.
5. Schedule: Most departments allow some flexibility with this course, especially if section enrollment can be kept under 15 students. For example, hybrid delivery can work quite well for some capstone courses, providing substantial in-person meeting time and freeing students for one-on-one instructor conferences, online lessons, mentor consultation, and independent work.

5 Resources

UNG Resources

Faculty Academy on High Impact Educational Practices (HIP)Faculty Academy on High-Impact Educational Practices (HIP)

https://ung.edu/center-teaching-learning-leadership/programs/teaching-and-learning/high-impact-educational-practices-hips.php

An annual professional training opportunity for faculty seeking to enrich their teaching approaches and practices.

High-Impact Practices (HIPs) at UNG

https://ung.edu/high-impact-practices/index.php

This webpage provides rationale, definitions of key concepts, a list of resources, and instructions for coding HIPs in Banner.

Student Scholarship, UNG Nighthawk Repository

https://ir.ung.edu/explore/collections

Archives student capstone projects that serve as illuminating examples of potential culminating work.

"What Are Capstone Projects?" by Donna Gessell. April 22, 2021. CTLL Blog.

https://ung.edu/center-teaching-learning-leadership/blog/teaching-and-learning/2021/what-are-capstone-projects.php

Offers insights on capstones from an experienced UNG professor.

Other Resources

AAC&U Website: https://www.aacu.org/

A highly developed resource for higher-education practitioners, including information on principles and best practices for capstones.

Cultivating Capstones: Designing High-Quality Culminating Experiences for Student Learning, edited by Caroline J. Ketcham, Anthony G. Weaver, and Jessie L. Moore.

This collection of essays emphasizes students as members of multiple and overlapping communities. It provides an overview of various types of capstones, examples of such projects in specific institutions, and implementation strategies.

Designing and Teaching Undergraduate Capstone Courses, by Robert C. Hauhart and Jon E. Grahe.

This book offers guidance for implementing capstones and addressing curricular and course design principles and challenges.

"Understanding the Capstone Experience through the Voices of Students," by Patsy Tinsley McGill.

This article reviews foundational literature on capstones and based on formally collected student input, recommends refinements to improve the capstone experience for students, specifically targeting preparation, communication, project structure, and support.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Independent Study Capstone Syllabus and Portfolio Assignment

A1: ENGL 7990 Syllabus

Department of English

Course: English 7990

Course Title: Directed Readings for English Teachers

Instructor: Varies

Prerequisite: Enrollment in the final semester of the M.A.T. Program

Catalog Description: This capstone course involves studying no fewer than ten works in the English discipline, culminating in a teaching demonstration, a portfolio, and a written exam. The student will work with a committee chosen from the English graduate faculty; however, the course will be completed primarily as an independent study. Through the process, the student will develop independent inquiry and self-directed study methods.

Course content: The student, in conjunction with the ENGL 7990 Coordinator (who also serves as English M.A.T. advisor) will determine areas of weakness, career objectives and expectations, and academic interests. Using this information, the ENGL 7990 Coordinator will recruit a committee chair and second committee member from the English faculty on the student's behalf. Then the student and committee chair will determine the area of study for the course, represented in a list of ten book-length works or the equivalent. The student, the student's committee chair, and the second committee member will then draw up the reading list. The student will demonstrate competence over the list by completing a written examination, presenting a fifty-minute teaching demonstration, and developing a portfolio.

Note: Committee chairs and members will be selected from UNG's pool of "graduate faculty": professors who hold a terminal degree in their field and have demonstrated knowledge and scholarly experience consistent with that commonly required for graduate teaching in the field at large.

Methods of Instruction: The student will work independently under the direction of the committee chair, who will facilitate the course and report the final grade. The second committee member will support the study according to protocols outlined in the Committee Responsibility Guidelines. Each committee member will advise and direct the student, determine and approve the reading list, recommend beneficial secondary works, check the student's progress, review the student's Portfolio, critique the teaching demonstration, provide practice experiences for the exam, and evaluate the exam. Once the student and committee have begun their work together, the ENGL 7990 Coordinator remains available as a consultant to the students and committee, as needed.

Course Outcomes: Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate

- The ability to construct effective lesson and unit plans aligned with school, county, and state-designated learning objectives
- The ability to execute effective teaching practices in the classroom to foster student learning and growth
- The ability to employ graduate-level research practices in the field as a basis for effective teaching
- Graduate-level knowledge of field content
- Graduate-level analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills
- Graduate-level communication skills, both written and verbal

Evaluation: The student must demonstrate competence determined by both committee members in all three evaluation tools: the teaching demonstration (25%), the Portfolio (50%), and the written exam (25%).

Course content:

Week 1	Determine the committee chair with the help of the ENGL 7990 Coordinator (if not already confirmed) and communicate with the committee to draw up reading list.
Week 2	Complete the first book on the list; complete the reader response; submit to the committee for feedback.
Week 3	Complete the second book on the list, complete the reading response, and consult with the committee to finalize the reading list.

Week 4 Read theory/auxiliary readings on the list and complete responses; consult with the committee chair to schedule exam and teaching demonstration; choose a topic for Teaching Assignment #1 (lesson for the college-level teaching demonstration) and begin working on that lesson plan; work on the researched essay (examining the text that was selected as the topic for teaching demonstration).

Week 5 Complete the third book on the list, complete the reading response, and complete the revised draft of the researched essay.

Week 6 Complete the fourth book on the list, complete the reading response, and **continue working on teaching assignment #1 (lesson plan targeting college students).**

Week 7 Complete the fifth book on the list; complete reading response; draft teaching demonstration lesson.

Week 8 Complete the sixth book on the list, complete the reading response, and submit teaching demonstration plans to the committee and the host professor.

Week 9 Complete remaining theoretical/auxiliary readings and responses; begin work on Teaching Assignment #2 (teaching unit targeting high school students).

Week 10 Offer teaching demonstration in host professor's class (student and committee will set real date); complete teaching demonstrationself-reflection.

Week 11 Complete the seventh book on the list; complete the reading response.

Week 12 Complete 8th book on list; complete reading response; complete teaching assignment #2 (unit targeting high school students); begin studying for an exam; work on compiling Portfolio.

Week 13 Complete ninth book on list; complete reading response; work on Portfolio; study for exam.

Week 14 Complete the 10th book on the list, complete the reading response, complete the Portfolio, and study for the exam.

Week 15 Complete the written exam and submit the Portfolio to the committee.

A2: ENGL 7990 Portfolio Assignment

Portfolio Guidelines: The completed Portfolio should be presented to your committee chair on or before the established deadline. The Portfolio should be neat and orderly and submitted electronically as agreed upon by you and your committee (e.g., Google file, D2L, email attachments, etc.). Any sources used in the completion of relevant sections of the Portfolio should be documented appropriately according to MLA specifications. Questions regarding the Portfolio should be directed to your committee chair. The contents of the Portfolio should follow the basic parameters given below, with further clarification and/or details provided by your committee chair as needed.

Contents:

Section One

For each primary work included on the reading list, draft a **reader response** of 750-1000 words in which you (1) discuss the themes of the work and (2) suggest ways in which those themes might be taught in a high school setting (including pedagogical strategies, and so forth). The section on how the work might be taught should comprise no more than 250 words of the response.

For each of the theoretical/auxiliary works on the list, the response should be 500-1000 words and should not include a discussion of how the work could be taught.

Note: The reading list comprises 10 book-length literary works or the equivalent (for example, three short stories or a selection of poems might substitute for a book). In addition, the committee might add 2-3 auxiliary readings to this list to help frame the literary study, such as a chapter on a literary movement or an essay on a particular literary theory.

Section Two: Teaching Assignment #1

Provide a full and detailed lesson plan for the work taught in the required college-level teaching demonstration. Including:

A. A **lesson plan** suitable for teaching the work at the college level in the class selected for the **teaching demonstration**. Include a copy of the lesson, auxiliary materials, and discussion notes used during the demonstration.

B. A **research essay** of 8-10 pages discussing trends in the scholarly, secondary research material available on the work. This essay should point out trends in the research and include a discussion of 10-15 sources, emphasizing contemporary articles and books (in other words, those published most recently). The essay should synthesize the material and present it under the umbrella of a unifying thesis. (This is the **research essay** on the sample schedule.)

C. A brief (two-three page) **post-teaching-demonstration assessment** (evaluating strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for teaching the work a second time, etc.)

Section Three: Teaching Assignment #2

Provide a full (multi-lesson) unit plan devised for teaching one of the other works on the reading list in a high-school setting (including at least 2-3 learning outcomes aligned with state curriculum standards, along with class exercises, quizzes, tests, lecture notes, etc.) (This is **Teaching Assignment #2** on the sample schedule.) To create the unit plan, students should use a general template consistent with unit assignments in their education courses. Here are some resources that may be of help:

1. Georgia Standards
2. Sample Template for High School Unit Plan
3. Spark Creativity website

B1(a): English Literature Capstone Syllabus

ENGL 4890 Senior Seminar in Literature

Big Question: What are our responsibilities as literary advocates?

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: ENGL 2050, ENGL 2230 and one ENGL 2100-level Literature course, each with a grade of C or higher; and at least 18 hours of upper-level credit in the English major

Required Text: *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*, by Wendy Laura Belcher, 2nd edition. 2019.

Course Description: This capstone class is for the English major with a Literature Concentration and includes a review of scholarship training, personal reading schedules, and preparation for professional careers and graduate school. The development of a sound sense of identity as a professional in the field of English will be encouraged. It is recommended that students take the Senior seminar in their final semester; however, advanced students may request the instructor's permission to take the class as juniors to accommodate unusual circumstances.

Course outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate

- The ability to read and analyze literary texts for meaning, effect, and import.
- Research skills, including locating, comprehending, and evaluating scholarly sources.
- The ability to forward a convincing and compelling argument supporting their assertions.
- Writing skills appropriate to an upper-level college course.
- Presentation skills appropriate to an upper-level college course.
- A bachelor's level knowledge is based in the field of literature.

Course requirements: Successful completion of this course requires students to complete assigned readings, participate in D2L discussions, gather research for and compose an annotated bibliography, compose a finished research paper, present the project to an academic audience, and reflect meaningfully on these experiences.

Methods of instruction: D2L and face-to-face instruction and discussion, preparatory reading assignments, D2L quizzes and discussions, research and writing assignments, poster presentations, reflective writing, and individual feedback from the instructor.

Delivery: This is a hybrid class. **Some lessons will be scheduled online** rather than face-to-face this semester. Please consult the schedule for details.

Evaluation: Daily and mentor assignments – 10%; Annotated Bibliography – 20%; Proposal - 20%; Research Paper - 30%; Presentation - 10%; Portfolio - 10%

Semester Schedule: (This schedule is subject to change.)

Week 1

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Introductions. Review Syllabus and Semester Schedule, Course Outcomes, Big Questions, and Mentor Relationship arrangement. Review assignments for Research Papers, Portfolio Assignments, and Literary Advocacy Presentations.

Additionally,

- Read Belcher's Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Build Google portfolio and documents. Give Dr. Bennett editorial access to the folder and all files.
- Contact the mentor and set up the first meeting (Meeting 1). Have them sign the Mentor/Mentee Contract and upload it to the Mentor/Mentee D2L Assignment file.
- Begin locating documents from previous courses (Items A, B, and C in the Portfolio Assignment.
- Complete the "Literary Roles" survey by January 19, 10:00 p.m.
- Choose a text on which to focus for the Literary Advocacy Presentation. Add/Drop period ends January 17.

Week 2: If you haven't already, meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 1). Upload the completed Mentor/Mentee Contract to the Assignments file by Friday at 10:00 p.m. Also, upload this week's Mentor Meeting Notes (with mentor signature) to the designated Assignments file by 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Before class, read Belcher Chapter 2, "Advancing Your Argument," and review "Types of Sources," paying special attention to peer-reviewed (scholarly) articles. (For more information, watch the linked video in peer-reviewed articles.)

Additionally,

- Review the "Formulating a Viable Thesis" lesson.
- Carefully review the Annotated Bibliography and Research Proposal Assignments.
- By Friday at 10:00 p.m., complete and submit the Research Scavenger Hunt.
- Also due by Friday at 10:00 p.m.: Upload Essays A, B, and C from previous courses [store in your Google folder]. Finalize text selection for the Literary Advocacy Presentation and sign up for a presentation date.

Week 3: Meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 2) to discuss your project idea (including your working thesis). Have your mentor sign your notes from this meeting. Upload a screenshot or photocopy of these notes to the designated Assignments file by Friday at 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Discuss Belcher's "Abstracting Your Article." Review the Abstract guidance in the Research Paper assignment. Revisit the Literature Review section of the Research Proposal Assignment—literary Advocacy Presentations.

Additionally,

- Read Belcher's "Abstracting Your Article" and write a 200–300-word abstract of your project. Bring a printout of your abstract to our next class meeting for discussion.
- Begin research for the Annotated Bibliography, which is due in three weeks.

Week 4: Meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 3). Share your abstract and at least five sources you have gathered on your topic. Ask for feedback on your work so far. Have your mentor sign your notes from this meeting. Upload a screenshot or photocopy these notes to the designated Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Proposal workshop. Bring your abstract and citations/summaries from all the sources you have gathered, then Literary Advocacy Presentations.

Additionally,

- Read Belcher's "Selecting a Journal." Complete the "Selecting a Journal" D2L Quiz" by Friday at 10:00 p.m.
- Continue your research.

Week 5: Meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 4). Discuss how your sources deepen or challenge your understanding of your literary text. Ask for perspectives your mentor feels you should consider as you research this topic. Make notes on your conversation. Have your mentor sign your notes from this meeting. Upload a screenshot or photocopy of these notes to the designated Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Integrating Primary and Secondary Sources into Your Argument. Review sample essay. Discuss Belcher's advice in "Refining Your Works Cited." Literary Advocacy Presentations. Big Question Discussion: The Ethics of Teaching Literature.

Additionally,

- Continue finding sources for your Annotated Bibliography (you should have at least 10 citations and annotations by Friday).
- Also, by Friday at 10:00 p.m., complete the "English BA Reading Inventory Tool."
- Participate in the Inventory D2L Discussion.
- Before class on Tuesday, read Larry Sullivan's short article, "The Least of Our Brethren: Library Service to Prisoners."

Week 6: No mentor meeting is required this week.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Big Question topic discussion: Librarians as Activists. Discuss Sullivan's article. Discuss Belcher's "Crafting Your Claims for Significance." Literary Advocacy Presentations

Additionally,

- Read Belcher's "Analyzing Your Evidence" and "Presenting Your Evidence";
- By Friday, 10:00 p.m., participate in the Big Question D2L discussion: Writerly Responsibilities.
- Continue finding sources for your Annotated Bibliography. Upload the complete Annotated Bibliography to the Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.
- Work on your Proposal.

Week 7: No mentor meeting is required this week.

No face-to-face meeting this week.

- Continue working on your proposal.
- Upload your completed Research Proposal to the Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.
- Send a copy of your proposal to your mentor, as well, and express your interest in discussing it at the next meeting.

Week 8: Meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 5). Discuss the proposal and invite your mentor to offer feedback and guidance for moving forward. Have your mentor sign your notes from this meeting. Upload a screenshot or photocopy of these notes to the designated Assignments file by Friday at 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Face-to-Face: Read and discuss Belcher's "Strengthening Your Structure." Discussion: The Role of Publishers. Literary Advocacy Presentations.

Additionally, carve out at least an hour to sit, focus, and write 2-3 pages of your Research Paper draft. It is fine for this draft to be rough at the end of the session!

Week 9: No mentor meeting is required this week.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Literary Advocacy Presentations. Bring a partial Research Paper draft to class for the workshop. Revisit Abstracts for revision.

Additionally,

- Upload a rough outline of your research paper to the Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.
- Continue working on your research paper.
- Edit Essays B and C [Google file] (Consult Portfolio assignment, as needed.)

Week 10: This week, send your mentor a full rough draft of your Research Paper. Invite feedback at the next meeting.

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Peer review session. Bring a full printed draft of your Research Paper to class.

Additionally, work on revising and polishing your Research Paper.

Week 11: Meet with your mentor this week (Meeting 6). Ask for feedback on your research paper draft. Have your mentor sign your notes and upload them to the designated Assignments file by Friday at 10:00 p.m.

No class meeting this week

- Read Belcher's Opening and Concluding Your Article" and "Editing Your Sentences." Review the Research Poster Assignment. (The digital research poster is due in two weeks.)
- Work on revisions to the Research Paper.
- Upload the Research Paper to the Assignments file by Friday, 10:00 p.m.

Week 12: Meet with your mentor this week (Week 7). Bring a "thank you" card to show appreciation for their time and effort in supporting you. Invite them to our showcase. If you like, ask for advice about your professional "next steps."

No class meeting this week.

- Work on Research Poster.
- The final Portfolio must be completed in your Google folder in two weeks. Ensure Dr. Bennett has been given editorial access to the folder, all four files (Essays A, B, and C), and the final Research Paper.

Week 13: No mentor meeting is required this week.

No class meeting this week.

- Read Belcher: "Submitting, Revising and Resubmitting" Celebrate your article!
- Submit your Research Poster to the Poster Presentation D2L Discussion by Friday, 10:00 p.m.

Week 14: No mentor meeting is required this week.

No class meeting this week.

- Respond to peers' Poster Presentations in the Poster Presentation D2L Discussion by Friday, **10:00 p.m.**
- Prepare for next week's showcase.

Week 15

Tuesday, Face-to-face: Showcase

Last day of classes for the semester.

Week 16 - Finals Week

Tuesday, online: Reflection Essay due in D2L Assignments file by 10:00 p.m.

B1(b): English Literature Capstone Research Project Assignment

The B.A. Research Essay & Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the capstone project for literature concentration is to make an original argument about a work (or works) of literature using the tools of literary analysis you have developed throughout your studies. The literary text you select for this project must have generated a substantial body of scholarly (peer-reviewed) articles and/or books in literary studies. Your paper should demonstrate responsible, effective scholarship through engagement with the arguments of other literary scholars as you enter the profession and begin to narrow your field of interest. On a practical level, the paper may also provide a solid writing sample for future graduate school applications.

The paper will be evaluated according to the rubrics provided and noted on the syllabus and with your project mentor, who has specialized knowledge of your topic.

In general, the essay should:

- Make a unique contribution to the relevant scholarship in the area you choose
- Identify and synthesize the scholarly arguments that have been made on this topic
- Articulate how your argument fits into the critical landscape
- Be 15-25 pages in length, not counting the Bibliography, about 7000-10,000 words
- Include 10-15 scholarly sources, and
- Include a 300-word abstract at the beginning of the document.

The Abstract

Purpose: The abstract aims to give your reader a snapshot of your argument for a paper or article. Abstracts are often requested as part of a "Call for Papers" (CFP) for conferences, but they are also requested in CFPs looking for book chapters or articles. They are sometimes included at the beginning of a published journal article. The abstract is a brief synopsis or summary of the essay's argument. It should include your thesis and main points, your methodological approach, and a sense of where your argument fits into the larger scholarly conversation.

B2(a): Honors Thesis Course Syllabus

Honors 3000 Honors Research Methods

Primary Delivery Method: Online

Prerequisites: Must be enrolled in the Honors Program.

Required Texts: The Research Journey: Introduction to Inquiry. Rallis and Rossman. Guilford, 2012.

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to research methods from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Credit hours: 3. Prerequisites: Acceptance into the UNG Honors Program.

Course Objectives: Students who succeed in this course will

- Demonstrate the ability to formulate a viable and insightful research question (critical thinking and problem-solving)
- Conduct scholarly research investigating the research question (research)
- Employ this scholarly research effectively and ethically to prepare for the researched product (analysis)
- Demonstrate and share their own valid scholarly perspective in presenting the research proposal (critical thinking)
- Effectively address the impact of this project on society and/or the natural world (service)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the global/cultural implications of this research project (global/cultural awareness)
- Reflect on the overlap /connections among disciplines experienced during the research/proposal process (interdisciplinary perspective)
- Communicate effectively in both written and oral presentation of their proposal (communication)
- Document research materials (both primary and secondary) according to the field-appropriate documentation style (research)

Delivery Methods: D2L lessons and face-to-face sessions

Evaluation: Annotated Bibliography – 10%; Research Question – 10%; Literature Review – 10%; Meetings with Professor – 10%; Research Proposal – 20%; Proposal Presentation – 20%; Daily work – 20%

Schedule: (This schedule is subject to change)

Week 1

- Students sign up for three one-on-one meetings with the professor and email the professor for an appointment. See the student conference schedule.
- Participate in D2L Introduction Discussion and Syllabus Review Quiz.
- Read RJ (The Research Journey) Chapter 1; complete the RJ Chapter 1 Quiz.
- Review the Research Proposal assignment.
- Participate in the discussion on D2L Research Interests and Concerns. See Discussion Evaluation Rubric.

Week 2

- Read RJ Chapters 2&3
- View the Research Basics video lecture.
- Complete the Research Basics Quiz (covers RJ Chapters 2&3, as well as the video lecture)
- Participate in the Tentative Topic discussion.
- Begin searching for a mentor in your area of research. Before contacting them, email Dr. Bennett with the names of two possible mentors.

Week 3

- The deadline for the first one-on-one meeting with the professor is Friday. Review the Annotated Bibliography assignment.
- Review the Research Pointers sheet.
- View the Purposes of Research video.
- View "Get Lit: The Literature Review" mini-lecture video.
- Participate in the Scholarly Mentor discussion.
- Complete the Article Methodology Analysis exercise.
- Confirm your mentor in an email to your professor.

Week 4

- Annotated Bibliography is due Monday.
- Read RJ Chapter 4; participate in RJ Chapter 4 discussion.

- Visit the University of North Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) webpage.
- Review Literature Review Assignment and Grading Standards for Honors 3000 Writing Assignments.
- Visit with a mentor and conduct an initial interview using the Mentor Interview Questions.

Week 5

- Read RJ Chapter 5.
- Participate in RJ Chapter 5 discussion.
- Participate in the Trends in Research discussion.
- Participate in the discussion of the Literature Review Questions (optional).
- Schedule a visit with Career Services; review the Career Services website: Tips by Topic.

Week 6

- The deadline for the second one-on-one meeting with the professor is Friday.
- Complete the second visit with your mentor. Present the Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review draft to your mentor for feedback/advice.
- Participate in the discussion on Mentor Benefits and Challenges.

Week 7

- Literature Review due by Friday.
- Read RJ Chapter 6.
- Participate in the RJ Chapter 6 discussion.
- Participate in the Career Development discussion.

Week 8

- Read RJ Chapter 7
- Participate in the RJ Chapter 7 discussion. Complete the third visit with a mentor. Present your Research Question for feedback.
- Review Research Proposal Assignment and Grading.

Week 9

- Submit your research Question draft to the professor for feedback.
- Participate in the Social and Global Impact discussion.
- Complete the Research Process Quiz.

Week 10

- Submit a revised version of your Research Question by Friday.
- Participate in Research Question discussion.
- Participate in Research Proposal Workshop discussion.

Week 11

- Read RJ Chapter 8.
- Participate in RJ Chapter 8 discussion.

Week 12

- Review Proposal Checklist.
- Complete and submit a rough draft of the Research Proposal by Friday.

Week 13

- Participate in the Peer Critique Exercise using the sheet provided.
- Employ the feedback you receive on your Research Proposal in the revision process.

Week 14

- Complete revisions of the Research Proposal.
- Submit the completed Research Proposal by Friday.
- Send "Thank You" to the mentor.
- Review Student Presentation Assignment.

Week 15

- Final Review
- Face-to-face meetings for Student Presentations
- Finals Week
- Final Exam - Reflection Essay to be submitted on designated exam date.

B2(b): Honors Proposal and Thesis Assignments

Research Proposal Assignment

Your completed research proposal will be the culmination of your work this semester. It will integrate information from your Annotated Bibliography and your Literature Review to produce a persuasive case for your research project. The final proposal should be 7-12 pages in length, not counting the Bibliography (double-spaced with 1-inch margins, in 11-point Times New Roman font). It should provide background on your topic, an overview of the previous studies on this subject, and a persuasive argument for the importance of your research.

In addition to the essay version of your proposal, you will also present an oral/visual version to your professor and classmates (7-10 minutes).

Guidelines

The title of the proposal identifies the topic and goal of the research.

The **title page** includes the writer's name, the course title, your professor's name, the semester date, and the paper title.

The **Introduction** provides a brief but representative summary of the literature—no major studies in the area are excluded. It lays the foundation, through logical and empirical support, for the hypothesis forwarded by the proposal.

The **Methods** section provides as much detail as necessary for a reader to reproduce your study and results. In papers on scientific topics, you should consider sampling issues, validity and reliability of operationalizations, demand and bias, potential confounds, and any controls. For humanities projects, you should clarify what theory or theories you will apply in your study and what methods you will use to analyze the subject (a novel or a set of military logs, for example).

The **Conclusion** section clearly states the hypothesis you hope to prove in the final project and the impact you expect your study to have on the field and society. You may also discuss, in this section, the limits of your project and recommendations for future studies (discussion of the study's limits and recommendations for future research are required for students writing in the sciences).

Appendices may be included following the conclusion.

The **Bibliography** should include entries for every source cited (mentioned) in your paper. It should not include any sources that are NOT cited in the paper.

The proposal should be written clearly and grammatically correct.

It should be written and documented using the appropriate field-specific style (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.).

The completed proposal should be signed and dated by your mentor at least ONE WEEK before the due date.

Appendix C: Human Services Delivery and Administration (HSDA) Group Counseling Course Assignment

Maxine Douglas developed the following assignment for HSDA 3130 Service Delivery Small Group Systems:

Counseling Group Proposal HIP Capstone Project

Assignment Description:

For the capstone project, students will work collaboratively in groups to create a comprehensive counseling group proposal. This project will integrate academic learning with practical applications, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of group dynamics, leadership, and counseling techniques.

Objectives:

- Develop a detailed proposal for a counseling group.
- Apply theories and techniques learned throughout the course.
- Demonstrate leadership and interpersonal skills in a group setting.
- Present the final proposal in a professional format.

Project Components:

1. Group Leader Qualifications:

a. Outline the qualifications and experience of the group leader.
b. Explain the choice of group and the theory and techniques to be used.

2. Group Description:

a. Define the type of group (psychoeducational, task group, etc.).
b. Specify the target audience and setting.
c. Detail the organization, setting, number of members, and pre-screening process.
d. Include an informed consent form.

b. Rationale:

a. State the goals and objectives of the group.
b. Explain the need for the group and the advantages of individual counseling.
c. Describe the expected outcomes.

3. Leadership:

a. Identify the group leader and their skills.
b. Discuss the leadership theory and the possibility of co-leaders.

4. Group Dynamics:

a. Predict factors influencing group dynamics.
b. Mention any tools for learning, such as journaling or outdoor experiences.

1. Stages of Groups:

a. Describe activities for each stage of the group.
b. Address potential issues and resolution strategies.
c. Outline the termination process and trust-building methods.

2. Planned Sessions:

a. Plan at least 8-12 sessions, detailing each session's title, structure, goals, and learning objectives.

Final Deliverables:

- **Written Proposal:** A professional document following APA guidelines (12-15 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, including title and reference pages).
- **Video Presentation:** A 10-15-minute video summarizing the group proposal.

Presentation:

The final proposal will be presented at a conference, university campus wellness initiative committee, and stakeholders or included in a library HIP capstone course guide.

Deadlines:

- **Group Proposal Paper & Video Presentation:** Due: Semester week 14.
- **Peer Review and Feedback:** Due: Semester week 15.
- **Evaluation:** The project will be graded based on the quality and completeness of the written proposal, the effectiveness of the video presentation, and the engagement in peer review and feedback.

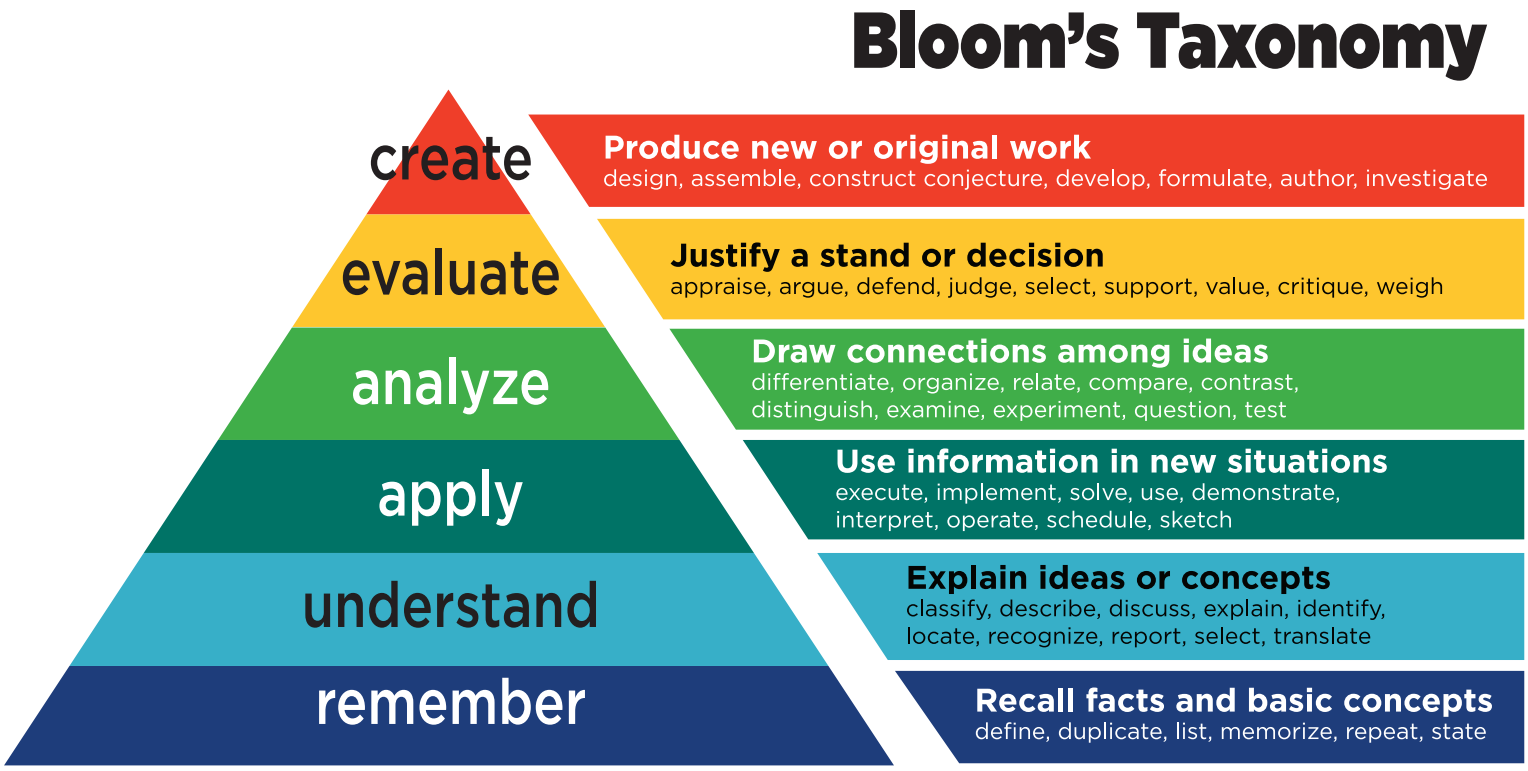
Additional Resources:

- Examples of group proposals and worksheets will be provided upon request. Samples of complete group proposals in schools and communities are available in Chapters 10 and 11 of the textbook, Corey, M., Corey, G. and Corey, C. (2018). Groups Process and Practice (10th Edition).
- Students encouraged to utilize the Writing Center and online resources for APA formatting and style guidance.

- More group proposal examples:
  a. Proposal for Increasing Self-esteem in Adolescent Females
  b. Psychoeducational Group Proposal
  c. Social Skills Group Proposal Project

This capstone project aims to synthesize course materials and practical skills, preparing students for real-world applications in human services.

Appendix D: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of Learning



Accessed from Patricia Armstrong, "Bloom's Taxonomy," Center for Learning. Vanderbilt University, 2010.

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ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

AcademicEngagement@ung.edu

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