



University Honors Program



CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

DEAR HONORS STUDENT:

Your Senior Honors capstone project should reflect your learning and abilities. You will select the subject matter of your capstone in consultation with the Honors Program director. It should be something that matters to you, something you know well or want to know better, and something that allows you to develop (as well as demonstrate) your ability to analytically and critically analyze as well as synthesize a broad range of material.

The process of designing and completing a senior capstone project is not trivial. It is recommended, therefore, that you begin thinking about your capstone project in your junior year or early in your senior year in order to give yourself time to plan, develop, and complete your project.

A key element in the successful completion of your work is your senior capstone mentor. They will assist you as you in defining the scope of your work and the direction of its development. The Senior Honors Capstone class will serve as a conversation community in which you will be able to present and discuss your work as it progresses. At the end of the spring semester you will present your work in the University Honors Conference before Honors guests, instructors, and peers. At your conference presentation you will be able to demonstrate your skills in communicating effectively and in using information and ideas analytically and critically.

Guidelines for Crafting an Honors Interdisciplinary Capstone Project

1. Your senior Honors capstone project can be similar to the senior project of your major.
2. There are two parts to your senior Honors capstone: the first part is a 20-30-page research paper (Chicago Style), which serves as foundation for the second part, a presentation at the University Honors Conference on the first Saturday in May of your graduating year.
3. What is the subject matter of your Honors senior interdisciplinary project?
 - a. Is the project complex such that it draws on multiple disciplinary insights and/or perspectives?
 - b. "Idea of dominance:" What is the clear and recognizable idea which can serve as a central focus for your work.
4. Why are you pursuing this subject matter?

5. What disciplinary perspectives would be helpful in this work?
 - a. Which disciplinary perspective is primary?
 - b. Do these perspectives form a more comprehensive perspective from which to view your subject matter? If so, how? If not, why not?
 - c. The Honors capstone project should be framed in such a manner that its interdisciplinarity is disclosed.

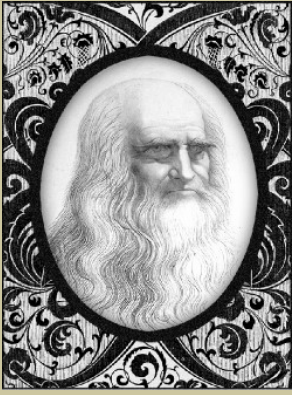
6. What effect (a. critical; b. expansive; c. relevance/application; d. coherence) does it have upon your study to view it from a more comprehensive perspective?

We hope that this guide provides you with a good start to a successful Honors Capstone Project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmichael Peters". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Warm regards,

Dr. Carmichael Peters, Ph.D.
Director, University Honors Program



“Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind.”

Leonardo da Vinci

THE HONORS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

The senior capstone project...

It is a mentored independent research or creative project in your final year of undergraduate studies at Chapman University.

It requires a public presentation to Honors guests, faculty, and students at an on-campus conference usually held on the first Saturday in May.

It should display a high level of intellectual ability and creativity on a specific subject or area. It should demonstrate general abilities valued in any college graduate:

- § Ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing;
- § Ability to think critically and constructively;
- § Ability to locate and evaluate information;
- § Ability to recognize and respond to ethical issues;
- § Ability to place one's work in the broad context of human effort.

You select its subject matter in consultation with the Honors Program director.

You will receive direction through the Honors capstone seminar, which is designed as a “research workshop” – a conversation community where students discuss their ongoing research with each other. It should be noted that the final requirements for any particular Honors capstone seminar are in the syllabus of that particular Honors Capstone Seminar.

CAPSTONE DESIGN

Your Honors capstone can be similar to the senior project for your major. You are free to select a topic that is of interest (maybe something you haven't had the time to explore but always wanted to) in consultation with the Honors Director.

The capstone project can take many forms:

- § Traditional research thesis on a specific topic from an interdisciplinary perspective;
- § A laboratory project or experiment in the sciences;
- § A problem-solving project that applies theories to an issue;
- § An original design for a model, prototype, or other programmatic area;
- § Have a different idea? Consult with the Honors director.

FINDING A FOCUS

Junior Year: A Time to Plan

It's important to begin generating ideas for your project in your junior year. The more time the project has to develop, the more mature your work will be. Being aware of deadlines associated with your research is also important. You may need to apply up to a year in advance to have research approved by CU's Institutional Review Board.

Where do you find ideas? Consider your past classes, outside reading, hobbies, places you have visited, or independent research you have already performed.

Once you have discovered a topic, it is equally important to define its scope and feasibility. For example, beginning with the idea of researching the economic effects of monocrop production in developing countries, you may want to focus on a particular country. Then, after initial research, you may find a specific group of coffee growers who interest you because their approach toward the market has proven to be more effective than others. The better you define your topic, the better able you will be to describe, discuss, research, and analyze it.

When defining your problem, you could address unresolved problems and present helpful provisional responses. So look for controversies that surround your topic and for gaps in responses to them. Research the major authors in the field, identify the research methods used within relevant disciplines, and consult with knowledgeable CU faculty.

Remember also that you are welcome to use your literary, artistic, or musical interests to create an original piece, such as a composition, performance, film, or exhibition. Your project should place your work within its historical and contemporary contexts, with discussion about its evolution and its importance to the development of your art.

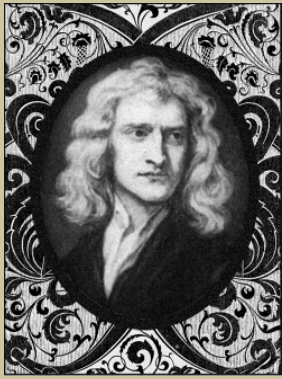
Other ways to get ideas for your projects include speaking with other students and getting a feel for what their interests are, meeting with faculty to discuss their research interests, and attending undergraduate poster sessions and research days. You never know when inspiration will strike, so write down your ideas. An "idea" diary allows you to record and digest thoughts, inspirations, and conversations. It also allows you to track what really interests you, recurring themes of which you may not even be aware.

Still stuck? Stop by the Honors office for a look at past project titles.



"Not knowing when
the dawn will come,
I open every door."

Emily Dickinson



“If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”

Isaac Newton

THE HONORS CAPSTONE CLASS

The Capstone Senior Seminar (HON 498) is a 3-credit class offered both fall and spring semesters. It is designed like a “writers’ workshop” to provide a supportive environment for the discussion of ideas, plans, and research strategies. It is the place to refine your project through suggestions and feedback from fellow Honors students.

All senior projects are presented during spring semester of each year, even if you take the capstone in fall—this applies only to students for whom the spring semester will be their final semester at Chapman University. The Honors on-campus conference, usually held on the first Saturday in May, is designed to showcase senior projects. Fellow students, professors and friends are invited to attend.

Students must take the Honors Capstone Senior Seminar in their final year at Chapman University. Those students who take Capstone in the fall semester of their final year at Chapman will receive an “SP” – which stands for “satisfactory progress” – at the end of the fall semester and will be assigned a letter grade after completing their research, their research paper, and presenting at the annual University Honors conference in the spring semester. The registrar has informed us that graduate schools understand the meaning of a SP grade, so it does not affect applications to them.

Those students who take Capstone in the spring semester of their final year at Chapman must complete all the work required for the Capstone in that semester and will receive a letter grade after presenting at the annual Honors University conference at the end of that semester.

Students for whom the fall semester will be their final semester at Chapman University have to complete all the work for the Honors Capstone that semester, including the completion of the research paper upon which their Honors Capstone is based as well as an in-class presentation of their Honors Capstone project. They will be given a letter grade at the end of the fall semester.

NB: Since there is no University Honors conference in the fall semester, these students are not required to make a presentation on their capstone research at a University Honors conference.

SELECTING A MENTOR

When you have a direction for your project, you will need to choose a CU faculty member as your mentor. Find someone who can advise you about formulating your topic, laying out a calendar of important deadlines, constructing a reading list, discussing methodologies, writing your report, and giving your oral presentation.

Your mentor invests time and effort into your project and will be one of your greatest resources. If you are developing a very broad interdisciplinary project, you may want to approach two or more professors to assist you.

Your mentor must sign your Capstone Initiation Form (see Appendix A) confirming that they agree to advise you throughout this process. To formalize the relationship even further, you and your mentor could structure your mentorship like an independent study. Standing appointments will help you maintain your calendar and update your mentor, which allows them to assist your progress and provide guidance with problems you might be encountering.

You need to advise your mentor that they are expected to attend the Honors conference — to act as a commentator on your presentation and to assist in the evaluation of it. The conference is usually held on the first Saturday in May. Date and time will be provided by the beginning of the academic year.

Your mentor should receive a copy of your presentation at least two weeks before the conference, to become familiar with the material and to be prepared to ask questions and engage you in conversation following the presentation.

mentor: a trusted friend, counselor or teacher, usually a more experienced person who gives advice and serves as an example. Mentors can enhance your education, and help you build academic networks.



“To think and to be fully alive are the same.”

Helen Arendt

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR YOUR PROJECT

At the back of this booklet, you will find a Senior Honors Project Initiation Form (see Appendix A). Please fill out this form and discuss the project description with your mentor. (The form is available online on the Honors website or picked up in the Honors office.)

When you get your mentor’s signature, bring the form to the Senior Capstone Seminar class for approval by the Honors director. Obviously, this should be done very early in the semester — so don’t procrastinate. Once your project is approved, we will send your mentor a letter of acknowledgment (see Appendix B), and you will be on your way

PRESENTING YOUR WORK

The University Honors Conference is designed to showcase your capstone work and allows you to share your knowledge with the university community. Interested faculty and peers will be in the audience, and we encourage you to invite friends and family.

At your presentation, a moderator will introduce you and then time your talk, limiting you to 20-30 minutes. They will give you a warning when the time is ending. After your presentation, you will have 10-15 minutes for responses from your commentators and to entertain questions from the audience.

Because the presentations adhere to a strict schedule, it is important that any visual aids be cued and ready to go. It can be a nightmare to realize that you have not saved your PowerPoint to a hard drive or cannot access your account online.

RESOURCES

CENTER FOR UNDERGRADUATE EXCELLENCE

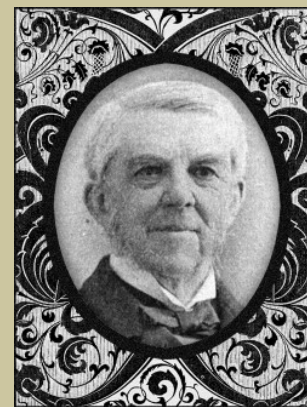
The Center for Undergraduate Excellence (CUE) is the perfect place to find support for research throughout your years at Chapman. The Undergraduate Research Fair, held each spring, showcases work done from all disciplines and colleges by students and their mentors. It could offer another opportunity for presentation of your Honors Capstone Project. Look at CUE on the Chapman website for information on funding and other research conference opportunities, both regional and national.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Faculty, staff, and students doing research involving human subjects — or if the information could be developed later into a research project, contributing to generalizable knowledge — are required to submit their research protocol to CU's Institutional Review Board for review and approval before starting the project. Keep this in mind as you design your project. The review process can take considerable time. Certain projects may qualify as exempt from review if they involve the use of existing or public data sets. You'll find information about the IRB on the Chapman website.

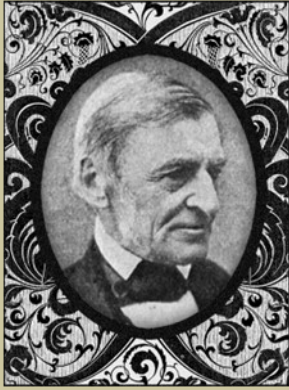
FUNDING A PROJECT

Some senior projects may benefit from funding, to allow for extensive research or to collaborate with a faculty member. Chapman has a number of avenues you can pursue. In most cases, the key to securing funding is to start early. For example, if you want to do your research the summer before your senior year, or during your senior year, funding applications may be due in February of your junior year. Chapman grants Student Scholarly/Creative Grants twice a year: in fall and spring. Awards are intended to provide support for a variety of clearly defined scholarly or creative projects. Grants typically do not exceed \$750, but all reasonable proposals are considered. Money can be used for a number of purposes, including travel expenses for original fieldwork or archive research. You must apply for consideration. Funding is also available through the Center for Undergraduate Excellence and the Ludie and David C. Henley Research Laboratory. Check the CU website to begin your search. Department chairs and faculty are another good source for information about possible research funds.



“Man’s mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes



“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE ROLE OF A PROJECT MENTOR

(Please share with your faculty mentor)

Discuss with the student the general concept and proposed duration of the project, your role in providing supervision and guidance, and your expectations of the project upon its completion. Review the “Brief Description of Proposed Project” with the student. If everything looks OK, sign the student’s *Project Initiation Form*.

Meet with the student at regular intervals to provide appropriate advice on the form and substance of the project. While you know the most about the requirements for written and oral presentations in your field and can best answer questions about those, the student can also access the Chapman Writing Center for many general questions about format and style.

Attend the student’s oral presentation at the University Honors Conference on the first Saturday in May. You will be part of the 15-20-minute conversation which follows your mentee’s conference presentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate your schedule. You can attend just the student’s presentation timeslot, or join us for the entire conference (including lunch and the awarding of Honors awards and graduation stoles).

APPENDIX A : CAPSTONE INITIATION FORM

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Capstone Initiation Form

Name: _____

Major(s): _____ Minor(s) _____

Email: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Title of presentation: _____

Brief description of proposed project:

What are your plans after graduation?

.....
Project mentor approval:

Project Mentor: _____ College: _____ Department: _____

(Please print)

I have agreed to supervise the project described above and to notify the Honors Program Office and student if I must relinquish this role before the project is completed.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Honors Program approval:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Honors Director)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Student)

APPENDIX B: INITIAL LETTER TO YOUR FACULTY MENTOR

Dear Professor _____,

Thank you for agreeing to mentor _____'s Honors Capstone Project. The purpose of the project is the completion of a significant, focused research or creative project. This is an opportunity for students to become producers and not merely consumers of knowledge, and to take an important step in their development as scholars.

As a Capstone experience, the project should exhibit the general qualities and characteristics of an accomplished university graduate, including abilities to communicate effectively in speech and writing, to think analytically and critically, to locate and assess information, to recognize and attend to ethical issues, and to place the work in the broad context of human effort.

In general, the role of the project mentor is to help the student to describe the project and define the scope of their work, to suggest resources that can help them accomplish it, and to evaluate the student's performance once the presentation is completed.

The Honors Program has a few general criteria for the project:

Scope: It can be a traditional research project on a specific topic from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Results: The project should result in a 20-30-page research paper (Chicago Style), which is to be the foundation for a 25-30-minute conference presentation suitable for a general, college-educated audience.

Presentation: The project will be presented at the University Honors Conference, held on the first Saturday in May. This conference begins in the morning and ends with lunch and the presentation of Honors stoles to graduating seniors.

Conference Role: We would like you to attend your student's presentation and to be part of the 15-20-minute conversation which follows the oral presentation.

Once again, I want to thank you for taking on this responsibility. If you have questions, please get in touch.

Cordially,

Dr. Carmichael Peters, Ph.D.
University Honors Program, Director
Philosophy & Religious Studies, Associate Professor

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

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