

Senior Capstone  
COMM 4310:001  
Spring 2015

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**Course Description:** The senior capstone is the culminating course in the Communication major sequence. Capstone experiences allow each student to demonstrate the capacity to bring information, skills, and ideas acquired from the major to bear on one significant research project. It is aimed at providing students with the opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired as communication majors.

**Course Requirements:** You and I will see each other at least once every two weeks throughout the term. We begin by choosing a topic, developing an outline, improving your information retrieval skills, brushing up on your research, reading, and writing skills, and then moving into your final paper writing, one chapter at a time. To successfully complete this course you will need to utilize the library to access previous communication research related to your topic and gather data to test your hypothesis or address your research questions.

**Grading:** 40% of your grade will be based on effort, minor writing assignments (such as topic proposal, literature review draft, and description of research methods), quality of first completed draft of your research project, and attendance of scheduled meetings. The other 60% will be based on the grade you will receive for the completed research paper.

**Procrastination:** You need to start working on this class right away and to keep going, week after week, even if your final draft is due months and months from now. A major research project is not the kind of thing that can be done at the last possible moment; it requires steady progress. For example, by the first week, you need to come close to finalizing your topic. By the second week, a rough outline is due, and so on. Another way of putting this: for the duration of this class, you and I are pen-pals who need to see each other, or write to each other, at least once every two weeks. If you vanish for three months, you cheat yourself out of a major life accomplishment.

**Academic Honesty:** All students are expected to comply with the student handbook guidelines for academic honesty. This means that students will turn in original work (not work completed by another student or purchased for submission), utilize appropriate citations to avoid plagiarism, and refrain from collusion (“the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit”.) Failure to comply with these standards will result in an F for the course.

**Course Deadlines:**

February 7 – Topic Statement (one page description of the communication situation of event that you are interested in investigating, including specific research questions you will be addressing with your original research)

March 5 – Draft of literature review to support your research questions

March 17 – Description of research methods to be employed in your study

April 15 – Complete collection of data

April 30 – Rough draft of completed paper

May 12 – Final draft of paper