English 695:
Capstone Project Syllabus

Semester: _____   Section Number:_____
(To be completed by Director of MAE)

Course Catalogue Description

After the successful completion of 30 credit hours in the program, all MAE students will
research and write a final capstone paper. Students are responsible for proposing a project to a
member of the Graduate Faculty and asking him or her to serve as their capstone project
Director. Once a written proposal has been completed and signed by the capstone project
Director, students will be given permission from the Director of the MAE program to enroll in
ENG 695. Proposals must therefore be completed during the semester before the student intends
to enroll in the class. Students will work independently and with the guidance of and feedback
from their capstone Director and two other members of the graduate faculty throughout the
semester they are enrolled in ENG 695 as they research, draft, and revise their capstone writing
project. Final capstone projects represent the student's most professional work. Papers should
amount to somewhere between 20-25 pages of double-spaced, polished and professional standard
prose. Students will present an abbreviated version of their capstone project during a 15-20
minute session at the Capstone Symposium that will be held during finals week of the semester
the student enrolls in the class. (3 credits)

Application and Signatures

Students must apply for permission to enroll in ENG 695 prior to the semester in which they
intend to register for the course. This syllabus serves as both an application for enrollment in
ENG 695 as well as a contract indicating meeting times, locations, and due dates for final
project.

In order to apply for permission to enroll in ENG 695, students must first identify a member of
the Graduate Faculty in the English Department who will serve as the Director of their capstone
project. Students should select a Director who best suits their academic areas of interest.
Additionally, Directors must be current members of the MAE Graduate Faculty at USI, and
students must have been enrolled in at least one graduate course at USI taught by that faculty
member. Students should meet with the Director of their capstone project throughout the
semester on a regular basis—typically, at least once every two weeks.

In consultation with the Director of their capstone project, students will then need to identify two
other committee members who will serve as Readers of capstone project. Readers must also be
members of the MAE Graduate Faculty at USI. If the Director of the capstone project and the
Director of the MAE Program approve, students may select one Reader who is a Graduate
Faculty member of another program at USI, provided that the student has taken a graduate course
at USI taught by that faculty member. Likewise, former MAE faculty members, including

Emeritus and Emerita faculty, may serve as Readers, provided that the student has enrolled in at least one MAE graduate course with that former faculty member. At least one Reader, however, must be a current member of the MAE Graduate Faculty.

A signed copy of this document must be submitted to the Director of the MAE Program before the student will be allowed to register for ENG 695.

_____   _____
(Print: Student Name)   (Signature)

_____
(Student ID No.)

_____
(Date)

Identify the faculty members who will serve on the committee for the culminating project:

_____   _____
(Print: Director of Capstone Project)   (Signature)

_____
(Date)

_____   _____
(Print: Reader)   (Signature)

_____
(Date)

_____   _____
(Print: Reader)   (Signature)

_____
(Date)

Indicate the day, time, and location of regular semester meetings.

Meeting Day and Time: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Proposal

The student must submit a 1000-1200 word proposal (4-5 double-spaced pages, excluding bibliography) describing his or her project. The proposal should indicate the project's title, specify the specific issues or questions the paper will address, describe the historical scope and theoretical approach to the topic, and indicate any preliminary conclusions that the thesis might reach. The proposal should also include a preliminary bibliography of appropriate length.

The proposal should sketch out an argument that a student *intends* to make Many students will find that some of their initial assumptions will change over the course of time spent researching and writing their capstone paper. Nevertheless, when writing the proposal, students should indicate exactly how they expect their claims will trouble or otherwise respond to current critical and theoretical arguments about their topic. Finally, the proposal should not only indicate the student's primary sources, but also list the most important secondary sources the student expects to use in support of his or her argument. The proposal, like the capstone paper itself, should follow the MLA documentation style.

The proposal represents a student's best estimate of his or her intellectual plans for a lengthy writing project and should not be undertaken lightly. The Director of the capstone project and the two Readers will review and approve the proposal before it is turned in. **They may suggest revisions or request further information before agreeing to sign the application form**.

The Capstone Project

The capstone project will amount to somewhere between 20-25 pages (5,000-7,500 words) of well-written prose, excluding bibliography and footnotes. The capstone paper will respond in a critically, theoretically, and historically informed manner, as appropriate, to a question or problem relevant to the student's chosen area of interest. The student's capstone project will be reviewed and judged by the committee according to standards that demonstrate competence in the discipline. That is, the essay should demonstrate the student's ability to navigate complex critical arguments, theoretical debates, and historical texts and contexts in order to advance an original argument appropriate to the student's area of interest. Likewise, the capstone project should reveal the student's ability to produce advanced academic discourse in English Studies.

Each capstone project topic will be generated by the student. The Director of the capstone project and the two Readers are responsible for guiding the student throughout the research project, but it is not the responsibility of the Director or the Readers to produce a project topic or engage in any of the research or writing of the paper.

The completed capstone project must be circulated in digital format and submitted to the Director of the capstone project at least ten working days prior to the Capstone Symposium.

Indicate the due date of the final draft of the capstone project:

Capstone Project Due Date: _____

Capstone Symposium

In order to receive credit for ENG 695, **students must also participate in the Capstone Symposium**, during which they will present an abbreviated version of their project—approximately 15-20 minutes followed by a question and answer session. The Capstone Symposium may be attended by all members of the MAE faculty and all students in the MAE program.

After the Capstone Symposium, students may be (1) granted the hours for ENG 695 based on a successful presentation, (2) asked by the committee to provide minor written revisions to the project prior to being granted credit, or (3) asked to conduct major revisions requiring a presentation at a second Capstone Symposium before receiving credit for the class.

Indicate the day and time of the Capstone Symposium:

Capstone Symposium Day and Time: _____

Grading

ENG 695 is graded on a pass/fail (P/F) basis. Occasionally, students will find that they need additional time to complete a capstone project. If, after the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in ENG 695, the Director of the capstone project concludes that the student has made adequate progress on, but has not finished his or her paper, then with the permission of the Director of the MAE program, the student may take an "Incomplete" grade in ENG 695 and continue working on the project for one additional semester. On such occasions, once the student has completed his or her capstone project and successfully presented it in a Capstone Symposium, the grade of "Incomplete" for ENG 695 will be changed to a "Pass" grade.

If a student does not complete and successfully defend his or her thesis within one semester from the end of the semester in which the student initially enrolled in ENG 695, a grade of "F" will be recorded for ENG 695, and the student will be dismissed from the MAE program.