BLA Capstone Project Instructions

Welcome to the BLA Capstone course. In this course, you will have the opportunity to combine in-depth knowledge in your two BLA concentrations (and any minors) with interdisciplinary perspectives and methods to create your own independent project. Three types of projects are available: an original research paper, creative artwork, or community action/internship.

As for overall requirements, all BLA Capstone projects require a project prospectus, reference list, written work, and oral/visual presentation. However, as described below, the specific requirements for these components, and the overall project, vary depending on which type you choose. So be sure to read over the guidelines for each project choice carefully, and follow the ones for your particular project type. If you feel these instructions need to be adjusted somewhat to fit your project, please schedule a meeting with your BLA Capstone course professor.

In addition to working with your BLA Capstone course professor on this project, you may also consult with additional faculty members in your BLA concentrations (and any minors) as well.

BLA Capstone Project Research Paper Choice

For this choice, you will design and conduct an interdisciplinary research study integrating your two BLA concentrations and/or minor. The topic you choose is up to you – but it must be one that is suitable for and benefits from interdisciplinary analysis.

1) Prospectus. Your research prospectus should be completed before your start your study. It should include the following:

- Explanation of your research topic, including why you chose it, any prior experience you have had with this topic, and why it requires an interdisciplinary approach
- Preliminary list of readings connected to this topic
- Key research question(s)
- Proposed methodology (i.e., what method will you use to collect and analyze data, and will your study involve working with others?)
- Preliminary goals for your study
- Any concerns or questions

This prospectus will be evaluated according to 1) Suitability of topic and references; 2) Detailed explanation; 3) Inclusion of all points listed above; 4) Clarity and accuracy of writing.

(20 pts)
2) **IRB Review.** If your research study involves human subjects, and you are intending to present the results publically (i.e., outside of our classroom), you will need to complete and submit an IRB application. If you are in doubt whether or not this is necessary, please discuss this with your professor.

3) **Reference List.** Using an appropriate style for reference lists, you should complete a reference list of resource materials for your topic. This may be expanded upon as you complete your research. You should use the appropriate style/format for your particular BLA concentrations; if they use different styles/formats, you may choose either one. This reference list will be evaluated according to 1) Suitability and comprehensiveness of references; 2) Use of appropriate and accurate style/format.

(15 pts)

4) **Written Paper.** Your final research paper should include 20---25 pages of content (excluding footnotes, reference list and appendix). Appropriate style/format should be used for citations, footnotes, and references according to your BLA disciplines. The organization may vary somewhat according to the interdisciplinary focus, but in general papers will include the following:

- Title
- Introduction, including an explanation of the interdisciplinary focus
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Data Analysis
- Conclusion
- Reference List
- Optional: Appendix with additional materials (i.e. interview transcripts, etc.)

This final paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) Strength of interdisciplinary thesis and analysis; 2) Insight and thoughtfulness; 3) Clarity of organization; 4) Detailed explanation and analysis of data; 5) Clarity and accuracy of writing; 6) Use of appropriate style for citations, footnotes, and reference list.

(45 pts)

5) **Oral/Visual Presentation.** During the final week of the semester, all students in the BLA Capstone course will design an oral/visual presentation to share their projects with our class. This presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long, and should include the following:

- Overview of the research process for your project, from initial expectations and plans to final product.
- Explanation of the interdisciplinary focus and approach used in your project.
Consideration of your most important research findings and their implications.

What you would do differently if you could do this research again; what future research projects are needed to expand on your findings.

This final presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) Suitability of presentation design for a classroom audience; 2) Organizational clarity and connections between presentation parts; 3) Appropriate use of visuals (i.e., PowerPoint, video, etc.); 4) Use of citations and references in appropriate style as needed. (20 pts)

TOTAL: 100 points

BLA Capstone Project Creative Artwork Choice

This project is most suitable for students with BLA concentrations or minors in Art History, Studio Art, Digital Media, Writing, or Music. Using your background in one or more of these areas, you will be required to create an original artwork involving an interdisciplinary theme or approach.

1. Prospectus. Your artwork prospectus should be completed before your start your study. It should include the following:

- Explanation of the artwork you are proposing to create, including why you chose it, any similar projects you have done, and how it will demonstrate an interdisciplinary approach. You may also include how this project connects with any personal experiences.
- Preliminary list of readings connected to this artwork
- Proposed method and materials needed for artwork
- Proposed goals for your artwork, including any potential audiences or locations
- Any concerns or questions

This prospectus will be evaluated according to 1) Interdisciplinary approach and suitability of artwork for a course project; 2) Detailed explanation; 3) Inclusion of all points listed above; 4) Clarity and accuracy of writing. (20 pts)

2) Reference List. Using an appropriate style for reference lists, you should complete a list of resource materials for your artwork. This may be expanded upon as you complete your project. You should use the appropriate style/format for your particular BLA concentrations; if they use different styles/formats, you may choose either one.

This reference list will be evaluated according to 1) Suitability and comprehensiveness of references; 2) Use of appropriate and accurate style/format. (15 pts)
3) **Creative Artwork.** Requirements for your final artwork will be discussed and arranged on an individual basis with your BLA Capstone professor and advisors in your BLA concentrations and/or Minors. Overall, this must be an original project with an interdisciplinary theme or approach.

Your completed artwork will be evaluated according to 1) Originality, 2) Aesthetic design, 3) Use of appropriate materials and methods, and 4) Interdisciplinary theme/methods. (25 pts)

4) **Written Reflection/Analysis.** As you work on your art project, you must write a reflection/analysis of your creative process. This should include the following:

- Origin of the idea for the artwork and initial expectations, including how it uses an interdisciplinary theme or focus
- Discussion of similar work you have done in the past, and any connections to the work of other artists
- Explanation of the interdisciplinary focus of your artwork
- Regular log of your work on the project, including personal reflections on the process
- Final reflection on the finished artwork, including any questions it raises, and how it may be displayed, shown or performed in the future.

Your written reflection/analysis will be evaluated according to its clear explanation, detailed description, inclusion of all points mentioned above, use of appropriate citations and references, and accuracy of writing. (20 pts)

5) **Oral/Visual Presentation.** During the final week of the semester, all students in the BLA Capstone course will design an oral/visual presentation to share their projects with our class. This presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long, and should include the following:

- Detailed explanation of the artistic process for your project, from initial expectations and plans to final product.
- Consideration of the interdisciplinary themes involved in your artwork
- What, if anything, you would do differently if you could do this project again; any plans for public presentation.
This final presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
1) Suitability of presentation design for a classroom audience; 2) Organizational clarity, including all required presentation parts, and connections between these parts; 3) Appropriate use of visuals (i.e., PowerPoint, video, etc.); 4) Use of citations and references in appropriate style as needed. (20 pts)

TOTAL: 100 points

**BLA Capstone Project Community Action and/or Internship Choice**

For this project, in collaboration with your community partner(s), you will design and conduct an interdisciplinary community action project integrating your two BLA concentrations and/or minor. In some cases, this may also include an internship. The community site and action issue you choose is up to you and your community partner – but it must be one that is suitable for and benefits from an interdisciplinary approach. It also must involve at least 30 hours of community service over the course of the semester.

1) **Prospectus.** Your project prospectus should be completed before your start your study. It should include the following:

- Explanation of your community action project, including why you chose it, how it will be helpful, any prior experience you have had with this issue, and why it requires an interdisciplinary approach
- Description of your community partner(s), including information about their support and involvement in this project
- Preliminary list of project resources (i.e., readings, websites, contacts, etc.)
- Preliminary project goals
- Proposed timeline and methodology for the project (i.e., how will you accomplish project goals?)
- Any concerns or questions

This prospectus will be evaluated according to 1) Suitability of project for an interdisciplinary approach; 2) Support and involvement of community partner(s); 3) Inclusion of all points listed above; 4) Clarity and accuracy of writing. (20 pts)

2) **IRB Review.** If your community action project involves human subject research (i.e., conducting a survey or interviews), and you are intending to present the results publically (i.e., outside of our classroom), you will need to complete and submit an IRB application. If you are in doubt whether or not this is necessary, please discuss this with your professor.
3) **Reference list.** Using appropriate reference list style, you should complete a list of resource materials for your community action project. This may be expanded upon as you complete your research. You should use the appropriate style/format for your particular BLA concentrations; if they use different styles/formats, you may choose either one. This reference list will be evaluated according to 1) Suitability and comprehensiveness of references; 2) Use of appropriate and accurate style/format.

(15 pts)

3) **Community Action Project.** Requirements for your community action project will be discussed and arranged on an individual basis with your BLA Capstone professor, community partner, and advisors in your BLA concentrations and/or Minors. Overall, this project must be a mutually beneficial collaboration using an interdisciplinary theme or approach.

4) **Journal/Portfolio (Fieldnotes).** As you work at your community site, you should keep detailed fieldnotes, being sure to use concepts from your BLA disciplines/minor as well as interdisciplinary approaches to understand and reflect on your experiences and observations. Additional guidelines for these reflections may be developed in consultation with your BLA Capstone professor, according to the focus of your particular project. Your writing may be organized in either an online portfolio or in a typed journal. Appropriate style/format should be used for citations and references according to your BLA disciplines. In general, you should include reflections regarding the following:

- Your own initial reactions to community service work at this site
- An overview of the physical and social environment
- Discussion of problems or concerns that arise, including honest appraisal of mistakes, misconceptions and ethical concerns
- How disciplinary and interdisciplinary insights and methods may be useful in understanding the problems and opportunities at your community site
- Explication of the process of working on project goals
- Evaluation regarding what was successful, what could have been improved
- Consideration of future steps and sustainability

This journal/portfolio will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) Strength of interdisciplinary explanation and analysis; 2) Insight and thoughtfulness; 3) Detailed description of observations and experiences; 4) Clarity and accuracy of writing; 5) Use of appropriate style for citations and reference list.

(35 pts)
5) **Oral/Visual Presentation.** During the final week of the semester, all students in the BLA Capstone course will design an oral/visual presentation to share their projects with our class. This presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long, and should include the following:

- Overview of the process for your community action project, from initial expectations and plans to final accomplishments and future plans.
- Explanation of your interdisciplinary focus and approaches
- Consideration of what was most impactful about your work and that of your community partners
- What you would do differently if you could do this project again; what steps you may like to take in the future

This final presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 
1) Suitability of presentation design for a classroom audience; 2) Organizational clarity, including all required presentation parts, and connections between these parts; 3) Appropriate use of visuals (i.e., PowerPoint, video, etc.); 4) Use of citations and references in appropriate style as needed. (20 pts)

6) **Community Partner Evaluation.** If you choose the Community Action/Internship project, in addition to evaluation by your BLA Capstone professor (and any other academic advisors for your project), you will also be evaluated by your community partner. Criteria for this evaluation include the following: 1) Reliability and attendance; 2) Problem-solving/creativity; 3) Interaction with others at the community site; 4) Ability to follow through with plans; 5) Impact of the project at the community site (10 pts)

TOTAL: 100 pts.