



Senior Capstone Project Overview

NCF Mission:

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, New College Franklin disciples students through the liberal arts for wisdom, virtue, and service.

Definition of Senior Capstone Project:

The Senior Capstone Project provides an opportunity for graduating seniors to richly engage an aspect(s) of their education at New College Franklin. It is intended to be a focused outworking of a Christian liberal arts education. The project entails an extended and concentrating period of engagement. As part of a student's ongoing education and in light of the true communal nature of learning, this is not solely or chiefly a private endeavor of the student, but rather is developed with significant input from the Dean's Cabinet and the student's advisor. The project may be fulfilled in part or *in toto* by a course of study and writing, through an apprenticeship, or through a creative production as determined jointly with the Dean's Cabinet, Advisor, and student during the planning phase of the project.

3 Credits (1 credit in spring of Junior year, 1 credit each semester of Senior year)

Coordinator: Dean of Academics

General Requirements:

The Project must engage with some aspect of the student's education at NCF which they wish to develop. The project may be intellectual, productive (artistic), practical, or some blend of the three. The project will be carried out under the guidance of an advisor and may involve some form of outside apprenticeship if appropriate and approved. As a general guideline, a two-credit course typically requires 150 hours of study. Students can expect to dedicate this much time to the fulfillment of the Capstone Project.

A project must demonstrate significant intellectual rigor. Therefore, the Dean's Cabinet will help students determine appropriate endeavors, as well as their objectives and requirements. For instance, a student may be required to supplement a project with further reading, research, or writing. On the other hand, the nature of some projects may not require additional facets of study or writing. Each project will be assessed individually and is subject to the judgment of the Dean's Cabinet.

Process

I. Planning Stage

The Dean of Academics or Coordinator of the Capstone will meet with Juniors twice in the fall semester to prepare them for the initial stages of the project.

The first meeting, potentially in October, will cover the description of the Capstone project and its requirements and also answer general questions. Sample proposals will be provided and past projects will be discussed. During that meeting, students and faculty will set a time to meet and brainstorm ideas at a future date.

The second meeting, over a meal if possible, will focus on potential directions each student is thinking of pursuing. This is a very tentative stage which serves to help get Juniors think about their interests, possible directions, and what kind of projects will be viable, fruitful, and fitting. This meeting will be held in November.

As students begin to think about potential projects, there are a number of questions they can ask themselves:

- What topics, texts, classes, or practices did I enjoy?
- What would I like to explore or develop that I have learned here?
- What medium might I work in (research, art, creative writing, etc.
- Who might I imagine working with in light of this topic?
- What sections or focus(es) of the curriculum is this tied to?

Moral Philosophy
 Quadrivium
 Theology
 Trivium
 Applied Studies

A student should be able to make a strong connection between their general project plans and concrete aspects of the curriculum at New College Franklin. It may also be helpful to have two or three potential project ideas or topics areas early on.

I. Rough Draft Proposal

The Rough Draft proposal is a rough draft which is in no way binding. This allows the Dean's Cabinet to review, make adjustments, suggestions, and direct students to qualified advisors. Students do not pick out their own advisors beforehand. It is recommended that students have a few viable project ideas in mind. Students may even present more than one option to the cabinet in their informal write up. The cabinet retains the right to make required adjustments, suggestions, as well as to approve or deny a project.

The **Rough Draft Proposal** should be a minimum of one full page which includes:

- A description of the project
- Its objectives
- The steps necessary to complete the project
- A description of how it connects to the program, including specific classes and/or texts
- The challenges they foresee to successful completion.

A student who does not do submit this Rough Draft Proposal in a timely manner may experience delays and fall behind schedule. Their proposal will go through whatever drafts, changes, reformations indicated by the Dean's Cabinet, until approval.

*Examples of Dean's Cabinet **Responses**:*

Joe wishes to write a collection of sonnets for his project. The Dean's Cabinet determines that Joe must do readings which involve ten primary and secondary sources. Joe and his advisor determine those sources. Joe's advisor also requires a written analysis of the sonnet form that is fifteen pages.

Sarah wishes to write a short story. The Dean's Cabinet approves. Her advisor requires her to read several short stories as well as a book on writing. Her only written work is the short story.

Zack wishes to write on the natural law. The Dean's Cabinet approves and suggest a minimum page length of 30 pages. Zack and his advisor select primary and secondary sources.

Luke wishes to apprentice under a pastor. The Dean's Cabinet first determines that this will be a substantive, non-secretarial role which will involve a rich course of study, reading, and practice. The Dean's Cabinet requires Luke to write a shorter academic paper of twenty pages or a fifteen-page creative non-fiction spiritual reflection to compliment the apprenticeship.

II. Approval and Advisor

After the Dean's Cabinet has approved the generic project plans and made all suggestions, the Dean's Cabinet will make a recommendation of an advisor and the student will establish formal plans to work with that advisor by contacting them and requesting that their services. An advisor must be available, willing, and qualified to lead them through the project.

The **advisor** does not merely approve of a project. An advisor helps shape a project, makes significant suggestions, including necessary, useful, or substantive changes, especially in the writing of the **Formal Proposal**. Please see Sample Formal Proposal document available from Head of Capstone. Students are expected to take required advice and consider suggestions seriously. Records will be kept regarding this process and taken into account during assessment. Students who do not meet regularly with an advisor or do not follow advisor's directions may fail to obtain a passing mark.

Students are required to meet with their advisor a minimum of seven times.

Students will be directed to an advisor by the Dean's Cabinet. Students have input on this selection but not carte blanche. The advisor should be someone who can effectively lead and mentor them during this project. There should be a real fit and not merely a preference of personality. Advisors must have willingness and availability. They should generally be faculty members.

III. Advisor Input/Requirements.

The advisor is an integral aspect of the development, revising and completing of the project.

The advisor will serve as a mentor who will:

- Meet with student a minimum of seven times
- **Help develop and review the student's Formal Proposal including all its details using Sample Document as guide**
- Approve of/suggest readings for a reading list where appropriate
- Review and suggest changes to a project
- Record:
 - The occurrence of each meeting on populi
 - Note progress or lack thereof regarding objectives
- Provide a final suggested grade or level of achievement
- Report any noncompliance or reasons which may result in an incomplete or failure

After each meeting **Student's** should record:

- The content of that meeting
- Progress with objectives
- Suggestions or Requirements made by Advisor
- Meeting Date

Any problems which students or advisors encounter should be brought to the attention of the Dean of Academics

IV. Formal Proposal

The initial work of the **student and advisor** will be to crystalize the details of the Formal Proposal, including all the steps and objectives necessary for the successfully complete the project and requirements (including but not limited to, readings, deadlines, objectives, etc.) Having done this, a **Formal Proposal** will be signed by the student and advisor and submitted to the Dean of Academics. This Formal Proposal is due the second week of **April**. For details of Formal Proposal see 'VIII. General Requirements', at the bottom of this document.

V. Outworking of Project

The student is responsible for the timely completion of their project. They will arrange for the fulfilment of all meetings and requirements. They are responsible for the submission of all

paperwork and keeping track of deadlines.

VI. Assessment

Spring Semester Junior year, the advisor and Dean's Cabinet will jointly assess the Capstone Project and determine whether a student will pass, as well as the level of recognition they will receive. The advisor will propose an initial mark. The Dean's Cabinet will review their suggestion and make a final decision. Evaluation will take into consideration the project itself, whether it meets its stated objectives, paperwork, meetings, as well as the timely manner of completion. Failure to meet an objective will not necessarily mean failure. The Dean's Cabinet retains the right of final judgment.

The following can result in the declaration of incomplete or failure:

- Failure to attend meetings with advisors
- Failure to attend meetings by scheduled date
- Failure to take required advice or make changes required by advisor
- Failure to meet major objectives

The project will be assessed for as pass fail. In addition, it will be recognized with

- Summa Cum Laude (P)
- Magna Cum Laude (P)
- Cum Laude (P)
- Satis (P)
- Minima (P)
- Aberior or Incon (F)

VII. Presentation

Seniors who have successfully completed this project will present their paper, project, or a summary of their work and experience in the late spring.

VIII. General Requirements:

Senior Capstone Steps:

1. Rough Draft Proposal
2. Approval w/ any stipulated changes
3. Work with the Faculty Advisor
4. Signed Formal Proposal Submission, developed alongside advisor
5. Completion of Project and Submission of all Paperwork
6. Presentation

Rough Draft Proposal Check List

The proposal should be a minimum of one full page which includes:

- A description of the project
- Its objectives

- The steps necessary to complete the project
- A description of how it connects to the program, including specific classes and/or texts
- The challenges they foresee to successful completion.

Formal Proposal:

The Formal Proposal should be **developed together with advisor** and must include:

- 1) A revised version of the approved project in narrative form
- 2) A bullet point list of major and minor objectives with expected dates of completion
- 3) A bullet point list of major and minor steps with expected dates of completion
- 4) A reading list if required
- 5) A form indicating acceptance into an approved apprenticeship (if appropriate)
- 6) A statement that the student understands all requirements and the consequences which may result if they failure to execute this plan.
- 7) **Signature of Advisor prior to submission to Dean's Cabinet**
- 8) Signature of Dean's Cabinet Representative

**Samples of successful Formal Proposals will be shared with students and advisors and are available upon request.*

Deadlines

- 3rd Week of February, Spring Semester, **Junior Year:** Rough Draft Proposal Due
- 2nd Week of April **Junior Year:** Formal Proposal Submission Due with signature of advisor
- Fall Semester, Senior Year:
 - By Second Week of Semester
 - 1st Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Fall Semester, Senior Year
 - By seventh Week of Semester
 - 2nd Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Fall Semester, Senior Year
 - By thirteenth Week of Semester
 - 3rd Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Spring Semester, Senior Year
 - By Second Week of Semester
 - 4th Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Spring Semester, Senior Year
 - By fifth Week of Semester
 - 5th Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Spring Semester, Senior Year
 - By tenth Week of Semester
 - 6th Meeting and Paperwork Due
- Final Submission of Project Materials and paperwork (13th Week of Semester)
- Presentation (TBA)