UIC IDEAS (Interdisciplinary Education in the Arts) CAPSTONE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Jared Kelley-Hudgins (BA '18), *Atmospheric Orchestra* installation at UIC Earth Day Sustainability Fair, 2018

Capstone Overview

The IDEAS Capstone Project is typically pursued in the final two semesters at UIC, building upon the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the undergraduate years. The capstone project grants students the time to focus on the production, discussion and theorization of subjects encountered throughout coursework in the College of Art, Design and Architecture (CADA) and the larger community of UIC.

The Capstone may focus on scholarly research or theory, creative visual or audio work, or design innovation or application. All projects develop professional skills, whether through rigorous inquiry, writing, crafting, or public presentation.

While IDEAS capstones can take virtually any form as agreed upon by the student and faculty advisors, collaborative projects are especially welcome as they both encourage larger and more complex projects as well as providing a supervised space for developing the skills of collaborative inquiry, task management, and project management.

In this way, IDEAS Capstone Projects challenge students to work independently or as a member of a team, develop critical and analytical skills, take risks, and see themselves as part of a global network of creatives, makers, activists, and thinkers.

Capstone Goals

While individual capstone projects may vary widely, the goals of the capstone process are the same. Upon completion of of the IDEAS capstone project, students will:

1. gain the ability to actualize and articulate a vision
2. learn to articulate the relevance and merits of a project before deciding to undertake it
3. develop lifelong learning skills related to advanced independent work (time management, overcoming challenges, etc.)
4. exercise analytical approaches to creative or scholarly challenges
5. address questions or critiques levied during the research or creative process in a mature and professional manner
6. understand and articulate the context of a question or challenge before and while engaging with it
7. gain experience in expressing complexity within analytical or creative expression to a wider audience
8. demonstrate scholarship, expertise, or proficiency in subjects they feel passionate about
9. build upon and deepen prior coursework experiences to gain a more mature understanding of the subject(s)
10. gain a tangible portfolio piece or analytical research experience that can be directly applied to a variety of future pursuits, such as job applications, graduate study, or entrepreneurial efforts

Capstone Timeline

Semester	Tasks	Deadline
After joining the IDEAS major	• Meet with IDEAS faculty; discuss interests, past/current courses that inspire you • Discuss possible ideas with other students or professors	
Junior Year (Spring Semester)	• Discuss possible capstone ideas during advising sessions with IDEAS faculty and college advisor • Look at capstone examples on the IDEAS website • Attend the IDEAS capstone planning meeting • Attend the organizational meetings for specialty capstone courses (Design capstones meeting lead by Design faculty, etc.) • Apply for specialty capstone courses (Art 401 & 402, Design capstones)	Emails will be sent out early in the semester with dates for organizational meetings.
Senior Year (Fall Semester)	• Register for IDEA 410** • Develop and submit a proposal for capstone, which includes description and timeline • Attend class and present occasional updates on capstone progress • Submit a progress report via your capstone website	End of Week 2 End of Week 5 End of Week 15
Senior Year (Spring Semester)	• Register for IDEA 410 • Attend class and present occasional updates on capstone progress • Submit relevant final capstone deliverables; submit capstone portfolio website with all relevant documentation • Attend and present capstone during final IDEAS celebration	End of Week 2 End of Week 15 ~ Week 13-15

**These bullet points refer to the IDEA 410 capstone schedule. Students admitted to the Art Studio (ART 401/402) or Design capstones will follow guidelines set by faculty in those departments.

Capstone Course Progressions

There are two general paths for capstone coursework in IDEAS: completion through application and admission to the Art Studio (ART 410/402) or Design Capstone courses (DES 420/421, DES 430/431, DES 440/441, DES 452/453), or enrolling in IDEA 410. Art Studio and Design Capstone progressions each have their own application process, and once accepted, IDEAS students join that cohort to fulfill capstone requirements. These capstone progression possibilities and their requirements are detailed below.

Sienna Peterson (BA '19), documentation of painting in-progress, Art Studio Capstone Project

I.   Art Studio (ART 401/402)

A. Portfolio Review

Entrance into the Art Studio track necessitates the creation of an art portfolio, and admittance through a portfolio review by faculty of the Art Department. Ideally, the student will have taken a variety of classes within the Art Department at UIC and gained familiarity with more than one concentration (photography, moving image, new media, and painting). Work from these art courses will make up the majority of the portfolio.

Early in the Spring semester of the students' junior year, notification will be sent out with dates for the art faculty portfolio review.

For more information about the creation of portfolios and the review process, contact IDEAS faculty.

B. Enrollment in ART 401 and ART 402

If accepted into the Art Studio track, students will enroll in ART 401: Senior Critique (6 credits[1]) in the Fall of their senior year, and ART 402: Senior Thesis (6 credits) during the Spring. Successful completion of ART 401 and ART 402 will fulfill the requirements for the IDEAS capstone project.

Yusuf Patel (BA '19), IDEA website banner, 2018

II. Design Capstones (DES 420/421, DES 430/431, DES 440/441, DES 452/453)

A. Application Process

Entrance into the Design Capstone courses necessitates attendance at a mandatory capstone meeting, as well as an application to the Design Department. Early in the Spring semester of the students' junior year, notification will be sent out with the date of this mandatory meeting.

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[1] It is important to note that the Art Studio track capstone for IDEAS is 12 credits, while both Design and IDEA capstone courses account for 8 credits. In this way, enrollment in the Art Studio track demands more course contact time than other capstone options, and should be considered when choosing an IDEAS capstone route.

Questions regarding the meeting and application guidelines should be directed to Design faculty and advising.

B. Enrollment in DES 420/421, DES 430/431, DES 440/441, DES 452/453

Upon applying for the Design capstones, students will be asked to rank the progression they prefer. If accepted into the Design capstone program, IDEAS students will be assigned to a particular progression dependent upon portfolio review. Successful completion of DES 420/421, DES 430/431, DES 440/441, or DES 452/453 will fulfill the requirements for the IDEAS capstone project.

Lorena Hernández (BA '19), distributing plants and seed bombs at UIC Earth Day Sustainability Fair, 2018

III.   IDEA 410

The IDEA 410 progression—enrolling in the IDEA 410: Interdisciplinary Capstone for IDEA Majors (4 credits) course twice—does not require an application process or portfolio. Students majoring in IDEAS may enroll in the IDEA 410 course two semesters before they plan to graduate, ideally in the Fall semester. The course focuses on conceiving, proposing, planning, and completing a project either individually, or in a group.

Projects from different disciplines will vary in form and design, but the processes below allow for the following general groupings. These two designations, the "analytical/scholarly thesis" or "creative arts project" are generalizations of capstone

approaches within the rubric of the IDEA capstone program, but outline helpful ways in which interdisciplinary projects may be approached.

General Types of IDEAS Capstones

A. Analytical/Scholarly Thesis

An analytical or interpretive capstone project is inquiry-based research driven by the investigation of a gap in academic knowledge represented by the current peer-reviewed academic literature. This category of capstone is inclusive of, but not limited to, the disciplines within the College of Art, Design and Architecture (CADA), but also interdisciplinarity in the disciplines found across colleges and departments at UIC.

B. Creative Arts Project

A creative capstone project is an expressive exploration of a political, cultural, economic, and/or social issue. Students need to have sufficient previous experience within the artistic medium and knowledge of theory in the field, by way of previous coursework and independent artistic practice throughout CADA. Students also need to have sufficient knowledge of relevant practitioners whose work their capstone project engages. Students are encouraged to engage more than one of the creative fields of interest (e.g., Creative Writing, Music, Theater, Photography, Moving Image, New Media Art, Painting, Photography, Performance, Sculpture, etc.) in conceiving their final capstone project.

Individual and Group of IDEAS Capstone Duties

A. Individual Capstone Projects

An IDEAS student engaging in an individual capstone will be responsible for all aspects of the project. These requirements—the written documentation on the website, as well as the public presentation—will be completed by the student within the timeframe specified in the IDEA 410 course. More information about these requirements is detailed below.

B. Group Capstone Projects

Students may work as members of a team on larger projects. However, each student must individually carve out a portion of this group project for their capstone documentation. This includes producing their own written documentation website, emphasizing their particular role in the team-based research or creative project by delineating their individual contribution within their own progress journal. Group work will necessitate that written documentation focus on a critical self-analysis of the student's experience in

IDEAS, and how the Capstone Project is the culmination of this experience. Group capstone students will give their public presentation together, but each participant will need to present their own contributions to the project.

IDEA 410 Capstone Requirements

1. Written/Website Documentation

Students are required to log all capstone documentation—proposals, progress-tracking media, and final assessments—on their capstone project website. Websites for each project will be provided by the Digital Humanities Initiative through UIC's library system. The Content Management System (CMS) for each website will be WordPress (unless other arrangements are made with IDEAS faculty, dependent upon student skills).

A significant portion of IDEA 410 will focus on project management; the website will allow the student to track their own progress, save documentation, and ultimately, form a portfolio and virtual gallery for capstone projects. Digital Humanities Initiative Projects will initially live on the UIC library server, but after graduation, can be migrated to a personal domain.

The specifics and timeline for the website will be detailed throughout the two semesters of IDEA 410.

The website will be used to collect and display the following documents:

a. Proposal

The crafting of the proposal for the capstone project will encompass a significant amount of the first weeks of IDEA 410. While the content and form of the proposal may depend substantially on the student and the disciplines in which it is produced, it will contain the following information:

   i. Purpose and objectives
The statement of purpose will be two to three double-spaced pages, and will include the following information:

1. a clear statement of the design, creative, or theoretical issue that the student is attempting to tackle through an original work;

2. background on the artistic field or technological area in which the student is attempting to make a contribution (i.e., what has been done in this area of creative arts or technological design in the past and how this frames the student's approach);

3. discussion of how the design, technological, or artistic product was conceived

ii. Methodology

Capstone students should include one to two pages describing how they will approach the objectives listed in the "Purpose and objectives" section of the proposal. For example, creative projects may focus on the creation of a series of preliminary sketches before a final form takes shape. A more process-based approach may depend upon repetition. Research-based projects may depend more on library or archival research; journalistic approaches may necessitate interviews. These methods should be detailed and explained thoroughly in regards to how they relate to the various disciplines reflected in the objectives of the project.

iii. Tentative timeline

A timeline should be included, based upon guidelines and expectations shared during the IDEA 410 course. While the timeline may be subject to change, capstone students are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible in the planning of capstone events.

iv. List and description of deliverables

In addition to the website, project documentation may include physical artworks, evidence/documentation of performances, audio of interviews, or a written summary of scholarly research. All deliverables for each unique project will be discussed with IDEAS faculty in advance of completing the proposal.

v. Bibliography

The bibliography, included at the end of the proposal document, must include all scholarly sources used in crafting the proposal. Research methods and appropriate source material will be discussed in the first few weeks of IDEA 410.

All bibliographies will be properly cited using [Chicago Style](#), [MLA Format](#), or another recognized citation style with attention to consistency and appropriateness.

b. Progress journal

Students must keep a progress journal throughout the capstone process. It should document, in an informal way, many of the following items: how the project unfolded over time; how ideas were generated and decisions made; actions, meetings, significant roadblocks and progress; overall themes, plans, and outcomes; noteworthy moments from the project. Careful

documentation of the work will make writing the reflective/contextual essay much easier, and the journal should be used for this purpose. Since it is a journal, it will not be assessed for content so much as for evidence that the student engaged with materials and mentors and regularly reflected on his or her progress in a thoughtful manner.

The style of format of journals will be discussed over the course of the IDEA 410 course. These journal entries will begin whenever the creative process starts in earnest. This is usually after the project proposal is submitted, after the 5th week of the Fall semester.

c. Report/Self-Assessment

Students are required to compose a significant piece of writing that reflects on or contextualizes the capstone project. The content and form of this essay may depend substantially on the student, his or her advisor(s), and the discipline in which it is produced. Significant flexibility is given to the student in determining the essay's aims and goals, and its content and length. In all cases, the essay should demonstrate ownership of the student's own educational process, mastery of existing applicable scholarship or craft in the field of study, and display thoughtful analysis and intellectual rigor.

2. Public Presentation

Students are also required to present their project in the form of a lecture or oral presentation, a poster presentation, a reading or unveiling of a creative work, a concert or other type of performance, or a defense of the undergraduate thesis, preferably with the opportunity for questions, comments, and evaluation by the audience. The IDEAS faculty will organize an event in Week 16 to celebrate the completion of capstones and graduation, providing an ideal time for project presentation. Other venues for public presentation are also allowed; the public presentation may take place in a variety of settings, including (1) an academic symposium outside the university (e.g., a national/international or regional scholarly conference for a particular discipline); (2) a large university-wide event (e.g., UIC's Impact and Research Day in the spring semester); (3) an off-campus gallery or reading event.

A presentation to other students in a class or laboratory setting is not sufficient to satisfy the public presentation requirement. The project must be presented in a context or to an audience beyond the one in which it was developed. Prior to the student's presentation, IDEAS faculty must approve the public presentation event as an appropriate venue.

Responsibilities of the IDEAS Capstone Student:

The IDEAS Capstone student is ultimately responsible for conceptualizing and developing the project and for completing the project within the prescribed two-semester schedule.

Responsibilities of the student include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The student is responsible for fulfilling all Capstone Project requirements within two semesters. If a student has extraordinary circumstances that prevent Capstone requirement fulfillment within two semesters, they should meet as early as possible with IDEAS faculty.
- The student is responsible for networking with faculty outside of the IDEAS Department (or outside CADA) for advising, dependent upon the subject of the capstone. If a student needs help in identifying helpful faculty, they should meet as early as possible with IDEAS faculty to facilitate these relationships.
- The student is responsible for choosing their topic or subject matter based upon their interests and coursework experience. Prior coursework in multiple areas of interest is encouraged.
- The student is responsible for constructing a research or project design appropriate for their topic or subject matter.
- If conducting an individual project, the student must independently construct the research or project design, with support from IDEAS faculty to determine the soundness and integrity of the design.
- If part of a group project, the student must be able to explain in their final self-assessment document their individual contribution to the team project with particular attention to the projects' outcomes.
- If applicable, the student is responsible for learning the technology or secure equipment for the project. The student may need to work with IDEAS faculty to learn how to use new tools or software.
- The student is responsible for interpreting the data and identifying findings, conclusions, and recommended next steps.
- If they choose to present at a venue other than the end of year IDEAS celebration, the student is responsible for proactively arranging the public presentation of their completed capstone project in order to fulfill the public presentation requirement.
- The student is responsible for submitting proposals, check-ins, and all self-assessments through their website by the deadlines each semester.