

Writing Certificate: Capstone Mentor Guide

We are pleased to offer students in the Writing Certificate Program the unique experience of working one-on-one with UI faculty mentors to complete an independent writing project.

Any tenured, tenure-track, lecturer, or visiting faculty is eligible to mentor a capstone project, as are qualified community members. All capstone mentors and projects must be approved by the Writing Certificate Program prior to the start of the term in which the work will be completed.

If you are receiving this handout, one of our students is interested in working with you on their project. In an effort to provide detailed information about the responsibilities of a mentor (and to share a little more about the capstone experience as a whole) please read the following outline and direct any questions to Tracy Meginnis, Coordinator of the Writing Certificate, at tracy-meginnis@uiowa.edu or 319.467.3912.

About the Capstone Project:

- The Independent Capstone Project (WRIT:4000) is an independent version of the guided capstone portfolio course (WRIT:4001) that serves as the culminating project for students enrolled in the Writing Certificate at the University of Iowa.
- The Independent Capstone Project will result in a substantial portfolio of the student's own writing. Past projects include screenplays, collections of poetry, policy reports, songs for rock and hip-hop albums, linked essays, graphic novels, and even professional handbooks for small businesses and nonprofit organizations. Students have also used their Capstone projects to help showcase their talents prior to entering the job market—students have edited and printed anthologies, designed websites, and even learned to record and disseminate podcasts—all with the goal of learning skills they know will benefit their future careers.
- As long as the final project is focused on writing (academic, professional, creative, or a combination), the content of the work is up to the individual student and the mentor.
- Students can enroll in the Independent Capstone Project for 1, 2, or 3 s.h.
 - 1 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least four times during the semester.
 - 2 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least six times during the semester.
 - 3 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least eight times during the semester.
- If the student is pursuing the Independent Capstone Project in place of the Guided Capstone Portfolio course, 1 s.h. is the recommended time commitment.

- Length, format, and other project specifics will be determined by the student and the mentor.
- Faculty mentors and Capstone students must arrange and schedule their meeting times.
- Faculty mentors submit grades via MAUI at the end of the term, evaluating the student based on the effort given throughout the semester. A grading rubric is attached at the end of this document to assist you in assessing your student's project.
- Students and mentors may see samples of past Capstone projects by contacting Tracy Meginnis.
- Students must have a faculty mentor for their project and must submit the Writing Capstone Proposal and Mentor Agreement form prior to registering for the course.

Important Deadlines:

General deadlines are below; semester-specific deadlines will be provided when the Capstone Proposal and Mentor Agreement form is approved.

- Student and faculty mentor must both sign the Capstone Proposal and Mentor Agreement form and submit it to CLAS-Writing-Cert@uiowa.edu by the Thursday of week 1 of the semester (or of the 12-week summer session).
- Faculty mentor must sign the Capstone Midterm Progress Report and the student must submit it (along with a working draft of their project) to CLAS-Writing-Cert@uiowa.edu by 4:30pm on the Friday during week 7 of the semester (or week 6 of the 12-week summer session).
- Faculty mentor must review and provide feedback on the first deposit of both the Capstone Project and its Introduction during week 12 of the semester (or week 9 of the 12-week summer session).
- Faculty mentor must review and evaluate the final deposit of both the Capstone Project and its Introduction, which students will submit to the mentor by the Friday before finals week. A second copy of the final deposit must be submitted electronically to CLAS-Writing-Cert@uiowa.edu by 4:30pm the Friday before finals week. If the meaning of the project is intrinsically tied to its physical form, a hard copy may be submitted to the Tracy Meginnis, Writing Certificate Coordinator.
- Faculty mentor will submit grades in MAUI by the appropriate deadline.

Expectations for Capstone Mentors and Students:

- Writing Capstone students will approach faculty mentors with a draft of their proposal, ready to explain their project, answer questions, and provide reasoning as to why they are requesting to work with the mentor.
- Students and faculty mentors will work together on scheduling meetings. Students who miss meetings without advance notice will see their grade negatively impacted.
- Students and faculty mentors will work together to define goals for individual meetings and set due dates for the upcoming term.
- Faculty mentors will provide insight and guidance throughout the term by reading and commenting on student work, answering questions, and suggesting external resources that might prove valuable to the overall project.
- Students will always submit work to be read/commented on by their faculty mentor at least 72 hours before their next meeting. Mentors are asked to present comments in a timely fashion. Students will submit work via email unless other arrangements have been agreed upon.
- Students will keep faculty mentors informed of major deadlines.
- Faculty and students can contact Tracy Meginnis, Coordinator of the Writing Certificate Program, by email or by scheduling a meeting if there are questions or concerns during the course of the capstone project.

Thank you for your time, and we appreciate your consideration.