

IVSP 420 Capstone Proposal Guidelines

The Individual Studies Senior Thesis/Capstone Project is a significant research project, synthesizing the interdisciplinary course of study of an IVSP program. Students register to take IVSP 420 during their final semester.

The signed proposal is due before registration for IVSP 420:

After consulting with their Faculty Mentor, students must draft a written proposal describing the senior thesis or capstone project and submit a signed copy to the IVSP office. This proposal must be handed in before students can be cleared to register for the course.

The proposal should include but is not limited to the following information:

- What will be studied in the project? This should include a statement of purpose and a justification or rationale for the particular project/topic. Why is this project important? How will this project contribute toward your development? How does this project represent a culmination of your unique IVSP major?
- What will the format be? This should include a plan for organization or presentation. Set out the major components of the project. Indicate major sources of information for the project.
- What is the estimated length of the project?
- Any special requirements for the work?
- Who will be the additional faculty readers of the project? (*see below*)
- When should the student turn in the project to allow for all three readers to assess and grade the work on time?
- How often will the student meet with the mentor to discuss the progress they have made throughout the semester?

The final paper or product will be reviewed by the Faculty Mentor, who has sole responsibility for grading, but must also be read by two other faculty members with expertise in the area of study. These faculty members are selected by the student and Faculty Mentor. Their names are included in the signed proposal. The outside readers will send their comments to the Faculty Mentor, who then forwards them along with her or his own evaluation to the student and to the Individual Studies Program Office. The Faculty Mentor may also request that the student formally present the work to the three readers in a forum for discussion. The requirements are largely at the Faculty Mentor's discretion.

Substance:

Most IVSP 420 final projects are papers--significant written works of research and/or analysis. Other modes of presentation are also possible (in some cases a performance, exhibition, or community service project might be appropriate) and should be proposed for prior approval. When such an option is chosen, the student still must write a significant written reflection/analysis of the experience. IVSP encourages both students and Faculty Mentors to think creatively about the senior project. This Senior Thesis/Capstone Project is the culmination of the student's undergraduate IVSP program. The choice of subject is flexible and entirely up to the student and Faculty Mentor. The subject presumably will be of great interest to the student and the process should be thoroughly engaging and stimulating. Designing, organizing, researching, and writing a major independent study project all contribute toward a significant, even exhilarating learning experience. Students are encouraged to approach their senior project with that spirit. Create a project that you will be proud of!