

Special Project (Capstone C)

Students who have had their proposal approved and who have completed a minimum of 18 credits with a GPA of at least 3.0 in the English MA Online-Hybrid Track for Teachers may register for 595, “Special Project Capstone C.”

In contrast to the other capstone options available to the literary studies MA tracks (Capstone A: the scholarly focused thesis and Capstone B: the broad comprehensive exam), the special project is a case study that combines intensive work on a single text with an overview of the scholarship on the primary text and applies that research and analysis to a specific literary argument or professional context (the classroom, curriculum development, etc.).

Special project capstones provide an opportunity for students to complete an academically rigorous, professional project that contributes in some meaningful way to the discipline and communities to which they belong. The project should reflect an understanding of knowledge related to the discipline or field and an ability to apply this knowledge. Students completing Capstone C receive valuable mentoring by their faculty supervisor and committee members. The special project capstone essay for the English MA is a case study of 25-35 pages focused on a primary text and a clearly defined disciplinary issue, as illustrated in a close reading of the text and an explanation of the relevant scholarship surrounding both the text and the issue addressed. Disciplinary issues may concern literary form, theoretical or historical/social concerns, pedagogical or curricular practices, other public uses of the text, or some combination of these.

While the overall length is less than a thesis, **the capstone essay should meet the following criteria:**

- The essay should clearly define the goals, argument, and context for the project in a brief **introductory section** of no more than two or three pages.
- The essay should provide a substantive **literature review** that explains the relevance to its argument and goals of existing published critical and/or pedagogical views on the primary text.
- The essay should offer a close **textual analysis** of the primary text that illustrates key issues or elements in the text and explains their relevance to the capstone project’s goals and concerns.
- The essay should provide an explanation of and argument for the **relevance** of existing scholarship and/or the need for distinct, or new, perspectives in the interpretation, public reception, and/or teaching of the primary text.
- If relevant, the essay should document and explain any pedagogical or professional **exercises, experiences, or data** used in the project.
- The essay should identify and explain its **conclusions** in relation to the research and close reading presented. The literature review, close reading, and capstone argument or goal

should each work together to support an existing disciplinary perspective or to complicate existing disciplinary or scholarly perspectives in some way.

- The essay should be written in **clear, correct, and organized prose**, appropriate to the graduate level and formatted and documented in accordance with MLA style.

NOTE: Because **the special project proposal** must also be approved by the Graduate Committee and Director of Graduate Studies before the student can register for ENG 595, students are strongly advised to begin working with their special project adviser during the semester before they plan to enroll in ENG 595 and to submit proposals at least **three weeks** before the upcoming semester begins. Students register in ENG 595 using the Capstone Course Registration Form during the regular registration period, i.e. before the end of the drop/add period of the semester.

Process for the Capstone C Special Project:

1. **Identify an area or text of interest and a special project adviser.** Find a project adviser who is expert in the field of inquiry. In consultation with the adviser, choose a central text and decide on project goals. Because it requires substantive investment in planning and researching to identify and design the project, students should start working with their advisers and setting aside time for research and writing in the semester before they plan to register for ENG 595.
2. Develop and revise **the special project proposal** for the Capstone with the adviser, which is then submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Committee as criteria for enrollment in ENG 595: Special Project Capstone C. The proposal should detail the project's primary text, the issues and goals the project addresses, and the research and scholarship on which the student plans to draw.
3. After the Graduate Committee approves the proposal **register for ENG 595**; this step requires permission of the Department Chair.
4. Working with the special project adviser, determine a regular **schedule** of contact and review of work in progress during the semester of ENG 595.
5. Write and revise the **special project capstone essay and annotated bibliography**, revising as directed by the adviser.
6. When the special project is complete, **prepare an abstract** of no more than 500 words.
7. **Submit the special project and abstract to the director for approval.** The student should submit the project at a date which allows adequate time—as defined by the director and second reader—for the essay to be carefully read and, if necessary, revised or corrected before the School of Graduate Studies' final submission deadline.

8. Complete the special project per guidelines of the CCSU School of Graduate Studies, **submit to the English Graduate Committee for signatures**, and then to Graduate College for approval and signatures.
9. **Present the approved special project publicly** at an event organized by either the English Department or its graduate society, typically in the antepenultimate week of the semester before graduation. The presentation is much like a conference paper, 15-20 minutes in length, in which the student presents the argument, chief evidence, and structure of the special project. The presentation is open to the public, and is typically attended by faculty members and students who may ask questions concerning the thesis. Typically, the presentation is made after submitting the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies at a date determined by the Graduate Committee. Alternatively, the student may choose to make the presentation before final submission of the thesis to the director and second reader in order to receive feedback from those in attendance.

Special Project Capstone Essay Organization

Please refer to the guidelines of the CCSU School of Graduate Studies and the Department of English Graduate Committee for capstone formatting requirements. Remember to number and title the sections, as indicated (with project-specific subtitles):

Cover Page

Abstract

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Literature Review
- III. Methodology
- IV. Close Reading
- V. Contributions or Issues in the Secondary Classroom or Other Relevant Material (if used)
- VI. Conclusion
- VIII. Annotated Bibliography (MLA format, 15-20 sources)

For further information concerning formatting, please see the general Graduate Studies Handbook:

<https://www.ccsu.edu/grad/resources/files/specialProjectHandbook.pdf>