

THEA 450 – CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

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Friday 1 pm Askanase B06

The final evaluation of a student's competency for all degree tracks is measured by an independent project within the student's area of emphasis, taken as THEA 450, Capstone Experience. The THEA 450 Capstone is a major project either self-manifested or related specifically to advanced participation in a Theatre NDSU main-stage production in which the student demonstrates competence in his/her area of emphasis. The Theatre Arts Faculty will guide these capstones.

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION

Demonstration of mastery in selected area of theatre through an advanced project in acting, musical theatre, directing, design/technical theatre, playwriting, or dramaturgy. Departmental capstone experience.

The THEA 450 Capstone Course is an applied research project which demonstrates your ability to address challenges presented in your area of emphasis. The appropriate Capstone Project will be at the 'growing edge' of your skill set and knowledge base. You will identify and then apply research to meet the challenge of realizing the performance or development of a particular script/material. BS/BA students are encouraged to synthesize multiple areas of study such as second majors or minors.

ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

The THEA 450 Capstone course measures the following student outcomes:

- (1) ability to recognize and discuss the essential staging demands and creative opportunities inherent in performance materials from a variety of periods, styles and genres
- (2) ability to communicate verbally and/or physically a dramatic idea, situation, scene or character
- (3) ability to use the technical skills of a specialty of theatre
- (4) ability to exploit all appropriate tools and resources in creating a comprehensive, integrated production component (performance or design or technical element)
- (5) (for BFA students only) the ability to employ advanced skills and display versatility in practice of a specialty in production
- (6) (for BFA students only) ability to function as a reliable, responsible, self-motivated, self-disciplined, and flexible member of a creative team.

PROCESS SUMMARY

The THEA 450 Capstone Course consists of three components: Planning, Execution, and Evaluation, all of which are documented in a Final Paper and Portfolio.

PART I - Planning

2-3 semesters before intended graduation:

Identify the challenges (deficits in skill and/or knowledge)

Select the challenge that can be best addressed through applied research

Propose 3 Capstone Projects (2 should be Theatre NDSU mainstage, 1 self-realized)

When the Project is approved:

- Select a Capstone Mentor**
- Select Evaluators**
- Create a Project Plan and Calendar**

PART II – Execution

- Record the process in a *digital* journal or log**
- Paper #1: Research &/or Script work- culminating in a no-less-than-8-page paper summarizing findings**
- Performance Project or Presentation of Research**

PART III – EVALUATION AND REPORT

- Meet with outside respondents**
- Meet with 4 faculty members, including all faculty members in your area**
- Paper #2: Capstone Paper and Portfolio A no-less-than-6-page paper REPORTING and SYNTHESIZING the process**
- A digital appendix of supporting documentation See Chart titled 450 Project Descriptions**

PROCESS EXPLANATION

PART I - PLANNING

2-3 semesters before intended graduation:

Reflect on your education and experiences at NDSU and identify your strengths. Then identify the areas in which growth is still needed. These might be deficits in skills, training, practice, or knowledge. Considering the upcoming Theatre NDSU season, identify appropriate potential opportunities to address those areas of needed growth. Then imagine how the same areas of growth might be addressed through a self-realized project.

Meet with your Academic Advisor to talk through your ideas and discuss potential research plan so that you have at least some vague ideas formulated. After meeting, write a letter of intent that outlines your strengths and weaknesses and how you plan to draw on your strengths and address a weakness through three (3) proposed projects. Two of the projects should be part of the Theatre NDSU mainstage season and one should be self-realized. Some previous self-realized projects include script translations, script development, production work with a community organization, or a program of scenes. Your letter of intent should be *approved by your Academic Advisor* and then distributed to the Theatre faculty via e-mail.

Once your project has been selected and approved you can determine the specifics about your project. At this point you should also select a faculty member to serve as your **Capstone Mentor** to guide you through the artistic aspects of the project. Note: The director of a play in which you are acting or designing CANNOT be your mentor. You should plan to meet with your mentor on an as-needed basis.

Rework your Statement of Intent using only the parts that still applicable. Be sure to describe the knowledge/skill deficit to be addressed, the research and analysis to be done, a possible plan for

applying the research, specific approved dates, time, and location for non-mainstage performances or presentations, who has agreed to serve as your faculty mentor, who has agreed to serve as your outside evaluators (with a one-sentence qualifying bio), as well as how and when you have scheduled the evaluations to occur with both outside and faculty evaluators. This one-page document is your **Project Plan** and is due the second Friday of the semester at class time.

Also due at the second Friday of class is a **Project Calendar** that lays out the entire project from start to finish (using a traditional calendar grid format). Be sure to include production deadlines and due dates for the capstone class. Also include other academic or personal obligations that may impact process. The Project Calendar is due no later than the second Capstone Class meeting. The following are the pre-determined due dates for the capstone:

Project Plan: *Due the second Friday of the semester*

Project Calendar: *Due the second Friday of the semester*

Journal/Log: *Weekly checks at class time*

Presentation #1 Due weeks 4 - 6

Paper #1 Consultation w/ Rooth during weeks 5- 6

Outline of Paper #1 Due Monday of Week 7

Paper #1: Due by class time Week 9.

Outline of Capstone Paper: Monday of Week

Rough Draft of Capstone Paper and Portfolio: *No later than the Monday of Dead Week*

Capstone Paper and Portfolio: *Due no later than the Wednesday of Finals week.* You may request an Incomplete if the Wednesday of Finals Week is less than 4 weeks after the (closing of the) a pre-schedule production. All other self-manifested projects or presentations must be scheduled to allow completion of the paper and portfolio by the assigned due date.

PART II – EXECUTION

Students registered for a 450 will meet weekly for a seminar style class. You will present your research and analysis for discussion and suggestion during class as described below.

Record the process in a *digital journal or log*

Every time you ‘work’ on the project you should make a journal or log entry, including but not limited to rehearsals, coachings, production meetings, shop work, fittings, research sessions, etc.. Sometimes this might be a daily activity and sometimes that may be only once a week. Use the journal format if you like to think things through by writing. Use the log format if making lists and recording short notes about activities and progress is more productive for you. Either format will help you be more focused in your work and help you to recall the process when it is time to write your paper. The journal may include annotated process photos, drawings, and digital media. ***Each entry should answer the questions following questions in some form:*** How did I use my research today? How did I use my analysis today? What was lacking in my knowledge or skills? What can I do to address that? What happened today that significantly impacted my work? These questions will help you to be more intentional about your process.

Research & Script Work

The first half of the semester will focus on research and getting to know the script. Each student will give a 10-minute presentation of their work-in-progress followed by 10-15 minutes of discussion and feedback from the class. These will happen in weeks, 4-6. During Week 6 you will schedule a **Consultation with Rooth** to review your thesis and outline. The **Outline for Paper #1** is due the Monday of Week 7. **Paper #1 Research & Script Work** is a no-less-than-8-page paper which summarizes and synthesizes your findings, which is due by class time Week 9. Please see the rubric for both papers and the *Capstone Project Descriptions* below for more details.

Performance Project or Presentation of Research

The execution phase of your project will culminate either in a public performance or a public research presentation for students engaged in formal research projects or non-realized projects.

PART III – EVALUATION AND REPORT

You must meet with faculty following the performance or presentation to receive oral feedback about your work. Please see the *Capstone Project Descriptions* below for faculty evaluation requirements. You **MUST** also arrange feedback from at least two knowledgeable people from outside the theatre department. These can be local theatre artists, theatre faculty from other universities/colleges, or faculty from other NDSU departments with applicable knowledge base. For example, in the past students consulted faculty from English, Sociology, Psychology, History, and Apparel Textiles. Another option, when it is possible to tape the project, you can work with someone at a distance. Think of this as a networking opportunity or at the very least, an opportunity to practice networking. You need two outside evaluators so arrange for three, so you don't get stuck at the last minute. **NOTE: MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR EVALUATORS EARLY!! THESE ARE LIKELY BUSY PEOPLE!** You may also gather and record feedback from additional sources but a minimum of two knowledgeable responses as described above is required.

The final phase of the project is an extensive report of the design, process, and evaluation of the Capstone Project in paper and portfolio format. **Paper #2: Capstone Paper and Portfolio** is a no-less-than-6-page paper REPORTING and SYNTHESIZING (use section titles for the following):

- How the intent of the project changed
- How the research and script-work influenced the project
- A report of the *actual* process and outcomes, both positive and negative
- A summary of and reaction to the feedback from evaluators
- A rigorous self-evaluation regarding the design and execution of the project
- Harvest the learning in a proposed future course of action.

The Capstone Paper is submitted with the **Digital Portfolio** on a thumb drive which must include the items listed on the chart *450 Project Descriptions*.

These materials can be created digitally or scanned in preparation for submitting the portfolio.

GRADING

Throughout the process the student should

- Communicate in a clear, organized, effective manner
- Work collaboratively and constructively when working with others
- Make reasoned decisions the essential staging demands and creative opportunities inherent in performance materials from a variety of periods, styles and genres;
- Demonstrate an understanding of theories and perspectives of theatre
- Use research skills critically
- Evaluate feedback critically

THEA 450 CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE is graded on the following criteria by the following means:

- A final grade for the capstone project will be assigned after consideration of the following areas:
 - Quality of finished product: 30% (graded by Theatre Faculty)
 - Process, preparation, management, and collaboration: 30% (graded by Capstone Advisor and Mentor in consultation with additional pertinent faculty)
 - Average of 2 Papers: 30% (Graded by Capstone advisor and a faculty reader)
 - Final portfolio: 10% (Graded by Capstone Advisor)
- A grade below a D in **ANY ONE** of the areas listed above will result in a failing grade on the **ENTIRE CAPSTONE.**
- A grade of C or higher is required to pass the course

****Synthesis combines information and ideas from two or more sources. In the case of the capstone you should synthesize:**

Knowledge from your theatre courses
Research and script-work for the capstone project
Your experience (as an artist or researcher) working on the project.
The response from your evaluators (faculty and outside evaluators)