Digital Studies Capstone

**50:209:401**

**Instructors:** Jim Brown and Robert Emmons

**Course Description**

All students in the Digital Studies (DS) program must complete the capstone course prior to graduation. The capstone course serves as a way to demonstrate the skills and expertise you have developed in your DS courses and to demonstrate how you are connecting your DS work to your other courses of study. DS Majors complete a portfolio of all their work to date, and DS Minors complete a project that connects their digital studies work to the studies of their joint major. All students in the capstone will present their work during a public showcase held at the end of the semester.

Projects are either a digital artifact or a piece of writing that addresses some digital technology or concern. The DS program welcomes a wide range of possibilities, and you are encouraged to share your ideas with Professors Brown and Emmons as well as other capstone students.

The portfolio completed by DS majors is a website that gathers together the work you have completed during your time at Rutgers. You will register a domain name and build a website that acts as a public-facing, professional site that showcases your digital work and (if applicable) your writing. DS Majors will also write a 1000-2000 word document in which they will do three things: 1) Reflect on the major themes and trends in the work they have completed in the DS program; 2) Explain and justify the content and organization of the portfolio; 3) Describe their plan for maintaining and updating the portfolio after they leave Rutgers.

We are available to meet throughout the semester to discuss progress on your projects. If you would like to meet, please make an appointment with one of us.

**Important Dates and Deadlines**

You are required to spend three hours per week in the Digital Commons working on your project. You will sign in and sign out with Doreen Wheeler when logging your DS Capstone hours.

While most of your work will be self-directed, we will ask that you submit documentation at various points throughout the semester. The deadlines for those submissions are below, and you will upload your work to a Google Drive folder that we will share with you. We will also provide feedback along the way.

**February 7**

*Projects*: Choose the project that you will complete this semester and develop a one page work plan. What research do you need to do? What software do you need to use? What deadlines are you setting for yourself? These are just some of the questions you can address in this work plan document. While this plan will likely change, it should be a beginning roadmap for the semester.

*Portfolios*: Visit Reclaim Hosting (<https://reclaimhosting.com>) to sign up for a shared hosting account ($30/year for personal (2GB), $50/year for professional (10GB)) and to register a domain name.

As with those completing projects, you should develop a one-page work plan for the semester. In addition, make a list of all of the work you plan to include in your portfolio, and choose a template for your website. If you choose to use Wordpress (which is available via Reclaim Hosting) you may do that, or you may also choose to build a site on your own using HTML and CSS. We recommend these templates if you go that route, but you are free to find others if you’d like: <https://html5up.net/>. (**Note:** Your template might change as you make decisions about what content to include. This is fine, but we’d still like you to choose a template by this date so you can begin to get used to working with HTML and CSS).

**March 6**

*Projects and Portfolios*: 5-minute slide presentation to the group detailing your progress to date. Presentation will be shared to Google Drive as a video, but how that is constructed is your choice. This can be a screencast of your presentation or a video of you presenting.

**April 3**

*Projects and Portfolios*: Full draft/operational prototype and 5-minute slide presentation due (same submissions details as above).

**April 17**

In-person dress rehearsal of final presentations. Meeting will be on a Friday, time TBA.

**May 4 (Monday)**

Final project/portfolio due and final presentations. Meeting time TBA.

**Grading Criteria**

When grading projects and portfolios, here are the criteria (grade followed by criteria) we will be using:

*Capstone Projects*

**A:** The student has completed all weekly capstone hours and has met all deadlines. The project demonstrates a sophisticated and careful engagement with digital technology at the level of both content and design (for a piece of argumentative writing, “design” would account for how the argument is arranged and executed). The project has benefited from extensive revision throughout the semester and also demonstrates that the student has taken instructor feedback into account to make meaningful changes. The final presentation is well designed, observes the stated time limit, clearly articulates the project’s purpose and significance, and was carefully rehearsed.

**B:** The student may have missed some weekly hours or a deadline. The project demonstrates strong engagement with digital technology at the level of both content and design. It is clear that the project has gone through revision and that the student has incorporated feedback. The final presentation explains the project, delivers its argument clearly, demonstrates that the student has considered how to design the presentation, and shows evidence that the student has rehearsed.

**C:** The student missed weekly hours and deadlines. The project demonstrates some engagement with digital technology at the level of both content and design. It is somewhat unclear that the project has benefited from feedback or that it has undergone meaningful revision. The final presentation explains the project and delivers its argument.

**D:** The student missed a significant number of weekly hours and deadlines. The project’s engagement with digital technology at the level of content and design is uneven. The project has not been significantly revised, and the student has not taken feedback into account. The final presentation is lacking in terms of clarity of ideas and design.

**F:** The student missed meetings and deadlines, the project is unclear or incomplete, and there is no evidence of engagement with digital technology. The final presentation is incomplete and unclear.

*Portfolios*

**A:** The student has attended all weekly capstone hours and has met all deadlines. The portfolio is masterfully designed, demonstrates themes and connections in the student’s work, and presents a range of work that makes clear the student’s skills and interests. The portfolio has benefitted from extensive revision throughout the semester and also demonstrates that the student has taken instructor and peer feedback into account to make meaningful changes. The final presentation is well designed, observes the stated time limit, clearly explains the contents of the portfolio as well as its design. The reflective paper is 1000-2000 words and offers detailed reflections on the major themes and trends in the student’s work, clearly explains and justifies the content and organization of the portfolio, and carefully describes the plan for maintaining and updating the portfolio after they leave Rutgers.

**B:** The student may have missed some weekly hours or a deadline. The portfolio is clearly and effectively designed, demonstrates themes and connections in the student’s work, and presents a range of work that makes clear the student’s skills and interests. It is clear that the project has gone through revision and that the student incorporated used feedback. The final presentation explains the project, delivers its argument clearly, demonstrates that the student has considered how to design the presentation, and shows evidence that the student has rehearsed. The reflective paper is 1000-2000 words and offers reflections on the major themes and trends in the student’s work, addresses the content and organization of the portfolio, and provides a plan for maintaining and updating the portfolio after they leave Rutgers.

**C:** The student may have missed weekly capstone hours or deadlines. The portfolio is adequately designed and presents a range of work. The project has gone through some revision and has partially engaged feedback. The final presentation explains the project, offers some evidence that the student considered how the presentation is designed, and shows some evidence that the student has rehearsed. The reflective paper is 1000-2000 words, addresses themes of the student’s work, addresses the content and organization of the portfolio, and provides a plan for maintaining and updating the portfolio after they leave Rutgers.

**D:** The student missed several weekly capstone hours and deadlines. The portfolio is incomplete or uneven and not effectively designed. The project has not been significantly revised, and the student has not taken feedback into account. The final presentation is lacking in terms of clarity of ideas and design. The reflective paper is either too short or too long and is missing key parts.

**F:** The student missed significant numbers of capstone hours and deadlines, the portfolio is unclear or incomplete, and there is no evidence of engagement with digital technology. The final presentation and the reflective paper are incomplete and unclear.