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# Literature Capstone Handbook

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# 1. General Information

The Literature Capstone is a culmination of a student's curriculum through an individual project involving independent research. Through support from existing faculty, students propose, undertake, and write up a research or creative writing project over the course of two consecutive semesters, labelled as Capstone I and Capstone II. Students are encouraged to conduct primary and secondary research, even for creative projects. Fieldwork, however, is not expected at this level. Students are also expected to think very carefully about an appropriate scope of research and production plan for the proposed capstone. The project may also draw from academic coursework, relevant extracurricular activities or practical experience to support the research and realization of the project. At the end of the year, students present their work in a symposium for peers and the greater Fulbright community. This symposium generally takes place before the final submission of their project to incorporate any pertinent feedback received.

The Capstone project demonstrates competency in a primary disciplinary specialization that is optionally supported by secondary and tertiary disciplinary areas. Current full-time faculty in Literature hold expertise in the following fields: modern Vietnamese literature and history, literature of the environment, early modern and contemporary poetry, Asian diasporic literature, creative writing, translation, gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial studies, and medieval, Renaissance, and classical studies. **Projects for which there is no faculty expertise may not be approved.**

For projects other than those outlined in this handbook (thesis or creative writing), students must consult with the prospective advisor(s) early in junior year to determine the suitability and feasibility of the proposed project.

## 1.1. Capstone Learning Objectives (CLOs)

In completing a Capstone, students will be able to:

1. Gain experience proposing, undertaking and managing an independent research project, from start to finish
2. Develop nuanced writing and analytical skills for their specific projects in the thesis or creative format
3. Explore and evaluate the pertinence of various theoretical frameworks beyond the Literature curriculum
4. Demonstrate competency in a primary disciplinary specialization (optionally supported by secondary and tertiary disciplinary areas)
5. Apply skills in the Literature major (i.e. analyzing texts, communicating concepts, developing and revising arguments, drawing connections) in a professionalized context

## Literature Program Learning Outcomes

Students in the Literature major will:

1. (MLO1) demonstrate versatility in reading and textual analysis across different forms, genres, and styles.
2. (MLO2) exhibit sophisticated skills in persuasive and creative expression, both written and oral.
3. (MLO3) evaluate and apply critical methodologies in interpreting literary works
4. (MLO4) critically reflect on the role and value of literature in society.
5. (MLO5) compare historical and transnational literary traditions with attention to social, political and conceptual nuance.

#### Mapping CLOs with MLOs

	MLO1	MLO2	MLO3	MLO4	MLO5
CLO1	x	x	x	x	x
CLO2		x			
CLO3			x	x	
CLO4	x				x
CLO5	x	x	x	x	x

## 1.2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the capstone in Literature, you must meet the following criteria:

- Major GPA: 3.5
- All 100-level major requirements must be complete by the beginning of Capstone I
- No outstanding Incompletes at the time of application.

Capstone applicants will be assessed by the major faculty based on the eligibility criteria and the quality of the proposal.

**NOTE:** Successful capstone applicants must maintain a 3.5 GPA throughout their senior year to be able to earn an Honors for the capstone. Failure to maintain the required GPA will result in the capstone being capped at Pass.

## 1.3. Advising process

Successful applicants will be matched to their first choice of primary and secondary advisor where possible. If the student's first or second preference cannot be accommodated due to the necessity of maintaining a fair distribution of faculty workload, the major capstone coordinator will consult with the student to determine an appropriate solution.

The primary advisor is your first point of contact and should hold expertise relevant to your project, for example, in terms of being a specialist in the project's disciplinary field. The primary advisor may also be your academic advisor in the major. They will be the primary reviewer of your work in progress and, as such, will be the person with whom you meet most frequently.

The secondary advisor can offer you additional feedback where necessary and may represent a disciplinary field outside of Literature (if your project is interdisciplinary). In some cases where the primary advisor is unable to continue, the secondary advisor will assume their role.

You should plan to meet with your primary advisor at least once a month, if not more often. **You are expected to initiate these meetings with your advisors.** The capstone places responsibility on you to be organized and to be responsible in regular communications and submission of work-in-progression to your primary advisor. **Failure to do this will result in the capping of your final submission at Pass.**

#### **REMEMBER:**

- ✓ *Respect your advisor's working hours*
- ✓ *Correspond professionally and courteously*
- ✓ *Use Fulbright email, no social media platforms*
- ✓ *Respect your professor's time*
- ✓ *Be prepared at meetings (with materials, questions) to use your time efficiently*
- ✓ *Take initiative for setting up the meetings (and showing up!)*
- ✓ *Expect meetings to be about 30 minutes*

#### **OTHER EXPECTATIONS:**

- You cannot change your topic without consulting your advisors and getting their approval
- We expect you to demonstrate a steady work ethic, self-organization, and management of your capstone workload with your other coursework
- You need to communicate challenges and questions
- Try to keep up with your timeline
- Manage your expectations in terms of what you can accomplish

### **1.4. Capstone I**

In Capstone I, you will actively conduct research and refine your project proposal and plan. You will focus on gathering and organizing your information or other materials needed to realize your project. In some cases, students may begin the very initial stages of production (subject to your advisors' approval).

#### **Capstone I expectations:**

##### At the beginning of the semester:

- Meet with your advisor as early as possible and set a regular meeting schedule and expectations for submissions with timeline.

##### Midterm submission(s):

- Revised project proposal and/or research questions – in the form of an introduction or prospectus
- Initial close readings
- Field journal extracts (for research)

- First drafts or excerpts of creative writing

End-of-term submission (very likely a combination of some of the following):

- A literature review or annotated bibliography
- A sample chapter, introduction or preface
- Selections or excerpts of creative writing
- Or other materials to be decided on in consultation with your advisors

## 1.5. Capstone II

In Capstone II, you will focus more on production, whether it be writing your thesis or realizing a creative project. You might continue to do some research or information gathering, but this should taper off early in the semester so that you can focus on producing and editing your final submission.

In Capstone II, you will also be required to formally present your work, likely in a capstone symposium.

### Capstone II expectations:

Midterm submission(s):

- drafts of chapters
- An entire rough draft of a thesis
- An entire rough draft of creative work

End-of-term submission:

- A revised and professionally presented written thesis or creative work
- Present your work formally, likely in a capstone symposium

## 1.6. IRB Approval

If your project requires working with human subjects through processes that include, but are not limited to, in-person or online interviews, direct or indirect observations, opinion surveys, etc., you will be responsible for obtaining approval from Fulbright University Vietnam's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval process involves taking an online module to learn about IRB procedures, as well as submitting an application detailing your research design and plan for data protection.

Students must obtain IRB approval **before** the period of their Fulbright-affiliated research. Failure to do so would result in delays to the project and/or its suspension. For this research, students are advised to begin their IRB application as soon as their Capstone application is accepted, or during Capstone I at the latest.

More information on the IRB approval process can be found at <https://fulbright.edu.vn/irb/>

### 1.7. Academic Integrity

The capstone is subject to the regulations described in Fulbright University Vietnam's Code of Academic Integrity, including updates on usage of generative AI. Creative projects involving generative AI will require full documentation of its usage.

### 1.8. Grading process

All capstones are graded using a double-marking process by the primary advisor and secondary reader or secondary advisor, if the student has one. The advisor and reader will discuss the final marks, especially in the case of a bid discrepancy, and the final grade will be communicated to the student by the primary advisor.

### 1.9. Group projects

Group project proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the group project application is accepted, the primary and secondary advisors will decide on the method of assessment (as appropriate to the nature of the project) and ensure that the evaluation criteria are made clear to the group project members.

## 2. Capstone by Thesis Guidelines

### 2.1. Word Count Regulations

The final submission should be 8,000-10,000 words, **including** endnotes or footnotes, **but not including** full bibliography and images with captions. Submissions that fall short of or exceed the allowed word count range will be subject to penalty.

### 2.2. Style and Formatting

#### Fonts:

- Times New Roman, Garamond, or Calibri preferred
- 12- point font
- Chapter headings and subheadings may be 14-point

#### Margins:

- Use one-inch margins on all sides
- Place page numbers in the lower right-hand corner within these margins

#### Line spacing:

- The text must be double-spaced. Footnotes/endnotes, image captions, should be single-spaced, in 10.5-point
- Quotes longer than three lines are indented, single spaced, in the same font and size as the body.
- The title page and preliminary pages are treated in special format; see below

### Sequence of Thesis Materials:

Preliminary pages, in the following order:

- A. Title Page. The title page should include the title of the thesis, your name, the date of submission, and your advisor's name. Include this statement on the lower third of the page:

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
Literature, Fulbright University Vietnam**

- B. Acknowledgment(s) page (Optional, double-spaced)
- C. Table of Contents. A consecutive listing of chapters or major headings with page numbers; also include the page number for the additional sections (illustrations, the appendix (if included), and the bibliography (double space between these elements)
- D. List of Tables (as necessary), with titles and page references
- E. List of Illustrations, with titles and page references



## F. Main Text

**NOTE:** *The preliminary pages should be paginated using small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, and so on). These may be placed at the bottom of the page. The title page counts as page i, but do not print a page number on this page. Begin the pagination with the next page (acknowledgments page, if you have one, or the table of contents).*

## Text

**References in the Text:** Choose ONE reference style and stay consistent. If you anticipate using many in-text citations, you may opt for [Modern Language Association Style](#). You may also opt for footnotes with the [Chicago Manual of Style – Notes and Bibliography Style](#). Discuss with your advisor which is more appropriate for your project and final thesis.

**Pagination:** Use Arabic numerals for these pages, starting with page 1 as the first page of the text.

**NOTE:** *All pages through the text, and including the end material (appendices, illustrations, and bibliography), should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals.***Appendices.** Optional [If you think you have material you want to include here, please discuss that idea with your advisor.]

## Illustrations

- You should include all illustrations that you discuss. Images should be placed within the main text body, close to their first mention.
- Place image callouts in the text by placing “(fig. X)” at the end of the sentence (before the period) which first mentions the artwork.
- Each image caption should be enumerated as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- In most cases, good quality scans/digital imagery will be acceptable, but this must be discussed with your thesis advisor.
- Illustrations should be neatly prepared, with full captions that include the name of the artist, title of the work, present location, date, and an acknowledgement of the source of the image. In some cases, your advisor may ask that you include additional information.
- Please consult the [CAA Publications Style Guide, Section III](#) for more guidance on how to format captions for different kinds of artworks.

**Bibliography.** Your bibliography must be consistent and well-formatted. It should follow the same formatting style as you choose for your in-text citations.

## 2.3. Formal Presentation Requirement

While this presentation is not assessed as part of the final submission, in order for your final submission to be evaluated at the end of Capstone II you must present your work as a formal 15-minute paper at the Capstone Symposium. You are expected to attend the entire symposium and to engage with the presentations of your classmates.

## 2.4. Evaluation Criteria: Capstone by Thesis

5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neutral 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree NA=Not applicable

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
ORIGINALITY OF THESIS, ARGUMENTS, OR PROJECT		
The thesis develops a sophisticated, creative and intelligent argument. (CLO2)		
The thesis draws upon connections between literary and theoretical works and/or the society and world around them. (CLO2, CLO3, CLO4)		
The thesis demonstrates potential for an original or innovative contribution to the field and adjacent fields of Literary Studies. (CLO2, CLO4)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
RESEARCH METHODS & ENGAGEMENT		
The thesis demonstrates comprehensive research appropriate to its scope, and references important works of literature, figures, or movements relevant to the topic where necessary. (CLO1)		
The thesis adopts a methodological or theoretical framework appropriate to a topic in literature or adjacent fields. (CLO4)		
The thesis critically engages with and adopts a synthetic approach to supporting literature. (CLO4)		
The thesis balances an engagement with factual detail and key theoretical issues relevant to the areas and fields in question (CLO3, CLO4)		
If interdisciplinary methods are used, they are effectively explained and significantly enhance the interpretation of materials.* (CLO2, CLO3)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
QUALITY OF WRITING AND ANALYSIS		
If specific genres are the focus of the study, the thesis shows a sophisticated and rigorous use of close formal analysis.* (CLO2)		

Evidence supporting claims are insightfully explored, and may even be drawn from nuanced, unexpected places. (CLO1, CLO4)		
Close readings or analyses demonstrate ability to draw connections to critical methods, other texts, and to the world around us. (CLO2, CLO4)		
The thesis is clearly and logically structured, with smooth and effective transitions. (CLO2)		
Foundations established early in the thesis push the argument toward a more complex conclusion. (CLO2)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
<b>MECHANICS AND APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC STYLE</b>		
The thesis is appropriately formatted for academic submission (cover page, illustrations and captions, page numbers, choice of font and font size, margins, etc.) The written expression is free or almost free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word choice. (CLO2)		
The language used is concise and appropriate for formal academic presentation. Presentation is effective, legible to non-specialists/majors. (CLO2)		
Sources are cited appropriately, whether paraphrased or quoted. There is no evidence of plagiarism. The citation style (e.g., Chicago, MLA) is appropriately chosen based on the disciplinary field, and correctly used. (CLO2)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
<b>TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE (average of section scores)</b>  <b>*excluding scores of N/A where permitted (as indicated by *)</b>		

**CUMULATIVE AVERAGE SCORE:** 4.5 and above = HONORS; 3.0-4.4 = PASS; 1.0-2.9 = NO PASS

## 3. Capstone by Creative Writing Guidelines

### 3.1 Submission Requirements

The final submission should be a completed compilation of new creative writing, including a Preface, manuscript of creative writing, and notes, if necessary. These works are considered new writing, undertaken during your senior year. “Creative Writing” can be broadly defined as poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, in addition to hybrid and/or experimental work that blurs more conventional understandings of genre. However, to fulfill the criteria for a Creative Writing Capstone in Literature, the textual or written component of the work must be the primary focus (i.e. poetry or lyric essay that incorporates photographs is acceptable).

#### Length

- Poetry: at least 20 pages, single-spaced
- Fiction: 8,000-10,000 words, double-spaced
- Non-Fiction: 8,000-10,000 words, double-spaced

### 3.2 Organization, Style and Formatting

#### Fonts:

- Times New Roman, Garamond, or Calibri preferred
- 12- point font
- Chapter headings and subheadings may be 14-point or bolded

#### Margins:

- Use one-inch margins on all sides
- Place page numbers in the lower right-hand corner within these margins

#### Formatting:

- All poems should be single-spaced; all stories and essays should be double-spaced. Each poem must begin on a new page (i.e. no more than one poem per page). Footnotes/endnotes and image captions, in 10.5-point font
- Long quoted passages (more than three lines) should be indented, single-spaced, in the same font and size as the body
- The title page and preliminary pages are treated in special format; see below.
- Conventions for spacing, dialogue, punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc. should be followed at all times, with some room for “poetic license.” The project must be proofread scrupulously.

## Sequence of Thesis Materials:

Preliminary pages, in the following order:

- A. Title Page. The title page should include the title of the thesis, your name, the date of submission, and your advisor's name. Include this statement on the lower third of the page:

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
Literature, Fulbright University Vietnam**

- B. Acknowledgment(s) page (optional, double-spaced)  
C. Table of Contents. A consecutive listing of chapters or major headings with page numbers; also include the page number for the additional sections (illustrations, the appendix (if included), and the bibliography (double space between these elements)  
D. List of Tables (as necessary), with titles and page references  
E. List of Illustrations, with titles and page references  
F. Preface. A meditative piece of prose that introduces and situates your creative work  
G. Main Text

**NOTE:** *The preliminary pages should be paginated using small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, and so on). These may be placed at the bottom of the page. The title page counts as page i, but do not print a page number on this page. Begin the pagination with the next page (acknowledgments page, if you have one, or the table of contents).*

## Text

References in the Text: Choose ONE reference style and stay consistent. If you anticipate using many in-text citations, you may opt for [Modern Language Association Style](#). You may also opt for footnotes with the [Chicago Manual of Style – Notes and Bibliography Style](#). Discuss with your advisor which is more appropriate for your project and final thesis.

Pagination: Use Arabic numerals for these pages, starting with page 1 as the first page of the text.

**NOTE** *All pages through the text, and including the end material (appendices, illustrations, and bibliography), should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals.*

**Appendices.** Optional [If you think you have material you want to include here, please discuss that idea with your advisor.]

## Illustrations

- You should include all illustrations that you reference. Images should be placed within the main text body, close to their first mention.
- Place image callouts in the text by placing “(fig. X)” at the end of the sentence (before the period) which first mentions the artwork. For creative work, please see your advisor for recommendations on the inclusion of illustrations.
- Each image caption should be enumerated as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.

- In most cases, good quality scans/digital imagery will be acceptable, but this must be discussed with your thesis advisor.
- Illustrations should be neatly prepared, with full captions that include the name of the artist, title of the work, present location, date, and an acknowledgement of the source of the image. In some cases, your advisor may ask that you include additional information.
- Please consult the [CAA Publications Style Guide, Section III](#) for more guidance on how to format captions for different kinds of illustrations.

**Bibliography.** Your bibliography must be consistent and well-formatted. It should follow the same formatting style as you choose for your in-text citations.

### 3.3 Preface

The Preface should be between 1500-1800 words (in addition to the main text). The preface is a meditative piece of prose that provides your readers with some context for the creative manuscript that follows it. This preface should articulate the following ideas: your motivations for writing what you have written; the difficulties and successes you encountered while writing it; your method for organizing your project (how did you arrange the manuscript, and to what purpose?); your aesthetic models (what writing influenced you?) and intentions; your personal reasons for pursuing a Capstone project in creative writing. Prefaces combine personal narrative with artistic considerations; in fact, you are encouraged to use the first person in this preface. Effective prefaces also demonstrate the ability to do sophisticated literary analysis and close-reading, skills which you have practiced in all your Literature courses leading up to the project.

### 3.4. Documentation of Process

The documentation of the process of creation should include relevant research such as archival or field notes, material experimentation, sketches, photographs (if applicable), etc. Selections from this component may be included in the appendices of your final submission or integrated into your preface.

Any research should be novel and conducted during the two capstone phases and not include assignment work from other courses. The intent of the documentation is to provide the audience/reader with a complete understanding of how the artwork was made.

### 3.5. Formal Presentation Requirement

While this presentation is not assessed as part of the final submission, in order for your final submission to be evaluated at the end of Capstone II you must present your work at the Capstone Symposium. For Creative Capstones, this presentation will take the form of a brief introduction of your project, then a reading from your original work. You are expected to attend the entire symposium and to engage with the presentations of your classmates.

### 3.6. Evaluation Criteria: Capstone by Creative Writing

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
PREFACE		
Clearly and concisely written, free of jargon and mechanical writing errors. (CLO2)		
Describes the aesthetic decisions, methods, and process pertinent to the work, discussing them in connection with current conversations in your chosen genre. (CLO2)		
Describe the design of the manuscript and rationale for its organization, with reference to any literary models, if applicable. (All CLOs)		
References key terms, theories, texts, techniques, writers and/or movements that are important to the understanding of the work. (CLO3, CLO4)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
CONCEPT		
The concept develops a compelling central idea, opinion, message and/or story. (CLO2)		
The concept demonstrates evidence of original, creative, and/or innovative thinking. (CLO2)		
The concept draws upon connections between literary and theoretical works and/or the society and world around them. (CLO3, CLO4)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION		
The planning and production of the creative project is properly aligned with the agreed-upon capstone schedule. (CLO1)		
Documentation of the process of creating the text(s) is comprehensive, including any research materials (if relevant), drafts, and clear evidence of revision throughout different stages of the project. (CLO1)		

Research and documentation are appropriately and seamless integrated into preface or appendix to aid readers in a better comprehension of work (CLO1, CLO5)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
PRODUCTION QUALITY		
The final work is closely aligned - holistically and materially - with the concept. (CLO2, CLO5)		
The final work demonstrates a command of advanced skill appropriate to the designated genre of the project. (CLO2, CLO5)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
MECHANICS AND APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC STYLE		
The Capstone as a whole is appropriately formatted for academic submission (cover page, illustrations and captions, page numbers, choice of font and font size, margins, etc.) The written expression is free or almost free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word choice. (CLO2)		
<b>Section Score</b>		
<b>TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE</b>  *excluding scores of N/A where permitted (as indicated by *)		

**CUMULATIVE AVERAGE SCORE:** 4.5 and above = HONORS; 3.0-4.4 = PASS; 1.0-2.9 = NO PASS