

LACS 396 (2019)

Final Project Guidelines

Scope and objectives of the Capstone:

The purpose of the capstone course is to provide the framework for students to delve more deeply into a specific topic in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. The capstone course should lead students to greater sophistication in the conceptualization of ideas and projects relating to LA/C.

The capstone experience differs from an individual, independent study in that we meet together regularly, discuss course texts, and deepen our understanding of a specific topic. Select faculty from the LACS program may join the students at set intervals of the semester to offer their expertise, guidance, and feedback.

Each student will devise a research project related to course content and will write an analytical paper OR creative/applied work for submission at the end of the course. The project will be in keeping with the students' previous interests, talents, and explorations and, of course, the course theme.

Analytical paper:

The analytical exercise may come closest to resembling a traditional project, but may be more interdisciplinary than other papers the students have written during their time at W&L. More precisely, more than adopting a narrowly focused perspective from a single discipline, the paper should strive to make connections among disciplinary viewpoints. For example, "Gender and Migration at the Borders" might use course texts (literature, film, documentary) and then draw from various social science disciplines, including economics, law, sociology, and politics. While topics will vary, the criteria should be consistent: Each student chooses a topic that has emerged from the student's LA/C experience or curriculum, draws from more than a singular disciplinary methodology, and advances the student's understanding of the region through the lens of gender and sexuality.

Final papers are term research projects of 15-18 pages (Times New Roman, 12 point).

Creative or applied work:

While some students may be well served by traditional forms of scholarship, the Program recognizes the merit of producing creative or applied works. For example, a sophisticated web portal database that collects immigration statistics and conclusions about specific concerns for women and/or transgender migrants is no less analytical in nature than the research paper described above, but its format may be more in keeping with the ultimate personal and professional goals of the individual student. In contrast to a web project, creative applications might include an art exhibit, a photo-journalistic compilation, or fiction. For example, a creative

piece such as “*Gender Moves: A Poetry Collection*” could allow a student to synthesize important conclusions about gender and sexuality in LA/C in a creative medium.

Process and Deadlines:

1. Proposal: Write 1-2 paragraphs explaining *what* (book, film, other work) you will study and *how* (lens of gender/sexuality; emphasis on specific theme; supporting research; basically, a preliminary road map to the paper) you will approach the study of this work. Also make sure to justify your choice of this work (what makes it appealing to you?; what does it have to do with gender and sexuality studies in LA/C?; will the work capture your interest throughout the term?).

Due by e-mail to Professor Mayock on Friday, February 15 (4:00pm).

2. Final Project Workshop 1: Approval of proposals; plan of action; collection of secondary sources. **Monday, February 25, in class (8:45-9:30).**

3. Final Project Workshop 2: Full outline; introduction; next section. **Monday, March 18, in class (8:45-9:30).**

4. Final Project Workshop 3: Complete draft available for perusal; start to prepare remarks for the work-in-progress presentation on Wednesday, April 3. **Monday, March 25, in class (8:45-9:30).**

5. Final Project Workshop 4: Final drafts and rehearsal for Wednesday’s in class work-in-progress presentation. **Monday, April 1, in class (8:45-9:30).**

6. Presentations on Final Projects: **Wednesday, April 3, in class (8:00-9:30 a.m.). LACS faculty invited.**

Rubric:

The final project is worth 25% of the total grade. Please see the rubric document for full information. (Available on Sakai and through our website.)