English 664.02: Honors Research  
Spring 2015  

Honors Adviser:  
Dr. Deborah Mitchell  
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Capstone Instructors:  
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& by appt.  

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** English 664 is the first half of the culminating, two-course sequence for Honors in English. The Honors project should demonstrate Honors English majors’ superior abilities to research deeply and carefully, develop ideas fully, and communicate clearly a significant topic of literary study (see below for specific outcomes). By the end of English 664, each student will have chosen a specific topic, conducted substantial research, submitted a comprehensive proposal, and completed a significant segment of the project for evaluation. 

In conjunction with English Capstone I-II (ENG 601-02), the English Honors experience is designed to move majors from more traditional classroom experiences to independent study. With this in mind, English 664 will combine collective meetings of both Capstone and Honors classes with opportunities for students to work independently, in small groups, and in conference with faculty. Please follow the syllabus outline; any changes will be announced.

**COURSE OUTCOMES:** Students will demonstrate  
- the ability to discuss literature, including engaging in an exchange of ideas, and offering and supporting insights  
- the capacity to sustain controlled, critical arguments that analyze and synthesize a number of related texts  
- an understanding of the craft of writing, including concision, diction, grammar, and syntax  
- the ability to produce creative writing that shows an awareness of language, freedom from cliché, and an understanding of genre, style, and topic  
- the ability to identify and use a range of sources, including in-depth, peer-reviewed journal articles and books, suitable to the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, to evaluate and integrate source material, and to document accurately  
- an understanding of the literary tradition, the historical and cultural contexts of literature, and critical methods of reading  
- the ability to give well-planned, engaging presentations

**TEXTS**  
*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*  
*The Honors Scholar Handbook, 2012-2016* - available online at  
http://www.westminster.edu/acad/honors/pdf/honors-handbook.pdf
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES
One of the most important parts of English 664 is learning to meet deadlines—a key to successful completion of your final project next fall. You will have several written documents to produce, including required drafts for class discussion; conferences to attend; and presentations to give. Please note the due dates in the syllabus. Any assignments turned in LATE will be penalized ONE LETTER Grade PER DAY. Grammatical errors will significantly lower your grade on any assignment. Any work filled with grammatical and technical errors cannot receive above a C. Any work turned in as your own but in actuality done by others may result in a failure on the assignment and in the course. We report all instances of plagiarism to the Dean of the College.

Your grade for this course will reflect your work on both the process and the product that constitute the capstone experience. Come to class prepared and ready to participate. Stay on top of your assignments. Your contributions are vital to the success of this class; therefore, we will lower your grade one letter for each absence after your third. If you have an emergency situation, you should notify us. We don’t accept “sick in room” excuses.

Model summary/analysis  5%
Conferences/small group discussions/peer and self-evaluations  10%
Topic Descriptions (including inventory)  5%
Topic Narrative  15%
First Copy  20%
Proposal (incorporates & expands upon Capstone Final Copy)  40%
Summer Plans  5%

ENG 664 ASSIGNMENTS
Includes Assignments for ENG 601: Capstone I

1. Reviewing Capstone Models
What is a capstone? One way to begin answering this question is to read what others have written. This assignment asks you to review one model, as follows:

Written Summary          DUE: Tuesday, January 20th

Read one project completed by recent seniors and write a summary. We will divide these among the group during the first day of class. Copies of these projects are filed on My Westminster. As you read, take notes that will help you write a one-page (250 word) summary of the project. In your summary, identify the topic, thesis, and argument of the analysis presented and comment on the creative dimension of the project. In a concluding paragraph, you may discuss features of the project that you find most interesting, note the relationship of the topic to the writer, and comment on any shortcomings you find. See below in class discussion for specifics on evaluation. Bring a printed copy to class.
Class Discussion DUE: Tuesday, January 20th

Come to class ready to discuss the following (and whatever else you find worth noting):

- Introduction: What larger context is provided to help us understand the topic? What critical vantage point is established? What is the relationship between writer and topic?
- Argument: What is the major claim of the study—what assertion launches the discussion?
- Scope: How extensive is the ground being covered; how fully does the writer cover that ground? Pay careful attention to the research and sources used. Are they scholarly? How do you know? Is the research extensive and thorough, or does it seem thin to you?
- Writing Quality: Is the writing clear—effective—elegant—engaging?
- Purpose, Depth and Breadth: Do you know where you are going as you read (paragraph focus and sequence)? Is the discussion detailed and pertinent? Does the discussion progress?
- Creativity: In what ways is the writing creative?
- Conclusion: Does the discussion have a destination? Does the discussion yield insights that the writer clearly presents? Does the conclusion do more than summarize?

2. Developing Your Topic

What shall you do? What shall you ever do? First, remember that capstone is a process and a product. The project in its final form will likely change shape and focus as you learn more about the material. At this stage, you need to identify some territories to explore. To this end, you need to complete an inventory of possible topics and ideas.

Topic Inventory DUE: Thursday, Jan 22th

Take a sheet of paper and generate an “interest inventory” for your Capstone project. Make the following headings on your paper: Authors, Texts, Historical periods, Genres, Tropes, Themes, and Concepts. Now, under your headings, list as many items as you can think of. There should be at least 10 to 12 items under each list. When you are done, look over your lists and circle the items in which you have the most interest. A good way to get ideas for this is to look over papers you have written for courses and syllabi for courses you have taken.

Topic Descriptions DUE: Tuesday, Jan 27th

Explore and evaluate possible topics for your capstone that you generated as part of your “interest inventory.” Write two 200-word descriptions of possible topics. For each, describe a topic and indicate why it appeals to you, how it relates to other work you have done as an English major, and what you think you would learn by working on it for 10 months. In addition to these two topic descriptions, list any further topics you think might be interesting (ie. your interest inventory). We will discuss your ideas as a group. Your peers will help you refine your thinking. Bring a printed copy to class.

Topic Narrative DUE: Tuesday, Feb 10th

The topic narrative should be a four-page essay that offers an explanation of the topic you would like to pursue and the texts and authors you will focus on. Your essay must accomplish the following tasks with as much specificity as possible:
• Give a description of your envisioned topic by focusing on ONE primary text and author. You can also refer to other texts and authors you might consider that explore similar ideas.
• Describe how the preliminary research you have done convinces you that yours is a viable project. Your preliminary research should be done at least in part by searching the MLA database through the library. This is THE primary database for peer-reviewed articles and books in literary studies. What is the conversation out there? How will you join it? You will be bringing in further research developed during the library sessions.
• Discuss some of the questions that will fuel your research.
• Describe some possibilities for the creative component of your project and discuss its relationship to the critical component.
• Identify what you will need to do to get going on your project. What is the first thing you will do? And then what? What items are already on your reading list for this topic?

Bring a printed copy to class. We will discuss your narratives in class as a group.

Meet with Honors Board  DUE: Monday, February 16th
Before you begin writing, it is important that you convene a meeting with all members of your Honors Board to review and obtain approval for your overall course of action. You are responsible for contacting all committee members and arranging a meeting time and place.

3. Writing Your Project
As with any English course, you have material to read and a paper to write. The difference in Capstone is that you choose the material and design the assignment. You will be reading and writing throughout the semester, and you will go public with two installments of your work.

First Copy  DUE: Thursday, March 26th
Provide 8-10 pages of writing that develop selected components of your project to date. Although this is but a draft of a draft, strive to make it polished and as complete as possible. Your writing must include the following:
• An introduction that provides contexts for understanding your topic and that sets up your approach to the topic. Conclude with a tentative claim about the topic—a preliminary thesis that launches the discussion to follow. You should include brief examples of the texts and authors you will examine as part of the overall project in order to ground your introduction in specifics rather than generalizations (1-2 pages)
• A summary analysis of relevant research. (2 pages)
• A developed segment of the larger work you envision. Examine a primary text you have chosen, providing a preliminary analysis that develops your thesis. Also refer briefly to several other texts that you will discuss as part of the overall project (6-8 pages)
• A brief outline of the whole work.
• In addition to the above, provide a working bibliography that includes all relevant material to date. The MLA police will be out in force (for all of the above).

Bring a printed copy of your “first copy” to class.

Honors Proposal  DUE: Wednesday, April 15th
This proposal, which counts as your Final Copy for Capstone, should be 20-25 pages long and must include the following:
• A cover page with the title of the project, the Scholar’s name and major, the adviser’s name, and the date.
• A revised and developed introduction that describes the project’s objective(s), rationale, and scholarly significance.
• A discussion of methodology: how will you shape your argument?
• A literature review with a bibliography or a literature cited section. After each properly documented item, include a few sentences explaining what the source offers and how you might use it. Remember those MLA police.
• An expanded segment of the larger work. Material submitted for the Capstone first copy should show signs of revision. New material may continue discussion already submitted or may examine another segment of the larger project.
• Integrated research. Your proposal should demonstrate that you have conducted substantial research on your topic and can situate your own writing within a larger scholarly context.

IMPORTANT: On April 23rd, you will need to bring a revised, printed copy of the Proposal your Capstone meeting. It will count as your Final Copy for Capstone.

4. Growing Your Project
In order to be in the best shape to complete your project by the end of the fall semester, you will need to make some progress this summer. By the end of the current semester, you will have a good foundation for further work. You will have completed nearly all of your research and will have written a sizeable portion of your project. Summer will give you the time you need to build on your good work thus far.

Summer Plans              DUE: Thursday, April 30

We would like each of you to give us an idea of what you will work on this summer. Give yourself 2-3 well-defined tasks for making progress. Indicate what readings you will attempt and what kinds of writing you might do, including plans for the creative component of your project. You should set modest goals—but not too modest! Write 1-2 pages & bring a printed copy to class.

Fall Harvest              DUE: Beginning of September

When you return in the fall, you will hand in, during the first week of classes, the fruits of your labor. Although you do not have to finish everything you said you would do—and may end up writing something you had not anticipated—you should have significant (5-10 pages) new material for us to evaluate.

• This material must include further analytical writing and an initial portion of creative material.
• You may also include a summary of additional sources read.
• Also include a revised outline of the entire project.

We will evaluate this assignment as part of the final grade for the project in English 602 (probably 10% of the total grade).
### Tentative Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Introduction to Advanced Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Class Discussion on Sample Capstones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Written <strong>Summary Due</strong> and Discussion</td>
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<td>Jan 22</td>
<td><strong>Topic Inventory</strong>: discussion and response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td><strong>Topic Descriptions</strong></td>
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<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Library; Faculty available for conferencing on topic narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Library; Faculty available for conferencing on topic narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td><strong>Topic Narratives</strong>—Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>No class; begin mapping out a final strategy for research. <strong>Meet with Honors Board by February 16 for project approval</strong></td>
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<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Mapping out a final strategy for research and small group set up</td>
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<td>Feb 19</td>
<td><strong>Bleasby Colloquium Josip Novakovich, 7-8 p.m. (Mueller)</strong> Required attendance; substitutes for class</td>
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<td>Feb 24</td>
<td><strong>Crossing Over: Seniors Visit Class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Small group discussions</td>
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<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Small group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>No class: work on first copy; faculty available for consultations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 7-15</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>Small group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Small group discussions</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Bleasby Colloquium David Hassler, 7-8 p.m. (Mueller)</strong> Attendance strongly encouraged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td><strong>No Class—Work on First Copy</strong></td>
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Mar 26 | **First Copy Due**
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Mar 31 | **No Class—Faculty Reading First Copy**
Apr 2-6 | **Easter Break**
Apr 7 | **Monday Classes Meet**
Apr 9 | Return first copy; faculty available for conferencing
Apr 14 | Faculty available for conferencing
Apr 15 | **Honors Proposal due; meet with Board to discuss**
Apr 16 | Small group discussions
Apr 21 | Small group discussions
Apr 22 | **Undergraduate Research Symposium (all are required to attend)**
Apr 23 | **Revised Proposal (Final Copy) Due; be prepared to discuss at least two URAC symposium talks**
Apr 28 | No class—prepare summer plans
April 30 | Summer Plans due
May 4 | **Final Period** (3-5:30; return Final Copy/Review Progress)