

**Communication Studies Department  
Southwestern University**

**Capstone Research Project Rubric**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Thesis</b>	Effectively articulates a distinctive and identifiable thesis within a particular framework; the thesis makes a specific interpretive argument about the material analyzed; demonstrates original, independent thinking and a creative approach to the research focus	Articulates a distinctive and identifiable thesis that makes a specific and appropriate argument about the material	Contains a thesis that makes an argument about the material analyzed	Contains a thesis that is either too broad, too narrow, or not based on an argumentative claim	No apparent thesis
<b>Thesis Integration</b>	The thesis effectively governs the evidence, analysis, and interpretation throughout; the overall argument is coherent, well developed, and logically integrated	Thesis is effectively connected to the main evidence, analysis, and interpretation; argument is coherent, well developed and well integrated overall	Thesis is competently connected to the main evidence, analysis, and interpretation; argument is sustained throughout	Thesis present but is not consistently or effectively connected to evidence, analysis, and interpretation	Little or no integration of thesis
<b>Analysis and Interpretation</b>	Demonstrates careful attention to detail and a depth of analysis that extensively and explicitly engages a well-defined communicative text, object, or phenomenon to support a persuasive interpretative argument	Presents specific analysis that is effectively interpreted and connected to the general argument	Presents specific analysis that pertains to the general argument, but does not consistently or effectively develop connections between analysis, interpretation and argument	Focuses either primarily on specific analysis or primarily on general characterizations but does not effectively connect the two to make an argument	No specific analysis and vague interpretation and argumentation
<b>Context, Evidence and Comprehension</b>	Claims and ideas are supported and elaborated with specific details and examples that show comprehension of the materials, contextualize the analysis, and support the argument	Most claims and ideas are elaborated with specific details and examples; shows general comprehension of materials; overall effective use of evidence to support the argument	Some claims and ideas are supported and elaborated with specific details and examples	A few claims and ideas are supported and elaborated with specific details and examples; overall lack of context and comprehension	Details and context are often missing from the argument

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<b>Methodology</b>	Clearly defines and carries out the methodology used to perform the analysis and structure the interpretation	Identifies the methods used and uses them to perform the analysis and structure the interpretation	Identifies the methods used but uses them inconsistently to perform the analysis and structure the interpretation	Uses a methodology but does not identify or define it; or uses a methodology not appropriate to the argument	No clear methodology
<b>Critical Engagement</b>	Thoroughly researched; extensively and explicitly articulates the analysis and argument in relation to other scholars and pertinent theorists; sources are cited appropriately	Well researched; articulates the analysis and argument in relation to other scholars and pertinent theorists; sources are cited consistently	Competently researched; engages some scholars and theorists; sources are cited inconsistently	Limited research; limited engagement with scholars and theorists; sources are cited inconsistently	Little research; little or no engagement with other scholars or theorists; few or no citations
<b>Audience and Purpose</b>	Demonstrates clear understanding of audience; satisfies the specific purpose and requirements of the assignment; performs a tone and voice appropriate to the assignment	Demonstrates understanding of audience; mostly satisfies the specific purpose and requirements of the assignment	Demonstrates awareness of audience; satisfies the general purpose and requirements of the assignment	Unclear about audience; mostly satisfies the general purpose and requirements of the assignment	Ignores audience and requirements of the assignment; egocentric; frequently confusing
<b>Organization and Logic</b>	Demonstrates clear, appropriate organization and clear logical development with effective use of paragraphs and transitions	Mostly well organized and logically developed, with effective use of paragraphs and transitions	Organized and logically developed overall, with competent use of paragraphs and transitions	Organization leaves several sections unintegrated; needs some work on paragraphs and transitions	Lacks clear organization and logical coherence
<b>Grammar, Mechanics, and Formatting</b>	Demonstrates high proficiency in grammar usage, spelling, clarity, punctuation, and sentence variety; few or no errors; effectively formats the paper to meet the specific requirements of the assignment	Demonstrates overall proficiency in grammar usage, spelling, clarity, punctuation, and sentence variety; some errors; well formatted overall	Demonstrates general competency in grammar usage, spelling, punctuation, and clarity, with some significant errors; competently formatted	Possesses several significant problems in grammar usage, spelling, punctuation, and clarity; sloppy and/or inconsistent formatting	Possesses persistent and pervasive problems in grammar usage, spelling, and punctuation; ignores specific formatting requirements

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<b>Negotiating Critique and Revision</b>	Student negotiates required critique workshops of drafts with openness; effectively responds to and reconciles others' concerns while maintaining the integrity of the author's approach; uses critique of the project within the Capstone seminar as an opportunity to further strengthen the project	Student effectively responds to and negotiates others' critiques to strengthen the project	Student responds to critiques and revision overall, but misses opportunities to strengthen the project	Student's approach to critique and revision responds to critiques but focuses on micro issues at the expense of more significant revision goals	Student ignores or rejects critique and revision processes and goals
<b>Disciplinary Engagement</b>	Clearly and effectively demonstrates how the Capstone project speaks to and from Communication Studies as a discipline; specifically situates the project in relation to one or both of the two main focus areas of the major: rhetorical studies and critical media studies	Specifically demonstrates how the Capstone project speaks to and from Communication Studies as a discipline; situates the project in relation to the two focus areas of the major	Generally locates the Capstone project within Communication Studies and within the major	Capstone project engages either the discipline or the major in general	No explicit engagement with the discipline or the major
<b>Public Presentation</b>	Capstone presentation confidently and creatively performs an authoritative, credible, and informative scholarly argument that engages the audience and effectively presents the specific analysis and interpretation within the defined formatting constraints	Capstone presentation demonstrates overall proficiency in presenting the argument, engaging the audience, and working within the formatting constraints	Capstone presentation presents the argument, engages the audience, and works within the formatting constraints overall	Capstone presentation is either too general or too specific to effectively communicate the depth and scope of the project to the audience; trouble working within formatting constraints	Capstone presentation is incoherent and ignores audience and formatting constraints

*Last revised January 11, 2017*