

CAPSTONE FOR WRITING: The Senior Seminar

Deadline for Proposals

Spring 2015 Graduates: Monday, October 20, 2014

The Capstone and Seminar:

The Capstone in Writing is an opportunity for all graduating seniors to develop an original project in a rigorous environment and hone their skills over the semester in a final work. The Senior Seminar is a series of four-credit intensive seminars taught by Lang full-time faculty, divided by genre, and restricted to the smallest possible number of students.

All Writing students who intend to graduate must submit a proposal for admission to the thesis class in their primary genre.

All capstone students will take the Senior Seminar in their primary genre: **Fiction, Nonfiction, or Poetry** (Playwriting is a capstone option only through The Arts Program; Journalism is now housed in the Journalism + Design Program).

Each capstone class will be designed as a collaborative small-group environment—capped, ideally, at twelve students. In a collective of advanced writers, students will pursue individual projects in a shared genre. Projects can be portfolio-driven (students can revise a portfolio of work in their primary genre culled from previous writing courses) or entirely new (a cycle of poems; group of short stories; piece of a novel; series of nonfiction articles or beginning of a book). No matter the genre, each thesis class will examine issues of craft, form, content, and process. Projects should aim to be *ambitious* but also *achievable* in such a short time. Final manuscripts should represent polished work that exemplifies the skill and craft of an accomplished writer—with (approximate) lengths of 20-30 pp. for poetry, 30-40 pp. for fiction, and 30-40 pp. for nonfiction.

The Proposal:

All students will write a proposal (**not to exceed 1,000 words; 4 pages, doubled-spaced**), outlining the body of work to be completed in the Thesis Class. You should think of this proposal as a thought process, not a final decision regarding your project. It is really intended to get you to try to express your plans for the capstone and to give the faculty a chance to learn them.

For **Fiction** proposals, you should pitch your proposed project, focusing primarily on the plot and, secondarily, on such matters as narrative point of view and style. Tell the plot in blow-by-blow fashion. You may write an extended story or a group of linked stories.

For **Nonfiction** proposals, you should write a prose summary covering the theme or argument of your piece, as well as the parts that will make up the body of the work. Specify your sources, drawing on personal experience or research.

If you are planning a senior project in **Poetry**, you should discuss the cycle of poems or long poem or chapbook you intend to write. How will your project, whether a collection of poems or a single long poem, be structured? Importantly, you should comment on your own poetic style and practice, perhaps describing it with reference to established schools of poetics.

Required Elements of Proposal (all genres):

- 1) 1000 word maximum proposal
- 2) Names of: a professor who taught you in an advanced writing course; the name of your academic advisor (you don't need to contact them in advance or get approval; this is just informational)
- 3) Writing sample, of 5-10 pages from your advanced writing class, representing the kind of work you do

Formatting:

Document style: The proposal, plus the names of your advanced writing professor and your advisor, plus the writing sample, should all be included in one single Word or PDF document.

File name: The file name should include your last name, first name, and primary genre, in that order. (E.g. "Austen-Jane-Fiction.docx." If you are Jane Austen.)

Registering/Follow-Up: You may register for a Senior Seminar in the appropriate genre after you have sent the proposal to Cyp Stevenson. You don't need any further permission or approval to register as long as you have submitted the complete proposal.

Submit all materials, in one single Word or PDF document, by email to:

Cyp Stevenson
Senior Secretary, Literary Studies-Writing Department
stephec@newschool.edu

Direct any further questions you might have to the Capstone Coordinator:

Prof. Mark Greif
greifm@newschool.edu