

Education Studies Senior Work Tip Sheet 2009-2010

As of 2009-2010, all senior concentrators in **Education Studies must complete a senior capstone project**, to be completed in the Senior Research seminar, offered in Spring 2010 with Professor Natalia Mehlman-Petrzela. **All students must register for this 4-credit course**, but do NOT need to declare their senior work with the Advising Office, nor do they need to submit a proposal to the College.

What is a Senior Capstone Project?

The Senior Seminar in Education Studies is the culmination of students' coursework, and their opportunity to make an original contribution to the field of education in an area of their choosing. In selecting a topic, students are encouraged to construe education broadly, considering not only schools but also other diverse sites where teaching and learning occur. Open to seniors who have pursued significant coursework in Education Studies, this research-based seminar supports students as they formulate a research question, conduct original research, and complete a substantial written project. The focus of the class will be on the research process rather than on content, and students will be evaluated both on their written work and on the quality of their participation in peer editing, individual conferences with the professor, and class presentations. The final project will be a written work of significant length, though certain projects may include other media as well.

While the senior research seminar is a semester-long commitment, students are strongly advised to begin preliminary work on their projects during fall semester. Students are encouraged to email Professor Mehlman-Petrzela at mehlmann@newschool.edu, and are advised to consider her note below in getting started:

The entire senior capstone work will be self-contained in ONE COURSE this spring (Senior Research Seminar in Education Studies/ Spring 2010/MW 2-3:40 p.m., Professor Natalia Mehlman-Petrzela.) But there is PLENTY you can to get started early...

Ideally, by the start of spring semester you will have at least a general – hopefully even somewhat refined – idea of the topic you would like to pursue for your senior project.

How do I Start my Capstone Project?

- Reviewing papers and syllabi from previous courses will help you identify an area in which you would be excited to engage for an entire semester.
- Reading secondary literature will help refine your research question and spark ideas for your proposal.
- Reach out to other faculty. I may be your adviser, but I don't know everything about everything! None of you have ever taken class with me before, so all of your research interests were ostensibly sparked in other courses. Now is the time to follow up with these professors to get extra readings and have discussions about the ideas and themes which might be fruitful for your senior work. Faculty members are busy, so sooner is better than later!
- Do not hesitate to be in touch with me beforehand with any questions you have about the course or your evolving research ideas. Email is the best way to get me: mehlmann@newschool.edu.
- Make sure to keep a growing bibliography as you embark on these early explorations of your topic, even if you are initially casting your net very wide. All students will submit a bibliography, in proper citation format, with their final project, and keeping track of your reading will both help you organize your work intellectually and save you time in spring semester.

While you will complete your entire project during spring semester—from proposal to research to writing—this VERY IMPORTANT preliminary work will provide a strong foundation for the course, which will proceed at an accelerated pace.

Looking forward to working with all of you on what are sure to be exciting projects!

- Professor Natalia Mehlman-Petrzela