Primer for Instructors of the iSchool Capstone

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We wrote this primer in summer 2013 for future capstone instructors so that they might know when to do what and to whom to turn for help; Diane revised it in 2015 with input from faculty and staff members directly involved in teaching and supporting this course. What you read here is not intended as the rules; however, many of these suggestions reflect actions that might help you as instructor and that certainly help the staff members who support the course. Specifically, if you do not do some of the tasks here, then those tasks may fall on staff members who were not expecting to do them or, worse, the tasks will remain undone and students may end up confused. Thus, coordinating with staff members and, if two sessions are offered in your semester, the other instructor early in the semester to confirm who will do what and how they will do it is your best bet for a smooth experience for everyone because the particulars are likely to change over time. We organized the contents chronologically to serve as a temporal guide.

1. Prior to the Advising Period

The goal of your activities prior to the semester start is to ensure that every student who will be completing a capstone in any of its four forms is aware of what he or she needs to do, and that advisors also know. The four forms of the capstone are:

1. Professional Experience and Project (PEP; usually the majority of students, enrolled in INF 388L)
2. Standard School Librarian Certificate practicum (SSLC; applications submitted to Carla Criner, enrolled in INF 388R),
3. Master's Report (enrolled in INF 398R), and
4. Master's Thesis (enrolled in INF 698A or 698B).

All students should also enroll simultaneously in INF181E Electronic Portfolio. The only exception will be students who, under the old master's core, already completed an e-portfolio in their management class.

Notifying Students and Faculty. Right before the advising period, send a notice out on the Insider list, the MSIS list, and the GSC list with initial information for students and faculty. Copy Carla Criner, Carol Carreon, Terry Giles, Tara Iagulli, and the course TA, if any,[1] so that everyone is on the same page. Appendix 1 shows the email that we sent out, modified to now include repetition across the types of students because we found that students only read what fell under their type.

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[1] The capstone experience is not guaranteed a TA. In the remainder of this manual, we continue to refer to TA duties. If you have no TA, then these duties are yours.

Posting Your Syllabus. Post your syllabus early to help students know what days they need to be present. Send copies to Carla Criner, Terry Giles, Tara Iagulli, the IT Lab, and the TA so that everyone is aware of dates. To create your syllabus, you need to coordinate with four people if you hold the types of class meetings that others have done in the past:

a. Ask the IT Lab Manager (currently Quinn Stewart) when and if a purple shirt can do an html/css presentation (for the e-portfolios).
b. Ask Tara Iagulli when and if she can give a talk on presenting one's professional self (résumés, social media, and the like).
c. Ask Carla Criner when the poster session will be. Typically, it is the last class day, but you can adjust it if circumstances dictate. Communicate this date to Terry, Tara, and Dona. The length of the session will vary by the number of enrolled students.
d. In fall and summer, ask Terry by which date she will need the poster session program. Allow one week before that for the TA to prepare the program when setting the date by which students should submit their abstracts to the TA. In the spring, Sam Burns provides a link for students to submit abstracts online; check with him to set it up.

You can see past syllabi via the [INF388L page](). As instructor, you are free to design specific PEP assignments beyond the e-portfolio and project; the PEP page provides information that may guide you and will certainly ground you in what is going on in the capstone.

2. After Advising, Prior to Semester Start

During the time between advising and the start of the new semester, you need to find out who will be doing the capstone, you need to review and approve the PEP students' project proposals, and you need to make sure everyone has seen the syllabus.

Finding Out Who Is Enrolled in What. As the PEP course instructor, you will see on CLIPS the enrollment and email addresses of students in INF388L and INF388R. You will not, however, see enrollment of master's report, master's thesis students, or any students enrolled in the e-portfolio with you. To get their email addresses, ask Carol Carreon. Now you have a complete set of students to expect in the class sessions (including the poster session) and from whom to expect e-portfolios and poster abstracts.

Approving PEP Projects. You will have received two forms from each student: a proposal form directed to you and signed by the student and a mutual agreement signed by the field supervisor and the student. Read them to make sure the projects are of proper scope and content. If you have concerns, email the student, perhaps asking for revision of the forms. Remember, even if the student has technically met all stated requirements, you as instructor hold final authority on what to allow or disallow as a capstone. Thus, if you think a proposed project is too risky, too small, too far astray from our field, or otherwise problematic, you need to tell the student so. When you have all of the signed forms, keep them; they go no further than you.

Emailing the Syllabus. Despite your clear instructions in the email during advising, students will be still be confused about or unaware of their obligations, perhaps because they found old info somewhere in the crevices of the web or they relied on what past students told them. Send

an email with the syllabus and remind students that all of them are expected to attend class, even if they are doing a school library practicum, a master's report, or a master's thesis.

TA Duties
- Publish the syllabus on the iSchool courses web server prior to the first day of class.

3. During the Semester

Beyond holding the classes, helping PEP students with any problems on their projects, and handling any extra assignments that you created, your main task during the semester is coordinating and preparing for the poster session. In addition, you need to collect evaluations from the field supervisor and the student at the end of the semester.

Coordinating the Poster Session. Meet early in the semester with Carla, Terry, and the TA to coordinate who will do what for the capstone session. These tasks need to be done:

- Prepare the program. (See below for details.)
- Coordinate with the IT lab to get the posters printed. (See below for details.)
- For summer classes, when the poster session is held on the first floor, coordinate with Dona to complete a work request form for Facilities Services staff to come and move easels from the 5th floor supply closet to the first floor, move the heavy benches and other furniture in the 1st floor hallway, and set up the easels. This work is done the morning of the poster session. After the poster session, the crew should come again to undo all of these steps.
- Send a notice to the Insider and Know Events at least one week in advance of the event. Repeat the notice to the Insider the day before the event.
- Send a notice to ischool@utlists.utexas.edu at least one week in advance of the event and again the day before the event.
- Send the completed program to Cassie Alvarado and Tara and ask for their help in distributing it to folks who may be interested.
- Get a budget approved for food and order light refreshments (anticipate attendance).
- Set up a workstation outside Carla's office where students can affix their posters to foam boards (the iSchool has the boards and the adhesive squares; students bring their printed posters).
- Assemble and store the printed posters. (See below for details.)
- Set up a rolling desk with a drape, blank nametags, pens, and the printed programs for guests and visitors.
- Prepare labels with the students' names on them and place the labels on the easels in the order that they appear in the program (likely alphabetical).
- Figure out how to handle students who worked remotely on their capstone and cannot attend the poster session. For example, they might send a digital file for their poster for the TA to print and an audio file with a one-minute explanation of their work. The IT lab can lend you a laptop and headsets (necessary, it will get loud) for guests to listen to the audio file.

- For summer classes, take completed posterboards downstairs the day of the session (if students are not held responsible for them, which is most likely during the summer when students are working and not regularly on campus). Place posters on easels.
- Clean up.

Preparing the Program. Contact Sam Burns to ask him to set up a webform for students to submit their final abstracts online. To ensure that the abstracts are of good quality, you might ask students to submit drafts to your Canvas page so that the TA can check them for clarity, logic, and grammar, asking students for revisions if necessary. Alternatively, or in addition, you might wish to spend time in a class session discussing how to write abstracts so that students do a decent job on the first try. Students should submit their final abstracts via the webform. Sam will compile the contents from the webform into an Excel spreadsheet. Using the abstracts in the spreadsheet and the confirmed poster session date/location, the TA should prepare the program according to the program template that Terry has (ask her for it). You should look over the prepared program and approve it. After that, it should go to Terry by the set date. Terry will liaise with UT Copy/Document Solutions to print the program. Terry will receive a proof of the program prior to the poster session; you and/or the TA can review the proof before printing; you may not be given a lot of time to do the review because the printer's schedule is tight, so be prepared.

Printing the Posters. The TA should discuss with IT Lab staff when students will be allowed to come to the lab to print their posters (typically the week prior to the poster session), and by what procedure the staff would like to coordinate student sign-ups for printing slots (e.g., paper sheet, Doodle poll). The TA should email this information to the students. Appendix 2 contains the text of the mail that we sent out. Students may find this video on poster design from the IT lab helpful. These instructions for designing posters in PowerPoint may also be useful. (Note these links are not in Appendix 2.)

Assembling and Storing the Printed Posters. The TA should check with Dona to confirm the dates of availability of the workstation outside Carla's office for students to attach their posters to a foam board with adhesive squares. In the academic year, instructors typically ask students to be in charge of their own posters after affixing them. In the summer, when students are not on campus and often working, you might allow students to place their completed posters on top of the drawer cabinet against the back wall; the TA should place a sign there reading "Completed Posters." The TA should email instructions to the students. See again Appendix 2 for the email text we sent out.

Collecting Evaluations. A week or more prior to the poster session, you should send only the PEP students two forms, one for their field supervisor to complete and one for them to complete. You and the students can find the forms online; they are also contained in the student manual. Students should hand in both forms to the TA at the poster session. The TA should tabulate the results of both forms so that we have some idea (and a record) of how our students are performing in their capstones. Send the results to Carla.

TA Duties
- Send out a reminder to students one week in advance of when abstracts are due. Some students may find helpful the cache of prior semesters' poster abstracts. Note that there will be some variability in the abstracts depending on whether it is for a PEP, practicum, report, or thesis, but the general requirements are the same for all students.
- Send out details for preparing and printing posters, including notice of any short courses scheduled by IT Lab staff relevant to the Capstone, such as on poster design.
- One week in advance of the session, send out an email to the students to
  - Remind them that they can invite guests to the poster session (e.g., their field supervisor for PEP students, or their faculty supervisors for report/thesis students)
  - Encourage them to bring a poster tube and take their poster with them following the session (removing the adhesive carefully and leaving the foam board *in situ*)
  - Advise them to dress professionally and to have practiced their 1-minute poster spiel
  - Remind students to bring their two completed evaluation forms and hand them to the TA.
  - Ask them if they will have additional media to display that might require a table or outlet. Communicate these requests to Dona and Quinn.
- If needed, check out a laptop and headset from the IT Lab to play students' audio files of their poster spiel if they have submitted one in absentia. Also, print at the IT Lab and assemble any posters submitted by students unable to attend the poster session in person.
- Bring an envelope to collect students' two evaluation forms. Check off students as they hand in these forms, consulting an extra program.

APPENDIX 1. Email notification prior to advising.
Send to Insider, MSIS, and GSC lists.

[Note that you should update all dates and some names.]

Hi Friends,

With the advising period about to get underway, I am writing with capstone information, including specific instructions below and the syllabus (attached). If you are intending to fulfill your master's capstone requirement this summer – be it a school library practicum, a master's report, a master's thesis, or a PEP – then you need to interact with me, the summer instructor, in the ways listed below. Full instructions for what you need to do (including required actions that do not involve me) can be found in the capstone manual online. The instructions here, drawn from the manual, are simply meant as clarification of how you will interact with me as summer instructor, and to help you during this advising period.

E-portfolio. Please note that all students wishing to complete their capstone this summer must also enroll in INF181E Electronic Portfolio (Unique ID 80865). The only exception is for students graduating under the old master's core, who completed an e-portfolio in their management class. Let me know if you are graduating under the old core.

About Those Forms! As you will see below, all students who intend to register for the capstone must complete one or more forms. Although you can register (and SHOULD register) for the course even if your forms are not complete (e.g., signatures are missing), your forms MUST be complete by Friday May 2nd. If they are not, then you will be dropped from the course. Not a good outcome! To avoid it, be mindful of the deadlines for registration and form completion: You are responsible for registering yourself for the capstone and the e-portfolio courses and for getting your completed forms in on time.

SCHOOL LIBRARY PRACTICUM STUDENTS

- You MUST GET your form signed and submitted by [date]. I will not advise you on your library placement. For that, you need to see Carla Criner during the advising period these next two weeks. You will hand in to her a form, which she will sign. I will not sign your form; I will simply monitor the final submission so that I am aware who is enrolled and who to expect in the class sessions.
- You MUST ATTEND four class sessions with me this summer on select Tuesdays from 3-6 p.m. in 1.208 (6/10, 6/ 17, 7/ 15, and 7/29). If you will be working at some distance from Austin, you will be excused from these sessions, but I need to know that up front (by Friday May 2nd).
- You MUST SUBMIT to me your e-portfolio link via email by or on Tuesday 7/15. Deadline is 6 p.m. The syllabus (attached) contains explicit instructions about what an e-portfolio entails and what yours must include.
- You MUST SUBMIT your project abstract to my CA Dan Sholler, copied here, by Tuesday, July 8th. See syllabus.
- You MUST PARTICIPATE in the poster session on Tuesday 7/29, during 3-4 p.m.

MASTER'S REPORT AND THESIS STUDENTS

- You MUST GET your form signed and submitted by [date]. Your form will be signed first by your report or thesis faculty advisor and second by Lynn Westbrook, the graduate student advisor, who will submit them to Carol Carreon. I will not sign your form; I will simply monitor the final submission so that I am aware who is enrolled and who to expect in the class sessions.
- You MUST ATTEND four class sessions with me this summer on select Tuesdays from 3-6 p.m. in 1.208 (6/10, 6/ 17, 7/ 15, and 7/29). If you will be working at some distance from Austin, you will be excused from these sessions, but I need to know that up front (by Friday May 2nd).
- You MUST SUBMIT to me your e-portfolio link via email by or on Tuesday 7/15. Deadline is 6 p.m. The syllabus (attached) contains explicit instructions about what an e-portfolio entails and what yours must include.
- You MUST SUBMIT your project abstract to my CA Dan Sholler, copied here, by Tuesday, July 8th. See syllabus.
- You MUST PARTICIPATE in the poster session on Tuesday 7/29, during 3-4 p.m.

PEP STUDENTS

- You MUST GET your form and letter signed and submitted. You must submit your required form and letter with all signatures (other than mine) to me by Friday May 2nd. That means your materials should be in my mailbox in the workroom by **4 p.m. Friday May 2nd**. Failure to get your materials in my mailbox on time would be cause for being denied entry to the class this summer, so don't miss this deadline.
- You MUST ATTEND four class sessions with me this summer on select Tuesdays from 3-6 p.m. in 1.208 (6/10, 6/ 17, 7/ 15, and 7/29). If you will be working at some distance from Austin, you will be excused from these sessions, but I need to know that up front (by Friday May 2nd).
- You MUST SUBMIT to me your e-portfolio link via email by or on Tuesday 7/15. Deadline is 6 p.m. The syllabus (attached) contains explicit instructions about what an e-portfolio entails and what yours must include.
- You MUST SUBMIT your project abstract to my CA Dan Sholler, copied here, by Tuesday, July 8th. See syllabus.
- You MUST PARTICIPATE in the poster session on Tuesday 7/29, during 3-4 p.m.
- You MUST COMPLETE learning journal assignments as described in the syllabus.
- You do NOT need to submit your form and letter to me prior to May 2nd; I will use the month between May 2nd and the start of class to ensure that all is well in terms of project scope, content, and process. However, because I recognize that you may be anxious about getting approval or you may wish to get a head start, and because I am also the kind of person who likes to get things done early rather than late, I will be happy to read your ideas prior to May 2nd. Try not to send me emails outlining your many possibilities. Instead, write up the one you most want on the form and send it to me via email. If it looks ok, I'll let you know, and you can go and get the signatures and resubmit to me.

Send to all enrolled students.

Dear students,

   I'm writing with some helpful pieces of information (but of course!) regarding your preparations for the Poster Session on Thursday, July 25, 3-4pm. These details complement our recent class discussion. Be sure to attend to the #1 item ASAP and to make plans for printing and assembling your posters (#2 & #3) soon.

#1. Poster Abstracts - due next Wed., 7/3

By July 3 (sooner is great), please send me via email your approx. 150-word abstract for your capstone poster which will be included in the event program. Per the syllabus, this also includes the following:

   -Your name
   -Project title
   -Host organization
   -Field supervisor's name

#2. Producing Posters

The dates when you can print your posters at the IT Lab include Fri. July 19- Tues. July 23 inclusive (see the lab hours for those days), and for these days you will be requested to have signed up via a paper sign-up at the lab desk (note that you can call 512-471-3991 /email the lab staff per guidelines linked below). This sign-up sheet may be available as soon as next week! Also, my latest info from the lab is that you are also welcome to print your poster BEFORE the 19th, and this will be on a walk-in basis. In all cases, please be aware that fellow colleagues will be printing posters as well and the lab may be particularly busy at certain times of Fri., Mon., and Tues. in particular. You should allow at least 30 minutes in-person for the printing process, including purpleshirts opening up your file and making sure the printed poster is adequate.

   Here are some specific details for preparing your poster: create the digital file "at size" of exactly 30" x 20" (either direction), meaning that you want to design the poster to be printed at 30 inches x 20 inches, and any images should be at a min. resolution of 200-300 dpi. A PDF file is best but a PowerPoint/PPT file is acceptable (Tableau files have shown some difficulty previously), and if you are designing on a Mac, be aware that any fonts may shift when printed from Windows so save your file as a PDF (again, at size). The IT Lab has a helpful poster example showing the visual differences between 24pt to 144pt fonts, which is good to check out beforehand. Please read through the capstone poster guidelines posted at:
https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/programs/masters/capstone/poster_session_guidelines

The IT Lab poster printing costs are 50¢ per sq. foot so plan on having about $3 BevoBucks ready to pay when you print (a reminder that the lab only accepts BevoBucks). There will be no poster printing the morning of Thurs. the 25th.

#3. Attaching Poster to foam core

Further details/modifications on this may be forthcoming, but the tentative plan is that pre-cut foam core will be provided for you at a workstation near Carla Criner's office. It is your responsibility to attach your printed poster to one of these foam core boards with adhesive squares (provided at the workstation by Carla) during Mon.-Wed., July 22-24, 9am-5pm -- no later. If you have printed your poster before the foam core workstation is ready, please make arrangements to store your poster safely until it can be assembled and placed with the completed posters there. If on Thurs. morning you need to affix your poster to the foam core, you may do so at the workstation, but you must keep the poster with you until the poster session. Alternatively, you can affix your poster to the foam core on the 1st floor (where the poster session is held) between 2 and 2:30, where we will have the foam core and adhesive squares for you during our setup.

The posters will be arranged alphabetically, on the 1st Floor of UTA. Of course you may take your poster with you following the poster session; leave the foam core (bring a poster tube). The event cleanup will conclude on Fri. morning.

I hope this is helpful, and I will let you know if there are any updates to the above. I'm looking forward to your poster abstracts! Thanks!