GS 491: Independent Study- Capstone for Bachelor of General Studies

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Office: Academic Commons – ID Weeks Library, 101D

Course Description:
The capstone course is designed to review and clarify student’s learning in the bachelor of general studies program.

The course is open only to students who have been formally accepted into the BGS program and are in their last semester before graduating.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course students will:

- Articulate a coherent reflective summary on how the student has grown (attitudes and behavior), things learned, and skills acquired throughout their educational journey.
- Demonstrate that students are knowledgeable in their emphasis areas through research showing that they have achieved college-level competencies in communication, critical analysis, problem solving, and synthesis.
- Identify skills and adapt employment documentation within career fields.

Instructional Method
This course is an independent study course and materials for this course are found online via Desire 2 Learn (D2L).

Communication and Equipment
Communication between student and instructor in this course is facilitated by E-mail within the D2L course. Only use regular Internet email to contact the instructor if there is a problem with D2L. Students who lose the ability to communicate over the Internet due to technical problems must call and leave a phone message at the instructor’s office (605-677-5681) that describes the problem and estimates when course activity will resume. Students are also reminded that coursework may be done on any computer with internet access. If students experience extended problems with a home internet
connection or personal computer, they are expected to find alternatives and keep up with the course schedule. Students are expected to check their D2L email frequently (at least several times a week). The instructor will use D2L email as the primary method of communication with students.

The instructor will strive to provide feedback and to respond to all communications within twenty-four (24) hours on weekdays or within forty-eight hours (48) on the weekends. The instructor will provide feedback and suggestions in a reasonable amount of time. Feedback will be available for graded assignments within one week of the due date in the D2L dropbox and will not be emailed separately to students. All written assignments will be graded using a standard rubric, which can be found within the course D2L site and is also included below.

**Expectations**

**Students**

Students are expected to read, understand and abide by all policies and procedures outlined in this syllabus as well as those in the Online Student Handbook (link provided in the “Getting Started” section on the GS 491 homepage in D2L).

Assignments are due on specific dates listed on the course calendar. Students are expected to email the instructor within D2L if they have questions about the requirements of any of the assignments. Unless an extension has been granted, an assignment not received by the due date will have 25% of the assignment’s total possible points deducted for each day the assignment is past the deadline. Every assignment must be completed to pass the course; even assignments that receive no points for being 4 or more days late must be completed. If you expect to be unable to make a deadline and need to ask for an extension, please email with an explanation and request for an extension through D2L course at least 72 hours before the due date. Extensions will be granted at the instructor’s discretion and only for good cause. Students who fall behind by missing deadlines for multiple assignments may be dropped from the course for non-participation. Students will also be required to complete 2 phone consultations with the instructor during the semester. These consultations typically last about 15 minutes but can take up to an hour.

**Instructor**

The instructor will abide by all policies set forth in this syllabus and those within the Online Student Handbook, The University of South Dakota, and the South Dakota Board of Regents.
# GS 491 Assignment Due Dates and Assignment Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Guide</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Narrative Assignment Guide</td>
<td>Reflective summary</td>
<td>1-13-19</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present and future career/educational goals</td>
<td>1-21-18 (MONDAY)</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Portfolio Assignment Guide</td>
<td>Employment interest identification assignment</td>
<td>2-3-18</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 job opportunities assignment</td>
<td>2-3-18</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>2-10-18</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cover letter and resume submission for first job opportunity assignment</td>
<td>2-24-18</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cover letter and resume submission for second job opportunity assignment</td>
<td>3-10-18</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Research Paper Assignment Guide</td>
<td>Capstone research paper proposal</td>
<td>1-27-18</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capstone research outline and preliminary list of sources</td>
<td>2-18-18 (Monday)</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research paper pages 1-5 draft</td>
<td>3-24-18</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft of pages 6-10 with bibliography draft and pages 1-5 revised</td>
<td>4-14-18</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final capstone research paper with revised bibliography</td>
<td>5-1-18 (Wednesday)</td>
<td>400 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Assignments are due by 11:59 PM (D2L time) on the due date in the D2L dropbox.
- Refer to the Assignment Guides in the Content tab on the course D2L homepage for specific instructions for each of the assignments.
Assessment description by project

Reflective Narrative
Assessment is based primarily upon the comprehensiveness of the student’s description of the experiences that have contributed to his/her academic and personal history to this point, and upon a clear and thoughtful description of short- and long-term academic and career goals.

Employment Portfolio
Assessment is based upon critical and comprehensive description of skills needed to meet the qualifications for student identified career fields, and upon careful, thoughtful, and precise composition of resume and cover letters with revisions per instructor recommendation.

Capstone Research Paper
Assessment is based upon precision of the student’s expression of research thesis, the collection of appropriate scholarly sources, the logical organization of argument, and composition employing clear and sophisticated prose appropriate for a student about to graduate from a liberal arts institution.

Final Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000-900</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>899-800</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>799-700</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>699-600</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>599 or less</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will be able to check your current point total at any time during the semester by clicking on the “grades” link off of the course D2L homepage. You will also be able to check the grades and feedback on any assessment in this same location.

Technology Requirements and Resources

The minimum technology requirements for participation in online courses offered by The University of South Dakota can be found under the “Technology Support and Requirements” section of the Online Student Handbook in the Getting Started section of the course homepage.

Desire2Learn (D2L) is used to facilitate all aspects of the course. In D2L, you will be able to:

- Find assignment guides and resources.
- Communicate with your instructor.
- Access your course progress and grades.
- Submit assignments and obtain feedback from your instructor.

To access D2L, please visit the following URL http://d2l.sdbor.edu/.
Students must have access to Microsoft Word 2010 or later for composing their essays, as the instructor will use the comment and proofing features in Word to provide feedback within the essays themselves. The free download of Office 365 ProPlus is available to students within Office 365. More information can also be found on the Office 365 Student Advantage Page in the MYUSD portal https://portal.usd.edu/technology/downloads/student/office-365.cfm. I also recommend having access to Adobe Reader DC since many articles are in the PDF format. This link will provide you access to the free adobe download http://get.adobe.com/reader/.

Student Resources
The University of South Dakota provides a number of useful services to students.

Online Student Handbook (see link in the Getting Started section of the homepage) This contains very important information related to the services provided by the University of South Dakota as well as the University policies. In it, you will find such information as:

- Academic support services such as the library, writing center, proctor and testing information, book purchasing, etc.
- Student support services such as advising and enrollment information, financial aid, student life, and counseling, etc.
- Technology support services like technology requirements, ITS Help Desk contact information, discounts on computers and software, etc.

USD Portal (http://my.usd.edu/):
The USD Portal is your one-stop place for a majority of services offered to any student taking a USD course – like this course. You can access the following services from the “Academics” tab in the portal:

- WebAdvisor
- I.D. Weeks Library
- Desire 2 Learn (D2L)

The USD Writing Center:
The USD Writing Center was established to provide writing assistance to students in order to help them become better writers. It is available on campus during regular business hours and online in the evenings. Students taking a distance course at the University of South Dakota are welcome to use the writing center at a distance. There are two options, Skype session or D2L submission through the Writing Center Dropbox, for your review of your work. For more information about the services that the Writing Center offers and instructions for making an appointment see their website at http://www.usd.edu/academics/academic-commons/writing-center.cfm.

Class Policies

Academic Integrity
The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. Plagiarism is defined as using the words and/or ideas of another and representing them to be your own, without proper credit to the author or source. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the Student Code of Conduct section of the USD Student Handbook.
No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

a. Given a zero for that assignment.

b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.

c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.

d. Dropped from the course.

e. Failed in the course.

Disability
If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Director of the Office of Disability Services, (Service Center 199; 605-677-6389) as early as possible in the semester.

Freedom in Learning
Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

Diversity
USD is committed to a systematic, intentional, comprehensive, and holistic approach to diversity and inclusiveness. To learn more about USD’s diversity and inclusiveness initiatives, please visit the website for the [Office of Diversity](#).

Assessment Disclaimer
Any written work submitted for this course may be used for purposes of program review and/or faculty development. Papers submitted into this course may be submitted to turn it in for originality verification.

Requirement: Introduce yourself to the rest of the class

To Do - Post your introduction to the class by clicking on “Discuss” under the “Communications” dropdown menu on your GS 491 D2L homepage within the first 5 days of the start of classes. *If you do not log into D2L and post your introduction within this time period, you WILL be dropped from this course.*
### Bachelor of General Studies Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Summary</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-69% of assignment total points</td>
<td>70%-89% of assignment total points</td>
<td>90% + of assignment total points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Summary</td>
<td>Includes a poorly organized or confusing description of the student’s acquired knowledge and skills; includes fewer than two experiences that contribute to his/her growth; and/or fails to clearly relate these to current and future learning. Frequent grammatical errors and/or unclear writing may confuse the writer’s meaning.</td>
<td>Includes a description of the student’s acquired knowledge and skills; explains at least two experiences that contribute to his/her growth; and relates these to current and future learning. Some level of synthesis is present and the summary is logically organized. Writing may contain some errors but the writer’s meaning is usually clear.</td>
<td>Includes a comprehensive description of the student’s acquired knowledge and skills; includes many experiences that contributed to his/her growth; and relates these to current and future learning. Synthesis is thorough and specific. Writing may contain a few errors but the summary is clear, well organized, and easy to follow.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present and Future Career/Educational Goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Future &amp; Present Goals</td>
<td>Does not identify both a short and a long term goal. Statement may be confusing because of poor organization and/or mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Includes description of each goal and provides timelines when student wants to achieve both goals. The statement is logically organized. Writing may contain some errors but the writer’s meaning is usually clear.</td>
<td>Goals are identified, measurable, and explained to show how both the short and long term relate to each other. Writing may contain a few errors but the statement is clear, well organized, and easy to follow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Interest Identification</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Interest paper &amp; 5 jobs</td>
<td>Includes a vague, confusing, or poorly organized description of skills needed to obtain to be successful in identified career fields. Fewer than five ads are supplied and/or the ads are not a good match for the description.</td>
<td>Identifies the skills needed to fit career fields sought after by the student. Description of skills is organized, adequately written, and includes some detail. Five job ads are supplied, most of them matching the description.</td>
<td>Comprehensive, specific, and well written description of the skills needed to meet the qualifications for identified career fields and how the student will fit the career field expectations. Five job ads are supplied, all a good match for the description.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>Resume is missing much important information and/or contains much irrelevant information; it is unclear; layout is inconsistent or sloppy; factual or mechanical errors would distract a prospective employer.</td>
<td>Resume includes most important information and little that is irrelevant; it is generally clear; layout is consistent and professionally prepared. Factual and mechanical errors are few.</td>
<td>Resume includes all important information with nothing irrelevant; adheres to professional format with clear indication of knowledge and skills of the graduate; there are virtually no factual or mechanical errors.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**GS 491: Independent Study- Capstone for Bachelor of General Studies- Dodge**
| **Cover Letter/Resume** | | | Cover letter is poorly organized, written, and/or formatted; contains factual inaccuracies; and/or does not show how the student would meet the qualifications the employer is looking for in each of the two ads. Feedback on previous resume has been minimally incorporated. | Cover letter and resume are tailored to highlight experience an employer needs to fill each of the two positions. Organization and formatting are adequate. There are only a few factual or mechanical errors. Most feedback on previous resume has been incorporated. | Cover letter and resume are both tailored to highlight skills precisely relevant to each employer’s position. Materials are factually accurate and well organized, written, and formatted. All feedback on previous resume has been incorporated. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capstone Paper** | Topic and research question are not clearly stated. Development of ideas is vague or lacking. Evidence and claims may be mismatched. Sources do not meet minimum criteria. Documentation of sources does not use a recognized style (MLA or APA) and/or is incomplete. The paper may be confusing because of poor organization and/or mechanical errors. Feedback on drafts has been minimally incorporated. | Topic and research question are clearly stated. Ideas are developed in some detail, with adequate evidence provided for claims. Sources meet minimum criteria and are responsibly documented in a recognized style. Organization is adequate and writing is usually clear, though there are some factual and/or mechanical errors. Most feedback on previous drafts has been incorporated. | Topic and research question are precisely expressed in an inviting introduction, and are developed throughout the paper with the support of appropriate evidence from sources that more than meet the minimum criteria. Documentation, organization, and writing are all handled well, with very few factual or mechanical errors. All feedback on previous drafts has been incorporated. Overall, the paper demonstrates a sophistication of thought appropriate for a student graduating from a liberal arts institution. | |