UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: IS
Course Title: Capstone 1

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 4980-001
Credits: 3

Course Description

This is the first of a two-semester (or term) course sequence culminating in a Senior Capstone Thesis/Project required for graduation from the Integrated Studies baccalaureate program at UVU. The Thesis/Project is a research paper or project that draws on tools and knowledge from each of the two minors that comprise the student's IS program.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☒ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Kim Abunuwara

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will engage in primary and secondary research on a topic that requires integration of their two emphases. They will work effectively with a committee of thesis/project mentors who will guide their research and writing. In Capstone 1 students will (1) establish this important working relationship with the thesis/project committee, and (2) produce an acceptable Thesis Proposal which consists of a strong thesis statement, introduction, and literature review.

Course Materials and Texts

Recommended: Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style,* 4th ed., (Pearson, 2000)

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

III. Assignments

All assignments must be submitted on their due date on Canvas. **Assignment descriptions and due dates are available on Canvas.** If you have technical difficulties submitting, email assignments directly to your IS mentor. The central goal all assignments is to help you develop a literature review if you are proposing a written thesis or research justification if you are proposing a project. This literature review/research justification is the most important part of your proposal.

A. **Source Summaries (25 x 10=250)**
    The goal of Capstone 1 is to create a strong proposal for your thesis or project. A strong proposal requires justification. Whether you are proposing a thesis, project, or business, you need to justify your plan. For an academic thesis this justification takes the form of literature review. For a project or business this justification will be solid research. The type of research you need to do depends upon your project or thesis.

    Sources can be scholarly articles, book chapters, documents of relevant public data, interviews with experts who can answer your questions, instructional films and/or videos etc.

    The quality of your capstone depends upon your **information literacy.** As you know, the internet disseminates much information of varying quality. Your literacy in this context refers to your ability to determine who has written the information and with what purpose. Is the purpose to sell something? To educate someone? To contribute to a discipline? Peer review is the strategy academia uses to assure the quality of its sources. This is one tool that makes searching for credible articles in academia easier. The internet has no such strategy and so you much evaluate the reliability of your sources yourself.

B. **Read Thesis/Project Proposal (10 points)** Creating a strong thesis/project proposal is your main goal for this class and for this assignment you will read a strong example. This will give you a concrete idea of what your goal is. You will read the proposal, answer questions provided on Canvas, and then take part in an online discussion about thesis/project proposals. Use this assignment to answer any questions you have about thesis/project proposals and to envision the best way to approach yours.

C. **Library Research Tutorial (10 points)** Cap 1 is the first of a two-part course series. This is the research, reading, set up, and preparation part of your thesis process. Think of this half as the reading half and the second half as the writing/execution half. Theses/projects must be prepared and justified in Cap 1. Your research skills will be put to the test in this class. Even if you have previously taken the library tutorial, take it this time with your thesis/project in mind. It will teach you how to make your topic the right scope. How to feel confident you are finding all the sources you need. How to evaluate your sources and make sure your justification is sound.

D. **Read Capstone Thesis/Project Example (10 points)** Read one of the capstone thesis examples posted on the IS website. A careful reading of a capstone thesis similar to what you'd like to do can answer a lot of your questions. Submit notes on the following questions if you find them helpful or use your own. **You notes should indicate a close reading.**

E. **Summary of Example Literature Review (10 points)** The main element of your Thesis/Project Proposal is a literature review. A literature review is an essay you write summarizing the views of acknowledged authorities on your topic; it demonstrates that you know what you are talking about and can enter the discussion in an intelligent way. Reading and summarizing the strengths of this strong example will help you to write your own.

F. **Online Discussions (5x5=25 Points)** Most weeks we will explore an essential element of the Thesis/Project Proposal (such as Methodology and Literature Review) in an online discussion. For these discussions, you are required to review a text and share what you learned during that review.

G. **Brainstorming Essay (10 points)** Submit a one-page essay that addresses the following questions: What topic or project do I want to explore for the next two semesters? What do I want to learn through this

process? What skills do I want to develop? What interests, knowledge and skills so I already have that I can bring to this work? How will this contribute to my plans after graduation? How will ideas and disciplinary tools from each of your emphases make your work possible? Your thesis will be proof for prospective employers or professional/graduate school assessors that you can do what they require.

H. **Database Paragraph (5 points)** Submit a paragraph about which databases are proving the most fruitful and which the least in your research.

I. **Area Mentors (25 points)** An important assignment this term is to select two UVU professors to serve as Area Mentors on your Capstone thesis/project. These mentors are essential to your capstone success. Ideally, they possess expertise on your topic and can direct your research. It helps if you already have a good working relationship with them but that is not essential. They will work with you during Cap 1 and Cap 2. In Cap 1 they will guide your research and approve your proposal, in Cap 2 they will read drafts, suggest revisions, and attend your defense. Together with your IS mentor, they form your thesis/project committee. Since your IS mentor may change between Cap 1 and Cap 2, your disciplinary mentors provide continuity. Three assignments prompt you to communicate with them often in Cap 1 so that their approval of your proposal is meaningful. All three members of committee must approve the thesis/project proposal before you advance to Capstone 2 (see final assignment).

J. **Methodology Workshop (20 Points)** In this assignment, you will write an on the methodology you will use in your thesis/project (10 points). You will also bring two copies to class to be read in a workshop with classmates (10 points).

K. **Literature Review/Justification and Workshop (70 Points)** You will draw from your summaries to create this first draft. To begin, sort through your summaries. How might you order them? Which ideas work together and how do they help you to tell the story you want to tell?

L. **Thesis Workshop (15 Points).** Happening when you are submitting your first draft of your literature review, this workshop gives you the opportunity to test the clarity and scope of your thesis statement. This happens during weeks when you are polishing your thesis/project proposal before sending it for approval to your area mentors. Submit your statement (5) and bring copies to class for workshop (10).

M. **Thesis/Project Proposal (100 Points)** consists of a strong thesis statement, introduction, and literature review. (See template and examples on IS Website)

N. **Faculty Mentor Agreement (10 Points)** This is a form found on the IS Website which the thesis/project committee members sign to signify their approval.

O. **In Class Presentations (by invitation)** As you conduct your research, you will have opportunities to present what you are finding to the class. Presenting requires you to shore up your knowledge of elements like literature review and methodology. It also gives you the chance to apply these elements to your own work.

P. **Attendance (30 points)** This is a face-to-face class and attendance is mandatory. A role will be handed out at the beginning of each class which you should sign. There will be no recordings of the course or livestream options. If you are absent, you are nevertheless responsibility for the information discussed in class. See assignment descriptions and due dates on Canvas. Excessive lateness or absences will result in a lower grade.

Total Possible Points 600

IV. Grading

94-100%-A (470+)	74-76%-C
90-93%-A-	70-73%-C-
87-89%-B+	67-69%-D+
84-86%-B	64-66%-D
80-83%-B-	60-63%-D-
77-79%-C+	0-59%-E.

UVU policy defines course grades as follows:

A = "an exceptional grade indicating superior achievement"
B = "a grade indicating commendable mastery"
C = "satisfactory mastery...an average grade"
D = "substandard progress"   E= "inadequate mastery
of pertinent skills or repeated absences"

V. Late Work Policy. I accept late assignments for one week after the due date with %5 reduction for each day they are late.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
See Assignments

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
Lectures will address theoretical and practical problems associated with research and writing, including interdisciplinarity, research methodologies, library research, computerized research, evaluating sources and writing development. The final assignment for the course is a detailed thesis/project proposal. *You will not be permitted to register for Cap 2 until you have completed an adequate proposal.* Each of the writing assignments during the semester will address a section of the proposal. Keep this in mind as you attend lectures and prepare individual assignments. None of this is busy work. Apply each assignment to the final proposal assignment.

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are skills that must be developed over time. Yet, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

Brainstorming and refining your ideas;

Finding information on your topic;

Checking grammar, mechanics and style.

The following policy which applies to this class was compiled by Dr. Frederick White from various AI statements in CHSS for Integrated Studies.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts. This means, as an example, using the tool to write your discussion posts.
- Writing drafts of your academic essays.

- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or essays to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

It is important to understand both technology's strengths and limitations. AI is already proving its usefulness in brainstorming writing ideas, simplifying complex topics, and performing rudimentary research. AI is a tool with potential usefulness for writers. However, AI is also fraught with serious issues (ie. hallucinations). **It possesses accuracy problems while simultaneously sounding very confident about its incorrectness. It frequently generates fake citations and quotations.** It cannot understand the complexities and contexts of human communication. Finally, the way AI is trained on other texts poses several ethical questions about copyright and intellectual theft of property (along with uncritically inheriting the biases of the texts it is trained on).

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. Although many citation guides are already presenting ways to properly use and cite AI, I do not currently believe that citing AI in your work is in line with the standards of academic writing that value knowing the exact author(s) or sources that informed your writing.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, the first step will always be a conversation with me (in-person or via Teams). If the infraction is very minor or clearly unintentional, there may be no sanctions at all. However, a lowered grade and/or the chance to revise the paper may also be possible. In more serious cases, the assignment may receive an automatic zero.

The most serious infractions may lead to me filing an incident report with the Student Conduct office. In this scenario, you have the right to appeal the report with the department chair. Regardless of the chair's decision, the incident report remains a part of your permanent record. If you are unhappy with the chair's ruling, you then have the right to file an appeal with the dean. The dean's decision on the matter will be final.

Using Remote Testing Software
☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities
Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](#) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*.

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.
To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed

by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.