

AHS CAPSTONE

Fall 2010

Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

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| <i>Instructor:</i> | Rob Martello |
| <i>Office:</i> | MH 355 |
| <i>Phone:</i> | 781 292-2532 |
| <i>Email:</i> | robert.martello@olin.edu |
| <i>Office Hours:</i> | By appointment, but insanely flexible |

Course Information

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| <i>Course Name:</i> | Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences Capstone Project |
| <i>Course Nicknames:</i> | Capstone, AHSCAP, |
| <i>Course Number:</i> | AHSE 4190 |
| <i>Meeting Time:</i> | Tuesdays 3 to 6 pm |
| <i>Meeting Location:</i> | AC 318 |
| <i>Course Webpage:</i> | http://mrwiki.olin.edu/mrwiki/AHSCap2010 |
| <i>Course Email List:</i> | ahscap@lists.olin.edu |
| <i>Course Mascot:</i> | A sunglasses-wearing phoenix on a surfboard, looking <i>oh so cool</i> |

Course Overview

If you are reading this, you are a lucky soul. The AHS Capstone, is, above all else, an opportunity to articulate a vision and make it come true. Over the course of this semester, you and your colleagues will take charge of advanced AHS projects. In other words, you have the primary responsibility to:

- conceptualize an AHS project, develop a question you wish to explore and articulate the importance of that question
- locate a mentor in your discipline, someone with valuable and inspiring experiences and perspectives who will offer advice and assistance along the way
- develop a work plan that sets milestones and offers a realistic strategy for accomplishing all objectives... and modify the plan as needed
- carry out your plan of work and produce a high-quality final deliverable
- revise your final deliverable to respond to feedback
- assess your work: explain the scholarly context of your project and interpret it for non-specialists
- present your work to a larger audience

The AHS Capstone consists of a number of assignments that will help you accomplish the preceding objectives, and we will make adjustments as needed, to realize the potential of your unique goals,

methods, and preferences. Opportunities like this do not arise every day. Be happy, find your inner motivation, and roll up your sleeves ... it is time to create!

Learning Objectives

The philosophy and main objectives of this course are embodied in the following goals:

1. **Conceptualize and execute an advanced AHS project.** The planning portions of this project (proposal, plan of work, etc.) are essential: in this activity the journey is at least as important as the destination. Revision is vital as well; stay in touch with your personal and educational goals, continually improve your methods and expectations, and victory shall be yours.
2. **Operate within disciplinary conventions.** Even though your project might span more than one discipline, you must view your goals and outcomes from the perspective of at least one AHS discipline and accept critique from the perspective of experts in that discipline.
3. **Analyze!** All projects must achieve an analytical goal, such as the exploration of a question or the engagement of a problem. Quality of work matters far more than quantity.
4. **Incorporate scholarly context.** In addition to creating a primary deliverable you will also analyze the context and outcome of your work and interpret its relevance and impact in relation to relevant scholarship. Stand on the shoulders of giants!
5. **Develop communication skills.** This course teaches and assesses a variety of communication practices. All course assignments will be:
 - a. **Professional.** Projects will be significant and appropriate to the AHS discipline(s) in which you are working: your study should have both breadth and depth and strike the proper balance between creativity and formality. Assignments will use appropriate methodology such as correct execution of citations, artist statements, human subjects protocols, etc.
 - b. **Goal-driven and Structured.** Assignments will communicate a clear goal while providing a logical structure governed by the deliverable's goals and outcomes.
 - c. **Executed with Clear, Engaging, and Efficient Mechanics.** The mechanics in all assignments will facilitate efficient communication, clarity, and understanding via techniques such as correct grammar, correctly labeled diagrams, effective artwork or musical execution, clear presentation mechanics, etc.

Competencies

This course will develop and assess the following competencies at an advanced level of mastery: **qualitative analysis, contextual understanding, lifelong learning, and communication.** These competencies are closely related to the learning objectives listed above and to the feedback delivered on all assignments. Though not assessed, **teamwork** and **fun** will also be developed.

Course Policies

- **Course Administration: Course Leader and Mentor**
 - Rob is your course leader. Rob is a marvel of the modern world. Rob loves PEZ.
 - Your course leader is your primary contact this semester. The course leader has many responsibilities:
 - Run weekly class sessions

- Grade assignments (with input from the mentor)
- Facilitate budgetary interactions if your project has a budget
- Schedule presentations and clap even if others choose not to clap
- Oversee all course administration issues with an impish grin
- You also need a mentor, usually a different person from your course leader. Mentors grade some of your assignments, meet with you about three times over the semester, and offer you valuable feedback.
- **Deadlines and Late Work**
 - You must submit all assignments by the formal deadlines. If you think you cannot meet a deadline, inform your course leader as far in advance as possible.
 - Your grade will be penalized if you miss a deadline without explicit re-negotiation with your course leader. Avoid this nonsense: spread bad news quickly!
- **Attendance and class participation**
 - Attendance and class participation are required each week and will be considered in computing your grade.
 - If you are too sick to come to class you should focus on getting healthy. It is your responsibility to contact your course leader as soon as you can – before class if possible, or at the first opportunity after class, if necessary – and make up missed material.
 - If you have a different reason for missing class, contact your course leader as early as possible -- always before class, barring a crisis.
- **Laptop use:** Please bring laptops and your notes to all meetings. We will have many opportunities to work on your projects while we meet. Reserve laptop use for appropriate times and leave them closed at other times.
- **Honor code issues:** Primary honor code related issues include:
 - **Plagiarism:** we will discuss this in class, but in general you must always take extreme care to acknowledge the source of all quotes, content, and theories. When in doubt, cite. Ask your mentor for clarifications and discipline-specific guidance.
 - **Collaboration:** ask for exact guidelines on the degree of allowable collaboration. If you receive help where help is allowed, you must acknowledge it in a brief note at the end of the assignment.
 - **Ethical considerations of your project:** we will discuss this in class, but primary ethical considerations generally involve: (1) professional ethics of your discipline and (2) ethics specific to those projects that involve human participants. In the case of human participants, researchers must adhere to three basic principles (respect for persons, beneficence, and justice).
- **Human Subjects Policy.** Some projects involve research with human subjects, that is, data to be analyzed will be gathered from talking to, surveying, or observing real people. For those projects, you must follow the procedure the course leader tells you to follow. If you even suspect you might need to do this, discuss with the course leader ASAP. Note that you must receive approval PRIOR to beginning your work with human subjects.
- **Time expectations:** This course requires all students to efficiently and diligently manage their time on an independent research project. Students should expect to spend 12 hours per week doing everything associated with this course (including attending class meetings). If you spend more than 12 hours a week on this course, please inform your course leader. If you spend considerably less, we should discuss how you might deepen your project.
- **SCOPE:** SCOPE is cool. SCOPE is intense. SCOPE is a force of nature.¹ Good luck with SCOPE. However, SCOPE meetings, deadlines, etc., are *never* an excuse for you to skip our class, miss deadlines, or spend less than 12 hours a week on the AHS Capstone!
- **Feedback:** feedback is an essential component of this course. I will request periodic feedback and urge you to contact me at any point with suggestions or concerns.
- **Archiving your work.** The library and the AHS Capstone team archive all AHS Capstone Projects for posterity. Each semester's work will be bound and placed in the library to serve as a resource for future capstone students and as a reference point for professors. At this point, the

¹ SCOPE spelled backwards is EPOCS, or "Equatorial Pacific Ocean Climate Studies." QED.

archive is available at P:\AHS Capstone Archives. At the end of the semester, please place your Disciplinary Deliverable and a synopsis of your project in this location, in the folder labeled "2010 fall." Delivery of your capstone to the library is the final step in completing this course.

Grading

This course will use the ABCDF grading system as outlined in the Student Handbook, including pluses and minuses (note that Olin does not use the A+ grade). Final grades will be assigned in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Student Handbook.

Your grade will be based on the following breakdown:

| Course Assignment | Percentage |
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| Personal Goals | 10 |
| Proposal | 10 |
| Progress Report | 10 |
| First submission of Disciplinary Deliverable | 20 (*) |
| Revision of Disciplinary Deliverable | 20 (*) |
| Project Assessment | 10 |
| Final Presentation | 5 |
| Professionalism (includes participation, attendance, deadline management, etc.) | 15 (**) |
| TOTAL | 100 |

(*) The relative weighting of the first submission and revision of your Disciplinary Deliverable may change to reflect the circumstances of your project.

(**) Professionalism may account for more than 15% of your grade in exceptional cases.

Style and Format for Written Assignments

All writing assignments should be delivered in an electronic format acceptable to your mentor, your instructor, and any peer editors with whom you will share this work. Typically, this has been MS Word. Do not use LaTeX or pdf, as they make electronic editing of your document more difficult.

Regardless of software used, your written work should use the following settings:

- 12 point font, spacing 2, margins 1 inch all around
- Times New Roman font (or other professional font by prior agreement)
- Page numbers in top corner or bottom center
- Your name and an identification of the assignment (e.g., "Project proposal") on every page (for example, in the header)
- Always use a file name that includes your last name and the identification of the assignment, for example, if your last name is "Obama," obama_proposal.doc

All assignments must be emailed to your course leader on or before listed assignment deadlines. Some assignments must also be emailed to peers, your mentor, or your reader as specified on the semester schedule below. If your work is not email-able, it is your responsibility to make sure the recipients get it by the deadline.

Semester Schedule

Note: all assignments are DUE on the date listed.

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| WEEK 1 | Tuesday September 7 80's Theme Song: "In Your Wildest Dreams" | |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">In Class: Introduction and Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review course expectations and syllabus: budget issues, future assignments (especially the Disciplinary Deliverable), grading, mentor relationship, etc. • Discuss ethics of research with or without human subjects • Discuss "work buddy" system • Form Peer Review groups • Discuss project ideas, get started on proposals • Discuss roadblocks, and blockbusters <p>• Due In Class: Assignment One, Personal Goals</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Outside of Class</p> <p>Dee Meeting: Schedule mandatory strategy session in library with Dee Magnoni before Monday, Sep. 20. Schedule it right away! Check her Outlook calendar and then send a meeting request. At least 24 hours prior to your meeting, please send her a brief introduction to the topic noting the main ideas and key questions.</p> <p>Work on Proposal at once!</p> |
| WEEK 2 | Tuesday September 14 80's Theme Song: "Life is a Highway" | |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">In Class: Proposal Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet in Peer Review groups • Share proposal ideas, questions, problems, and excitement with the class • Discuss peer reviewing of proposals to be done next week • Work, work, work on proposals | <p style="text-align: center;">Outside of Class</p> <p>Dee Meeting: make it happen.</p> <p>Proposal: Email your proposal by 9:00 PM next MONDAY (Sep. 20) to course leader and peer reviewers.</p> |
| WEEK 3 | Tuesday September 21 80's Theme Song: "The Glamorous Life" | |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">In Class: Proposal Review/Revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop proposals: read pre-assigned colleagues' proposals before class and prepare written comments and feedback. (Address specific peer review questions that course leader will email to the class.) • Bring all the work you have done thus far: this is a big working meeting day • Briefly discuss note-taking and outline development | <p style="text-align: center;">Outside of Class</p> <p>DUE: Email your proposal by 9:00 PM on MONDAY (Sep. 20) to course leader and peer reviewers.</p> <p>DUE: Email a final version of your proposal to course leader and mentor no later than 6:00 PM on Thursday September 23.</p> <p>Arrange to meet with your mentor in the next week (no later than Friday Oct. 1) to discuss your proposal.</p> |

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| WEEK 4 | Tuesday September 28 80's Theme Song: "Don't Stop Believing" | |
| | In Class: Progress Reports | Outside of Class |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Progress Report • Work on projects should be underway, we will discuss our early activities | <p>DUE: meet with your mentor by Friday Oct. 1 to discuss your proposal</p> |

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| WEEK 5 | Tuesday October 5 80's Theme Song: "Synchronicity" | |
| | In Class: Group Meetings | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one or peer group meetings with the course leader, individually scheduled. • Time to get cracking, no loitering. Is your Plan of Work still accurate? | |

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| WEEK 6 | Tuesday October 12 80's Theme Song: "Birdhouse in Your Soul" | |
| | In Class: Presentations | Outside of Class |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have questions about the Progress Report? (draft due FRIDAY) • In-class presentations, everyone present their methods and progress to the class. | <p>DUE: email Progress Report to course leader and peer reviewers by 9:00 PM on FRIDAY October 15.</p> <p>DUE: write a peer review of your group's Progress Reports by Tuesday's class.</p> |

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| WEEK 7 | Tuesday October 19 80's Theme Song: "Come Sail Away" | |
| | In Class: Progress Reports | Outside of Class |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due In Class: Write peer reviews of your group's Progress Reports and bring to class. (Address peer review questions that the course leader will email the class.) • Bring your own Progress Report to class for workshopping | <p>DUE: email revised Progress Report to course leader and mentor by 6:00 PM on FRIDAY Oct. 22.</p> <p>Arrange to meet with your mentor in the next week (by Friday October 29) to discuss your Progress Report.</p> |

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| WEEK 8 | Tuesday October 26 80's Theme Song: "Crazy Train" | |
| | In Class: Presentations | Outside of Class |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three weeks to the Disciplinary Deliverable due date! Strategize with peer group! • Due In Class: Assignment One, Personal Goals (Revision, if needed) | <p>Meet with mentor by Friday October 29th</p> |

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| WEEK 9 | Tuesday November 2 80's Theme Song: "Wild Wild Life" | |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss last-minute survival strategies: finish line is in sight! • In-class works-in-progress presentations to peer groups (specific content TBA). | |

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| WEEK 10 | Tuesday November 9 80's Theme Song: "Overkill" |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be a major working day. Work like the wind. • Perhaps schedule Mentor Meeting (M&M) around now? |

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| WEEK 11 | Tuesday November 16 80's Theme Song: "Limelight" | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class this week. The course leader is available for consults. Classroom is available for working. All systems go. • Arrange to consult with mentor about Disciplinary Deliverable by Dec 3 | Outside of Class DUE: Disciplinary Deliverable – send via email (if appropriate, or some other way if needed) to course leader, mentor, and peer reviewers by 6:00 PM on Friday November 19. |

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| WEEK 12 | Tuesday November 23 80's Theme Song: "Just Can't Get Enough" | |
| | <h2 style="margin: 0;">THANKSGIVING BREAK!</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Turkey, turkey, gobble, gobble, eat until you wobble wobble.</p> | |
| | DUE: Massive and unrepentant turkey consumption. Watch football. Be happy. | |

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| WEEK 13 | Tuesday November 30 80's Theme Song: "Authority Song" | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive feedback on DD from mentors by Friday December 3 • Plan revision strategy for revised Disciplinary Deliverable • In-class written peer review? | Outside of Class Arrange to meet with your mentor by Friday December 3 to discuss your deliverable! |

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| WEEK 14 | Tuesday December 7 80's Theme Song: "The Final Countdown" | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last day of class! Wow. • Work on Project Assessment • In-class works-in-progress presentations to peer groups (specific content TBA) • Course feedback session | |

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| WEEK 15 | Final Exam Period 80's Theme Song: "Don't Let it End" | |
| | DUE to mentor and course leader: Revised Disciplinary Deliverables, Tuesday Dec. 14 at midnight | |
| | DUE email final deliverable to library for archiving (see instructions on syllabus) | |
| | DUE to course leader: Project Assessment, Wednesday December 15 at midnight | |
| | DUE: all presentations (TBA)! | |