

LSP Capstone – Best Practices

To receive and maintain LSP approval and credentials, Capstone courses (both proposed and on-the-books) must intentionally pursue and demonstrate the following Capstone Learning Outcomes (CLO) and Writing Expectations.

Capstone Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

1. Apply one or more theories or concepts from courses within their major to an analysis of a particular issue relevant to the major.
2. Identify an idea, method, or concept from a discipline outside their major field of study and be able to apply it within the context of their major field of study.
3. Examine how their previous coursework, including Liberal Studies courses, has contributed to their intellectual development and/or their post-graduation plans.

Writing Expectations

Instructors of all Capstone courses must assign at least ten pages of written material to be completed outside of class. These ten pages do not have to be contained in a single assignment but may be the cumulative work of multiple assignments. *These ten pages must provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their progress in mastering one or more of the Capstone learning outcomes for the course.* Additional writing beyond the ten-page minimum is discretionary and need not reflect learning outcomes. All written work requires instructor feedback during the quarter and should be structured into the curricular calendar to ensure such.

Combined, the CLOs capture the reflective and integrative purpose of the Capstone domain within the mission of the Liberal Studies Program. Respectively:

- CLO #1 is internal to the major and demonstrates student knowledge of the major;
- CLO #2 expands out to encompass a student's entire undergraduate academic experience beyond the major, demonstrating the integration of a student's coursework and undergraduate experiences beyond major requirements (including Liberal studies courses) with the skills and knowledge required for their major;
- CLO #3 widens further to demonstrate students' ability to connect their DePaul education to their personal development and aspirations beyond the university and the undergraduate degree (i.e., to connect their undergraduate education to their lives beyond DePaul).

Collectively, the CLOs require the Capstone student to **demonstrate** the indicated skills, to **apply** the significance of their education to widening spheres of curricular experience, knowledge, and personal development, and to **reflect** upon his/her/their DePaul education, both within and outside of the chosen major. CLOs must be clearly drawn and evident to the committee through the course syllabi, assignments, and course content. The capstone writing requirement also must reflect one or more of the CLOs.

A word on Interdisciplinarity: CLO #2 is intentionally interdisciplinary, requiring students to draw and reflect upon lessons and concepts from curricular areas outside of and beyond their major course of study as influential upon their major course of study. The more explicitly and intentionally the outside discipline of study is from the major, the stronger the connection to the spirit and objectives of CLO #2.

The LSP Capstone Committee recognizes the growing number of inherently interdisciplinary programs and majors at DePaul, many of which are populated entirely (or almost entirely) by courses from across the university and external to the program or major. Capstone instructors in these programs must be especially and intentionally mindful to the expectation of “looking beyond” the major for interdisciplinary influences.

The CLOs are not intended to replace program-specific learning goals and outcomes. The LSP does not dictate how, or by what means, assignment(s) or instrument(s), different faculty and/or programs teach students or evaluate the CLOs. Faculty and programs have creative license in their pursuit of these topics.

That said, to receive and maintain LSP approval and credentials, the following Capstone/CLO requirements and expectations must be observed:

1. Formal CLOs (as written above) must appear on Capstone course syllabi;
2. Assignments and activities that demonstrate student command of the respective CLOs must appear and be identifiable within the ‘Assignments’ (or similar) section of the syllabus or provided in supplementary materials during course reviews (formerly known as "syllabus reviews");
3. Respective CLO assignments/assessments must appear and be identifiable within the Course Calendar section of the syllabus; and
4. For LSP assessment purposes, respective CLO assignments/assessments must produce material and accessible student submissions, and the ten pages of writing required in all capstone courses must reflect one or more of the CLOs.

In short, the Capstone instructor’s pursuit and solicitation of the CLOs must be deliberate, identifiable, measurable – not just to the students and course instructor, but to the LSP Capstone Committee. Capstone proposals seeking LSP approval will demonstrate these efforts in their design and sample syllabi. Similarly, Capstone courses currently taught must demonstrate these efforts if they are to maintain their LSP credentials.

The LSP Committee welcomes questions from Capstone instructors (current or potential) in their preparation of course syllabi and/or CLO-related assignments. LSP Capstone-related questions should be sent to LSP Coordinator Celia DeBoer (cdeboer@depaul.edu).