

**AN 315 Senior Seminar in Anthropology
Fall 2017
Pre-course Workbook for Capstone Project Development
(Worth 15% of final grade in AN 315)**

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Preface

Developing a capstone project is both exciting and daunting. The process of creating a capstone is meant to provide you with a culminating academic experience in anthropology that will allow you to dive into an area of anthropology that is particularly interesting to you. However, deciding on a research topic, designing a solid project, analyzing data, and communicating your findings all present their own challenges. This pre-course workbook is meant to guide you through the initial stages of the process. It is recommended that you use it alongside of conversations with your thesis project advisor. Many of the exercises should be useful in helping you organize your thoughts prior to meetings with your advisor and can lead to more productive and efficient discussions.



Acknowledgements: The Department of Anthropology would like to thank the writing center, especially Dr. Traci Freeman, Ms. Kat Bell (M.A., Ph.D. candidate), and Ms. Roy Jo Sartin (M.A.) for their help in the development of this workbook, the AN 315 course, and for providing excellent assistance to anthropology majors and thesis-writers.

Step One: Which Capstone Project Format Is Right For You? Long-term Capstone vs. Short-term Capstone (Suggested timeline: work on this in block 6 of junior year)

A long-term capstone (at times referred to as “thesis” research in the college and other institutions)

- Allows time to locate a study site, get permission(s) for research, collect original data, and perform a thorough analysis and write-up.
- Strongly recommended for students who may pursue a graduate degree.

A short-term capstone

- The majority of research and writing takes place within the AN 315 block.
- May be appropriate for double majors who must write a thesis or capstone for another department, for students with extensive pre-med or minor coursework, and those who have other work or family commitments. However, keep in mind that with advance planning, you may be able to conduct a longer-term project and fulfill your other commitments.

Alternative capstones

Students may pursue other options that fall outside of a traditional paper format (e.g. museum exhibition, applied project), but these still require the same type of organization and reflection. Alternative capstones also result in the production of a (shorter) accompanying paper. Thus, all students should follow the general guidelines outlined in the following pages. Alternative capstones may follow either a long-term or short-term format.

Questions to consider as you select a capstone path:

1. What are my goals for my senior year at CC? _____

_____.

2. What are my goals for the first few years after CC? Do they include graduate school? _____

_____.

3. What academic and non-academic time commitments do I anticipate in my senior year? _____

_____.

4. Given the above and in consultation with my academic advisor, I elect to pursue the following

capstone track _____.

Step Two: Finding Your Topic (Suggested timeline: work on this in block 6 of junior year)

Read through Appendix One- "Thesis writing basics: choosing an undergraduate thesis topic," located at the back of this pre-course workbook and chapters 3 - 5 in *The Craft of Research*. Brainstorm your topic using the following prompts (the following is developed by Kat Bell in our excellent Writing Center!).

1. Brainstorm potential topics for your research paper, based on your personal interests. What topics or questions are you most interested in from class? What has sparked a passion/curiosity for you?



2. Narrow those topics to 2 - 3 that encompass what you're MOST interested in pursuing and discussing with your potential thesis advisor(s).



3. Reflect on your potential topics.

Topic:

- What is interesting about this topic, in general?
- How did I become aware of this topic?
- Why does this topic interest me?
- Who else cares about this topic? Who else has written about this topic?
- Why should people care about this topic?

Topic:

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More Ideas and information from the writing center:

What makes a “good” thesis?

- ✓ Originality
 - What’s new about my study?
 - What gives this a fresh perspective?
- ✓ Relevance
 - How does this fit the discipline?
 - How am I adding to the field?
- ✓ Feasibility
 - What’s the scope of my study?
 - What kind of time do I have?
- ✓ Ethics
 - What are the standards governing my research?
 - What might be at risk in my research?
- ✓ Passion
 - What do I enjoy studying?
 - Where do I want to go with this work?

Remember, you’ll be working with this topic for some time. The more invested you are, the happier you’ll be with the work you’re doing.

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



The chicken is not writing a good thesis. Don't be like the chicken.

CC has sample theses online? What!?!

To get to the online theses, you can start at the library home page, and follow this chain of links:

- * In the list of links at the top left in yellow, choose "Digital CC"
- * At this point, you could use the search box, OR, to browse...
- * Click "Academic Departments and Programs"
- * Click the name of the department you are interested in (hopefully its anthro....)
- * Click "Student Senior Theses" and go from there

Step Three: Discussions With Potential Capstone Advisors (Suggested timeline: work on this in block 6 of junior year)

Read Appendix Two- "Thesis writing: the basics" paying special attention to step three and the recommendations for considering who might make a great advisor for your thesis.

1. Given their research expertise, which of the anthropology faculty might be a good fit for advising your research topics?

Topic 1: _____

Topic 2: _____

Topic 3: _____

2. Next, factor in other considerations. Maybe some faculty will be on sabbatical during the upcoming academic year, others have a communication style that is similar to yours, or you have worked successfully with certain faculty on past projects.

Rank the faculty in terms of their appropriateness for advising your possible thesis topics:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

Schedule an appointment to discuss your research topics with the advisor that you identified as being the most appropriate. Bring your 2 – 3 research topics to that meeting and discuss your ideas. If it doesn't seem like a good advising "fit," schedule meetings with the next faculty member on your list. Even if a faculty member may seem like an excellent choice for your project from your perspective, be prepared that you may be assigned another advisor as the department may need to adjust capstone advising workloads based on other constraints.

3. Finally, decide on the topic that you want to work with and the specific question that you want to answer:

Step Four: Writing A Proposal (Suggested timeline: work on this in block 7 of junior year)

Mandatory Proposal Deadline: Noon on 1st Monday of Block 8 in your junior year. Successful completion of your research proposal and accompanying pre-course workbook materials will count toward 15% of your grade in AN 315.

For students selecting the *short-term capstone option*

The proposal will include: 1) Submission of completed pre-course workbook p. 4 – 12 to AN 315 professor. and you will submit the following to the department:

- 2) Brief statement (300 word maximum) summarizing your 1st choice research project. Describe the importance of the topic to anthropology and the gaps that it fills in the anthropological literature (or museum work or applied anthropological work).
- 3) List of top two advisors (1 = first choice, 2 = next best choice) with whom you would like to work on this project.

Short-term capstone projects may be eligible for funding although long-term capstones have priority. If you will require funds, please follow guidelines outlined in step 7 below.

For students pursuing a *long-term capstone option*

The proposal will include: 1) Submission of completed pre-course workbook p. 4 - 14 to AN 315 professor. and you will submit the following to the department:

- 2) A brief statement (300 word maximum) summarizing your 1st choice research project. It should include a clear research question, problem, proposition or hypothesis.
- 3) Brief literature review (approximately 2 pages) that summarizes previous research on the topic and identifies gaps in that research.
- 4) Evidence of adequate preparation in the form of coursework.
- 5) A detailed work plan (methods) and timeline.
- 6) References/Bibliography in the format of the journal *Current Anthropology*
- 7) A detailed estimated budget with justification for each item, if you are requesting funding. Please do not limit yourself to asking for funds for the “big ticket” items. Consider requesting funds to purchase gifts for key informants, funds for fuel for local travel costs, etc. Be thorough.
- 8) Affirmation that IRB proposals (human subjects) or IACUC (animal subjects) proposals have been submitted, or dates that the appropriate proposal will be submitted prior to beginning research.
- 9) List of top two advisors (1 = first choice, 2 = next best choice) with whom you would like to work on this project.

Please note that your research topic can change (this can happen to experienced researchers!). Changes (e.g. change in research methods, shift in location) can be approved by your thesis advisor.

So how do you organize your thoughts and begin developing your proposal....?

Introduction / Mini Literature Review	
What's your topic? (be as specific as possible)	
What does the current research say about your topic?	
What gaps are present in the research?	
Which, if any, prior studies guide your particular project?	

Purpose/Significance	
What specific gaps in the research will your study fill? (develop with synthesized information)	
Why is your research/methodology/potential outcomes important to the larger field?	

Hypothesis, Problem, or Propositions

What are your research questions?	
For each research question, what are your expected/anticipated results?	

Methods

What is your methodology?	
What materials will you need? How much will they cost? Can any equipment be borrowed?	
Why is your methodology valid?	

Step Five: Long-term Planning and Logistics for Long-term Capstones/Thesis (Suggested timeline: work on this in block 7 during pre-registration advising and throughout your senior year).

Once the department has reviewed your proposal, you will receive notification regarding approval of your project, status of funding requests, and notifications regarding thesis advising. Other considerations that you need to work on include thinking about other funding opportunities, ethical research, and scheduling.

Concurrent with writing your proposal:

- 1) Apply for venture grant or other funds. Submission of venture grant application is required before the department will fund your research. Also, you may need to submit applications in multiple funding cycles in order to receive venture funds. Start applying early!
- 2) Begin thinking about how to do your research ethically and apply for IRB or IACUC approval. Application directions and other resources available online by searching for “IRB” or “IACUC” from the CC webpage to find relevant links. IRB and IACUC staff are excellent resources for helping you do your research to the highest ethical standards, so contact their staff and have a conversation about your research.
- 3) Develop a plan for writing your thesis. Breaking the process into “bite-size chunks” helps you make progress and avoid feeling overwhelmed. Mix and match from the strategies presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Suggestions for thesis scheduling based on what has worked for different students in the past.

	Summer before senior year	AN 400 in fall semester	Thesis adjunct offered by writing center in fall of senior year	AN 315	AN 400 in spring semester	Thesis writing half-block or adjunct offered in spring of senior year
Option 1	Collect data	Analyze data, begin drafting methods and/or lit review		Revise methods and lit review, draft results/discussion	Revise thesis	
Option 2	Collect data	Analyze data	Draft methods and/or lit review	Revise methods and lit review, draft results/discussion		Revise thesis
Option 3	Collect and analyze data	Draft all sections		Revise all sections.		Final revisions
Option 4		Collect data, start analysis	Draft methods and/or lit review, continue data analysis.	Revise methods and lit review, continue data analysis, draft results/discussion	Revise thesis	
Option 5			Draft lit review/methods	Revise methods and lit review	Collect data, analyze, write results/discussion, revise	Analyze data, write results/discussion, revis

The above schedule is a starting point for thinking about how to plan for the different components of a long-term thesis. Use this in combination with discussions with your advisor. Mix and match different strategies. In my experience, plans similar to option 5 are the least successful in producing a mature thesis. Your planning should keep in mind the following departmental deadlines for capstone projects:

First Friday, Block 6

Complete first draft due at noon

Second Monday, Block 7

Final copy due at noon to both your advisor and the staff assistant in Barnes 302

In addition to holding several workshops, peer reviews, and writing retreats during AN 315 which will allow you to work on your thesis, remember that you can take up to two blocks of AN 400. Many students have used the AN 400 blocks or writing center thesis adjuncts and half-blocks to give themselves time for thesis work.

In consultation with your advisor, outline your plan for thesis research below:

Table 2: My plan for capstone research

Summer before senior year	AN 400 in fall semester	Thesis adjunct offered by writing center in fall of senior year	AN 315	AN 400 in spring semester	Thesis writing half-block or adjunct offered in spring of senior year
			Revise or Draft (Circle what you will revise, underline what you will draft): Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion		

In addition to working on drafts of the capstone project in AN 315, we will also draft a poster that will be presented at senior Anthropology Day in block 8. You are also encouraged to present the results of your research at the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum (CSURF) which is normally held during block 7.

Keep an eye out for additional presentation opportunities that will enhance your professional development and improve your chances of getting into a top graduate program. Professional organizations such as the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, the Society for American Archaeology, and the Society for Applied Anthropology typically hold meetings late in the spring and you may be able to present your research at these conferences. Search their websites for dates and locations of upcoming meetings. Some of these organizations have a late winter submission process for seniors completing their thesis projects.

For those of you beginning data collection and/or a literature review before the start of AN 315...

Step 6: Organizing Notes and Resources

As you begin locating previous research that has been done on your topic, you will start to accumulate many useful sources. In addition to reviewing chapter 6 in *The Craft of Research*, some additional ideas for keeping track of your information:

Managing hard copies of material:

- In block 6 of your junior year, you will attend a required meeting in which you will discuss the thesis process. You will receive some organizational resources, including a notebook that can be useful for managing thesis-specific resources.

Managing online material:

- Sign up for a Refworks account through the library homepage. Refworks allows you to create virtual folders in your account and you can store .pdfs of journal articles in folders that are organized by topic. Refworks can also be a useful tool for creating your final bibliography.
- Zotero plugin available at zotero.org is free and also allows you to create folders where you can store links to research articles and include notes on those articles.

Note-taking

- Develop an annotated bibliography. After reading each article, book chapter, etc, put your notes on that resource into one annotated bibliography. This file can be useful to help you locate key sources or information later. Sample formats for an annotated bibliography can be found at:

Purdue OWL annotated bib: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>

Cornell Library: <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>

- Alternative strategies for note-taking include using colored index cards to take notes in a thematic fashion. For example, you can take notes that relate to theme A on purple notecards, theme B on yellow notecards, etc. The notecards can then be grouped together, laid out in an outline, taped to a wall, etc in a way that will help you visualize how you might build an argument.

Effective Note Taking

- Keep your topic, thesis statement and audience in mind at all times. Do not take notes on information that does not relate to your topic.
- Write as you read.
 - This is an interactive process, so record anything you feel is relevant to your topic.
 - You will be able to remove notes at a later time as you begin to narrow your focus.
- Put ideas and information into your own words, in the form of summaries.
 - The best way to accomplish this is to read a passage, close or put the source away, think about what you have read and summarize it.
- Be accurate. Make sure to copy a direct quotation word for word with capitalization, spelling, and punctuation as precisely as the original. Be sure that every quotation begins and ends with quotation marks.
- Double check references. Make sure when you create a new note card, you've selected it from the proper source so it is properly tagged.

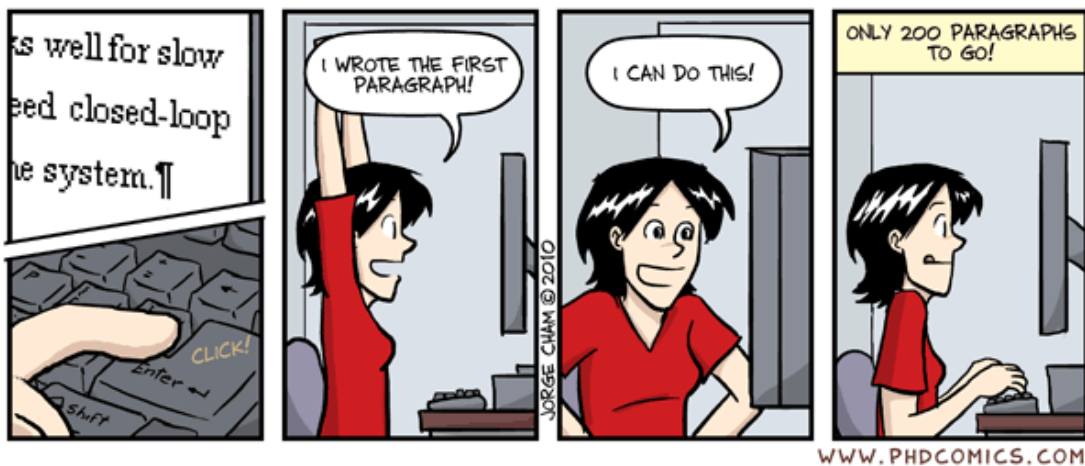
Step 7: Drafting an Introduction

The introduction sets the stage and introduces the reader to your topic. For those of you writing theses in the natural science tradition (e.g. biological anthropology, archaeology), the introduction is similar to an abstract. See also chapter 16 in *The Craft of Research*.

Components to include as you draft your introduction:

- What is the context of the study, within my field? What is the problem/issue I'll be addressing?
- What makes this a timely undertaking of the study? What prompts it at this moment in time and makes it relevant beyond being a question at hand?
- What is the overall purpose of the study? What does it add to the field at large? How does it fit into/extend/contradict current trends in research/answer an existing question?
- What are my research questions?
- What are my predictions or hypotheses relating to those questions?
- In a nutshell, what methods did I use to explore these questions?
- What is the thesis/findings for the project? (If you haven't finished analyzing your data and synthesizing it with the literature in the field, don't worry about this yet.)

Think about using software like Scrivener to help you organize the different sections of your capstone. A free trial can be downloaded at: <https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php>



Step 8: Drafting a Literature Review

The literature review is where you describe past research pertaining to your topic. Here you will discuss anthropological theory that is relevant to framing your research and the findings of previous research. See also chapters 12 and 13 in *The Craft of Research*.

A general guideline of what to include in your literature review:

- Introduction
 - o Reiterate purpose
 - o Preview trends/organization of literature review section
- What are my general topics?
 - o What contextual information does my audience need to know?
 - o How has this been studied before? What have those authors found?
 - o What theory am I drawing from?
 - o What gaps in the literature are present?
- Conclusion
 - o How does the literature relate to/inform my study?

The literature review section of your thesis is NOT a glorified annotated bibliography. For example, if your draft of the literature review follows the format of paragraph one = discussion of one author's work, paragraph two = discussion of another author's work, etc. then you are not doing it correctly. Instead, envision all of your authors and sources at a dinner table having a conversation with each other. Pick a theme for each paragraph or subsection. Have the author's converse about that theme.

My thesis is written in



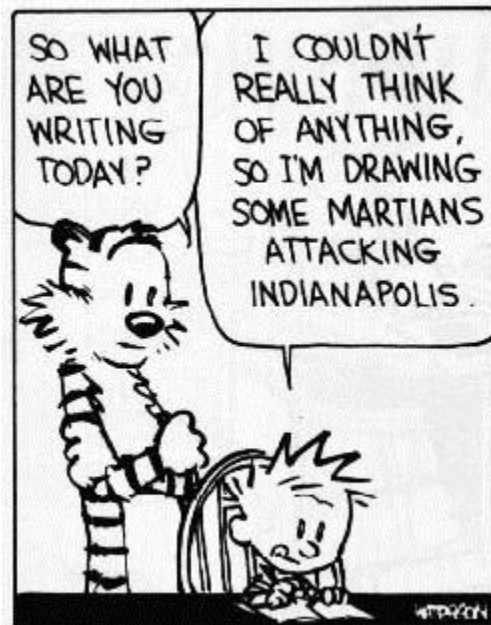
Step 9: Drafting a Methods Section

- Introduction
 - In general, what methods and instruments am I using for this study?
 - How are those choices appropriate for the study?
- IRB/IACUC/Instruments
 - What permissions did I get?
 - How, if at all, did those permissions impact my participant selection?
- Participants
 - Who was included in the study?
 - How were they recruited?
 - Who was excluded & why?
- Data collection
 - What was the context/setting for data collection? (online, in-person interviews at a college, phone interviews from the convenience of the participants' homes, etc)
 - If there were variations, why?
 - What methods of data collection did I use?
 - Why did I choose to collect data in this way? What makes this appropriate for the study?
 - What theory/other studies guide my data collection?
- Data analysis
 - How did I analyze the data I collected?
 - Consider frameworks
 - Consider quantitative v. qualitative analytic methods
 - What theory/other studies guide my analysis?
- What was my role as the researcher?
 - Is there any bias?
 - How did I remain objective/choose to participate?

What are the limitations of the methodology?

Step Ten: Drafting Results and Discussion. In biological anthropology, these are separate sections. In cultural anthropology, these are often combined. Check with your advisor regarding their discipline-specific guidelines. Also see chapter 15 in *The Craft of Research* to begin thinking about how to visually represent your data.

- Introduction
- What do my raw results point to?
 - o Can include figures/charts
 - o Remember to explain the figures/charts & what that information is important to the study.
- What, specifically, do your results mean? How can they be interpreted?
- What are my take-aways from this study? How do my results answer my research questions/address my hypotheses?
 - o Get to the 'so what' – why is each take-away significant to the study and to the field?
- What are the implications of this study on a larger scale?



Final Notes: Goal Setting! This should be done throughout the process.

During any summer work and thesis blocks, you are encouraged to set both daily and long-term goals. Be realistic! For example, don't plan to do work during the weekend of a family member's wedding. However, you might want to give yourself a deadline (e.g. # of survey responses analyzed or adding 10 sources to the annotated bibliography) before you travel to that wedding.

Below is a sample section from a daily goal-setting sheet for a thesis block:

1 Oct. Monday morning	Monday afternoon	Reflection on Accomplishments
2 Oct. Tuesday morning	Tuesday afternoon	Reflection on Accomplishments
3 Oct. Wednesday morning	Wednesday afternoon	Reflection on Accomplishments