

# CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

## *Honors 3990*

Spring 2019

Friday, 11:00-11:50 am

Location: C-215D and/or IC 100D



Prof. Ellen E. Bell  
Office hours:  
Tuesdays, 12-3pm & by appointment



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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*(From the Catalog)* Independent research and discussions with research mentor leading to an approved research proposal for thesis or capstone project. Emphasis on framing a creative approach to research topic using congruent methods from different disciplines. (Spring of junior year.)

*(From the Professor)* This class is designed to support Honors students as you develop research skills and begin the Capstone project you'll complete in your senior year. The course focuses on exploring a topic that interests you in the context of different disciplines and research methods. There is a strong emphasis on developing flexibility and curiosity as you formulate research questions and on deepening your knowledge by reading further into your selected topic through a detailed literature review. In this class you will work with your McNair faculty mentor to identify a topic, complete background research, formulate a research proposal and present your initial findings in a poster session at the Honors Capstone Conference. You will develop solid research skills, learn to milk the resources available through the University Library, and explore ethical practices and research protocols (including IRB and IACUC review). You will learn to give (and take) peer feedback by working with a research partner, in disciplinary cohorts, and with the class as a whole. You will also network with faculty members in your discipline and Librarian Tim Held. By the end of the semester you will have made significant progress on your Capstone project, giving you the skills you'll need to complete it and other research projects during your senior year and beyond.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Demonstrate the ability to identify and contextualize a research question, design a research project, complete a pilot study, and analyze, interpret, and disseminate the results (Goal 3.3)
2. Display solid research skills, including the ability to access University Library resources effectively (Goal 1.5 and 1.6)
3. Demonstrate flexibility and curiosity in the formulation of research questions
4. Demonstrate a deeper understanding of a research topic through a detailed literature review

5. Display a familiarity with ethical practices and research protocols (including IRB and IACUC review) by designing an ethically sound research project (Goal 3.2)
6. Exhibit facility in giving and receiving peer review.
7. Exhibit the self-discipline required to evaluate and revise work with a thoughtful, ruthless attention to clarity and correctness.

**General Education:** none

**Prerequisites:** Junior standing, discipline-specific research methods class, good standing in the Honors program, or consent of the professor.

### RECOMENDED TEXTBOOK

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald  
2016 *The Craft of Research*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.  
ISBN-13: 9780226239736 Available as a **free ebook** through the Stan State library.

### EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Students will be graded based on their scores on the following required assignments:

- 60% Research Proposal
- 40% Research Poster

The +/- system **WILL NOT** be used for this course. On a 100 point integer scale, final letter grades will be assigned as follows: A (90-100%), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%), F (0-59%). Please note that a grade of C (70%) or higher is required for credit to be granted for those enrolled under the Credit / No Credit option.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Honors Capstone Project Proposal:** This is a written representation of your intellectual journey and a road-map of the steps you'll take to test your hypotheses, address your research questions, and analyze, interpret, and share your findings when you complete your Honors Capstone Project in your senior year. Successful proposals (A & B grades) will state the research question clearly and succinctly; present sufficient background information to contextualize the question; make original, well-supported, and persuasive arguments about the importance and feasibility of the project; and include a clear, well-organized, and feasible research methodology. Any research projects that involve human or animal subjects will also include a completed IRB or IACCUC application, or evidence of significant progress on one. Successful papers will also be at least 8 typed, double-spaced pages in length (not including title page, Works Cited, or References lists), well-written, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and cite sources properly. All proposals will be graded for argument, organizational structure, mechanical correctness, and accuracy and relevance of citations.

In addition to satisfying the course requirements, your McNair mentor, the McNair Director, and the McNair Faculty PI will review your proposal with you as it must be approved before your paid summer research internship begins. Your grade for the course is independent of this review process.

**Research Poster:** (Draft due April 19; poster due April 26) You will create a poster for presentation in class and at the Honors Capstone Conference (**Saturday May 4, 11am-4:30pm**, location TBA). The poster is modeled on those presented at professional research conferences. It will summarize your HCP proposal and present your project in a visually compelling format. Poster guidelines will be provided in class and on Blackboard.

**ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**—All work submitted must be your own, and all sources on which you draw to produce that work must be properly credited. Absolutely no infractions of the academic honesty policy (<http://www.csustan.edu/JudicialAffairs>) will be tolerated. In *addition* to any administrative disciplinary actions, any student caught plagiarizing, cheating, or otherwise violating the academic honesty policy will be given an F for the assignment and, at the discretion of the professors, may *fail the entire course*.

**Students with Disabilities**—if you have a disability that requires classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible after class or during office hours. If you haven't done so already, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (Library L-165, [drs@csustan.edu](mailto:drs@csustan.edu), Tel. 209-667-3159, TTY 209-667-3044), which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. All information and documentation of disability is strictly confidential.

**Office Hours**—Office hours are set aside for you—please take advantage of them! If you have any questions about the course material, assignments, your research project, etc. please stop by my office during office hours to talk (Classroom Bldg. C-215D). Outside of office hours, the best way to reach me is by email ([eebell@csustan.edu](mailto:eebell@csustan.edu)). If you can't make it to office hours, we can schedule another time to meet or to talk on the phone if that's more convenient.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CULMINATING ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES**

|         |        |   |
|---------|--------|---|
| Week 10 | Mar 29 | Research Proposal Draft due   |
| Week 12 | Apr 19 | Research Poster Draft due   |
| Week 13 | Apr 26 | Final Poster due via Blackboard link                                  |
| Week 14 | May 4  | Poster Presentation, Honors Capstone Conference (11am-4:30pm, DBH)    |
|         | May 10 | Research Proposal due (via Bb & copied to McNair mentor and Director) |