

Senior Capstone – Class and Project Parameters

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A Senior Capstone Project reflects the education you have gained and the skill level you have achieved while at UVU. Artistically and technically it is expected to feel like professional work. This level of quality must be felt in all aspects: directing choices, casting, performance, cinematography, editing, production design, audio design, etc. Our expectation is that your project is of high enough quality that we can submit it for a Student Academy Award, Student Emmy, or other International level student awards.

THE CLASS

The senior project course (DGM 4310 in the Fall and 4410 in the Spring) is the Meet-in-Class part of the overall senior project experience and it serves two purposes: It gives you a centralized space to plan, work on, and improve your senior project AND it serves as an "Exit Course" to prepare you for a career in the "Screen-based Media" Production Industry.

The class is two semesters long. It does not need to be taken in any order. Students who are graduating in December should take the 2nd part of the course first in the Spring before they graduate; students graduating in the Spring should take part one first, in the Fall before they graduate. There is no "testing out" of Senior Projects. On the rare occasion that we approve a very different type of senior project that doesn't fit into the norm, it is still expected that the student takes the actual classroom part of the course. Digital Cinema Production students MUST take the Digital Cinema Senior Project course (not a course from one of the other DGM programs).

The three-credit class meets just once-a-week for an hour and a half. The rest of your credit is based on outside-of-class work on your senior project (see below). Your attendance is expected in this class. Each week we will either have a Checkpoint session from various project groups, or a presentation by either faculty or outside professionals on subjects ranging from getting on shows, getting in the unions, getting an agent/manager, doing your freelance taxes, etc. Your attendance and participation in the class is part of your overall grade in Senior Projects.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

By the beginning of the Fall semester, you should have already: Joined a Project Group and had your project approved by your Mentor.

MENTORS

Your Project Mentor can be any of the (currently 3) full-time Cinema faculty: Duane, Alex or Bill. They will ultimately approve your project and give you your final grade. Part-time faculty or non-Digital Cinema Production faculty are not permitted as your mentors.

You also will need a PROFESSIONAL MENTOR assigned to your project. Talk to your Project Mentor about your Professional Mentor before you reach out to anyone. Your Professional Mentor should be an industry professional with experience in projects similar to the one you are attempting. This should be someone that someone in your group has a personal relationship with. If no one in your group has a personal relationship with anyone in the industry, we will first ask, "What have you been doing the past four years?" and then can help you find one. You will give them three forms (found in files) that will allow them to rate your project proposal/script draft, a mid-progress cut, and your final project. Anything additional that they do as far as a contribution is up to them and certainly allowed and appreciated.

YOUR PROJECT

You may make a narrative film, a documentary film, a video project for a not-for-profit organization, or write a feature-length screenplay or a Pilot/ Bible for a series (the length of the series will determine how much will be written). Students in the Sports Broadcasting track will make a documentary short on a sports subject that might work as a spotlight for a team's Marketing Department or as an ESPN 30/30 type project.

Your crew will consist of the following: 1) a Director, as well as at least one of the following from the class: 2) Producer, 3) Cinematographer, 4) Writer, 5) Editor. Each person on the project is considered a **producer** of the project and has authorship and skin in the game. A cinematographer might shoot a few different senior projects, but there will be only one that is his or her actual Capstone Project which they also produced. Though each member of the group is a producer, each project must have a dedicated Producer who is responsible for the whole project. This person doesn't have to be part of the class, but it is highly recommended that they are. Production Groups must be a director and at least one other person (no solo trips). Students working on feature-length scripts must coordinate with Alex Nibley.

Each crew position **MUST** have taken the following courses (or be currently taking them) prior to production: Directors - Directing III (DGM 350R-002); Cinematographer - Cinematography III (DGM 454R); Producers - Producing II (DGM 4550); Editors - Editing III (DGM 350R-601); Documentary directors and producers - Documentary II (DGM459R). For narrative projects, the writer must have workshopped the script in Story Editing (DGM 450R). Additionally, all directors and producers of narrative projects must have taken Digital Cinema Production III DGM 3520) prior to or concurrently with the first semester of the Capstone Class. There will be no exceptions to this rule. In other words... you don't suddenly decide you will be a Senior Project cinematographer if you're not in the cinematography track, etc.

Please note that Audio and Commercial Music students also do Senior Projects. It is a good idea to make friends with students in these programs who might mix and compose your project as their Capstone (where would Damien Chazelle be without Justin Hurwitz?).

SCHEDULE

For students graduating in Spring, you are required to turn in your proposal and group by April 1st the PREVIOUS Spring semester. For students graduating in December, you should be committed to a group of fellow December graduates by November 1st the previous Fall before you graduate.

As not everyone is on a steady schedule (people return after time away etc.) we will accept exceptions on a case by case basis.

The following should be considered a general guide, each project will vary and December graduates can convert this to their own schedule:

April 1st- Submit proposal/draft of script/anticipated group to preferred Project Mentor.

October 1st- Projects should be shot and all principal photography should be complete

January 1st- A rough edit should be assembled

March 1st- Edit should be locked

May 1st- Project should be colored, scored, mixed and all accompanying paperwork should be submitted for evaluation (remember that you will also need time for your Professional Mentor to see it and weigh in before the last day of class).

GRADING AND EVALUATION

You will be graded on the following: 1) The quality of your final project (determined by a consensus of all full-time faculty); 2) The appropriateness and completeness of your final paperwork/production book (determined by your mentor); 3) The evaluation of your Professional Mentor; 4) Your attendance and participation in the weekly course and meeting the checkpoints for your project in a timely manner; 5) An overall evaluation from your Project Mentor; 6) Your group evaluation; 7) Your Personal Summary of your experience.

CHECKPOINTS - throughout the semester you will have a few Checkpoints to meet when you present your project in its current state to the Senior Projects course. This will include proposals, drafts, report on production, showing of a rough edit, etc. These in-class Checkpoints are different from the one-on-one input and evaluation from your Project Mentor.

PROJECT MENTOR EVALUATION - Your Project Mentor will determine and individual grade for each participant based on an evaluation of your effort and learning resulting from the project.

GROUP EVALUATIONS - Your group will evaluate each member's overall participation to ensure that everyone pulled his or her weight and truly had "authorship" and intimate

involvement in the project. While no one wants to be the reason someone gets a lower grade, no one wants someone else to be the reason they got a lower grade.

PERSONAL SUMMARY - You will fill out the Personal Summary form and include a detailed description of your experiences and journey on the project. This might include challenges faced in the pre-production, production, and post-production processes, how you overcame them, and what you learned, as well as a detailed report of your technical considerations and process. The written part of each summary will be about four pages and be written in a way that represents senior students about to enter into the professional workforce.

At the end of the course, you will receive **a personal evaluation of your work on the project and considerations for professional advancement** from the head of your personal track: Post-Production (Duane); Cinematography (Bill); Directing (Alex); Writing (Alex); Production (Duane); Documentary (Duane); Sports Broadcasting (Josh). It is important that the head of your track is aware of your work on the project and beyond - so you must stay in touch with him or her, especially if they are not the School Mentor of your Senior Project.

FORMS AND PAPERWORK

The following are critical forms that are needed for each stage of production:

Proposal - Turned in the semester before you begin your first Senior Capstone course and describes your project, your group, and, for narrative projects, should include a draft of the script.

Professional Mentor Script Evaluation/Edit Evaluation/Final Evaluation- These are three forms to give to your Professional Mentor. They are a general survey with places for written suggestions.

Group Evaluation- To be filled out on Canvas evaluating the other members in your Group.

Personal Summary- Filled out by each person that covers your effort and journey on the project. The written part of each Summary should be around four written pages long.

Project Mentor Evaluation - This will be filled out by your Project Mentor upon his or her review of the Final Project. It will be printed up and placed in your final production book.

Student Project Volunteer form: as in all of our classes, all project participants NOT enrolled in the class for which the project is being made must sign a UVU Volunteer Form. This form works as a clearance release as well as a deal memo. Please see your Project Mentor before you give anyone any other kind of contract.

A NOTE ON APPROVALS AND SUCCESS

Your Project Mentor will give you notes on your proposal and scripts and will strongly encourage you according to his or her opinion. The proposals will be shared with all of the other full-time faculty who will also share their opinion. It is also important that your project has gone through the evaluation process of the Story Editing Class and that the edit goes through the evaluation process of the Advanced Editing Class. You are also encouraged to bring the project to our Friday Films event for peer review. That said, at one point you will need to decide to go ahead with your project in spite of our notes. Though you will try you may never get it to our or your own level of expectation. In these cases, it is likely that the project will "fail gloriously." Meaning, you went for it, but didn't pull it off, but learned important lessons on the way. If things are learned, then this is occasionally acceptable. What isn't acceptable is to NOT FINISH a project... or to shoot a project and never edit it. Or to edit it but never finish the color or sound. Students who do not finish their projects during this class will not pass the class. They will get an Incomplete and **will not graduate until the work is finished.** DO NOT BECOME THIS PERSON.