

CAPSTONE FOR WRITING: The Senior Seminar

Deadline for Statements of Purpose: Spring 2018 Graduates: Friday, December 1, 2017

The Capstone Seminar:

The Capstone in Writing provides an opportunity for all graduating Seniors to reflect on their studies at Lang, and in particular the cumulative effects of the curriculum in the Writing Track of the Literary Studies Department. In the Capstone, students articulate their creative vision, write a critical essay that contextualizes their work, and complete and polish a portfolio of original work.

The Capstone project is produced in the Senior Seminar, which is a series of four-credit intensive seminars taught by Lang faculty, divided by genre (occasionally mixed-genre depending on number of enrollees). Each Capstone class is designed as a collaborative small-group environment—capped, ideally, at twelve students.

All graduating Seniors will take the Senior Seminar in their primary genre: **Fiction, Nonfiction, or Poetry.**

*Playwriting is a Capstone option only through The Arts Program

*Journalism is now housed in the Journalism + Design Program

The instructor of the Senior Seminar may prepare a syllabus beforehand, or the syllabus may be worked out collectively, according to the stated needs of the students. The Senior Seminar will include workshopping and peer editing integral to the completion of the Capstone project, but, depending on instructor, it may also focus attention on perceived deficits, such as literary history or grammar; “real-life” questions, such as the writing process or writing after college (jobs, cover letters, applications, grad school, etc.); generative exercises; or some combination of the above.

In completing a portfolio, students will substantively revise original work in their primary genre culled from previous writing courses, which may, in turn, entail the creation of a small amount of new material. The Capstone course, however, is **not** the forum for beginning a novel, or conceiving or writing three new stories, or a new long poem, or a new research-based project. No matter the genre, each capstone class will examine issues of craft, form, content, process, and critical context. Final manuscripts should represent polished work that exemplifies the skill and craft of an accomplished writer, with (approximate) lengths of 20-30 pp. for poetry, 30-40 pp. for fiction, and 30-40 pp. for nonfiction. For all genres, a critical essay or artist’s statement of 10 pages is required.

The Statement of Purpose: DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017

All students will write a Statement of Purpose (**between 750 and 1,000 words, 3-4 pages, double-spaced**), outlining the work they hope to do and the questions they hope to entertain in their Capstone, and email that document to the Senior Seminar Instructor. The Statement of Purpose is intended to elicit your plans for the Capstone project and to give the faculty member a chance to confer with you and approve your project *before* the semester begins, and, where

applicable, to incorporate your plans into the course.

For Statements of Purpose in all genres—**Fiction**, **Nonfiction**, and **Poetry**—please include: a detailed summary of the work you intend to include in your final portfolio; the scope of revision or polishing you have in mind; what if any new work remains to be done; what you need before you leave Lang with a degree in Writing. All statements should make reference to the specific features of their genre, so that a **Nonfiction** writer might specify choice of narrative technique, subject, sources or research methods. **Poets** might present their portfolio as a cycle of poems or a long poem or a chapbook, commenting on their own poetic style and practice, or perhaps describing it with reference to established schools of poetics. **Fiction** writers might locate the work in their portfolio in genres or subgenres; outline its plot or plots; and/or describe its innovations of form.

Your Statement of Purpose should be attached to an email and sent to your Senior Seminar Instructor and the Senior Secretary of Literary Studies, Shaza Elsheshtawy. The filename of your document should include your last name, first name, and primary genre, in that order. (E.g. “Austen-Jane-Fiction.docx.” If you are Jane Austen.)

Registering/Follow-Up: You may register for a Senior Seminar in the appropriate genre after you have sent the Statement of Purpose to Shaza Elsheshtawy. You don’t need any further permission or approval to register as long as you have submitted a complete file.

Submit your materials by email to:

Eduardo Velasquez

Senior Secretary, Literary Studies-Writing Department litstudies@newschool.edu

Direct any further questions you might have to the Capstone Coordinator:

Prof. Alexandra Chasin chasina@newschool.edu