

GUIDELINES FOR THE MELC CAPSTONE ESSAY REQUIREMENT

A capstone essay is required in one of the three options within the Middle Eastern Studies major, Comparative Cultures. It is an option in the other degree options to fulfill graduation requirements. The essay is normally written during the student's senior year to gain experience in researching and writing a major paper.

Supervisor

First the student must find a faculty member to be the supervisor for the capstone essay. The supervisor must be a regular faculty member in MELC, a Teaching Professor with a Ph.D., or a faculty member with an adjunct appointment in MELC. The faculty page of the MELC website lists the possible supervisors. Ideally, a student should work with a professor whose classes the student has taken and whose area of research interests the student. Students should seek out faculty early (quarters ahead) to secure a supervisor and to begin talking about a direction for the essay.

Essay Topic

The essay topic must fall within the areas of research of the supervising professor. Completing supervised readings prior to the capstone essay quarter assists in narrowing and settling on a topic that is both of interest to the student and within the faculty supervisor's field of research.

The essay can be a new topic on which the student has never written, or it can be a topic inspired by a paper that the student has written for an earlier course. However, if developed from an earlier essay or research paper, the capstone essay must represent significant new work and development beyond the earlier product. A copy of any earlier paper that provided the inspiration for the capstone essay must be turned in with the capstone essay.

Preparatory Readings/Research

The student is strongly advised to enroll in MELC 490 (Supervised Study) or MELC 499 (Undergraduate Research) prior to writing the essay to best prepare to write the essay. These studies must be contracted with a faculty member as well.

Procedures

During the quarter in which the essay will be written, the student will enroll in MELC 498 for 5 credits with the faculty supervisor. To enroll in the course, the student and supervisor must entirely fill out and sign a Capstone Essay Approval Form. Submit the completed PDF form to the MELC Program Coordinator at melcuw@uw.edu. MELC staff will forward the student's information to Humanities Academic Services who will enter the registration for the appropriate credits.

The supervisor and student must agree in writing on:

- a) a topic and methodology to be followed when writing the essay
- b) a regular meeting schedule during the capstone essay quarter
- c) style format (MLA, Chicago, etc.)
- d) essay length
- e) the due date for the final version of the essay

The essay should be between 20-30 pages in length. However, the required length may vary based on whether research is completed in translation or from the original text. Students should check with their faculty supervisor. Students completing an Honors Thesis in place of the Capstone Essay will have higher requirements, as determined by the supervising professor.

The capstone essay must go through at least one rewriting. A first draft must be submitted to the faculty supervisor for comment and correction no later than three weeks before the agreed upon due date for the final version.

A PDF of the final version of the paper must be submitted to the MELC main office to be kept in the collection of capstone essays. Reference to authorship may be removed if requested.

All fields below are required

Student Name _____

Student Email _____ Expected Grad. Date _____

Supervising Faculty Member _____

Essay Topic

Meeting Schedule _____

Style Format _____

Essay Length _____

Final Version Due Date _____

Additional Comments _____

Signatures

We acknowledge that the student and faculty supervisor have reviewed and agreed upon the Capstone Essay Requirements.

Student _____ Date _____

Faculty Supervisor _____ Date _____

MELC staff only

PDF of form sent to student and supervisor

PDF saved to student's file