**MDS 410**

**The Capstone Experience: Past, Present, and Future: WP3**

**Self-Paced Course Asynchronous**

**Instructor**: Wendy Walker

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**Description**:

The purpose of this course is for students to reflect on, examine and evaluate their education and Multidisciplinary Studies Major in terms of their futures. Using a variety of media and methods (readings, videos, recorded speakers), students will use a narrative approach to explore their past, assess their present, and imagine their futures. Assignments include homework, online responses to other students’ work, a written self-narrative, instructor consultations and recorded mock interviews, guest speakers and presentations. Writing will be submitted in draft and final formats.

**Introduction**:

A capstone courses usually is a culminating experience that pulls together what students have learned in their disciplines. The capstone thus becomes a foundation for the future, typically oriented toward a career or graduate studies. It can, and should, however, be relevant to all areas of our lives, including our roles as citizens and community members, as well as our leisure.

MDS majors don’t share a discipline in common, such as biology, psychology, English, or business. Instead, each has woven a program of study out of multiple disciplines. This course will be an opportunity to pull together knowledge and experiences from various studies and life. It will also give students a chance to *pause*, taking stock of where they have come from, where they presently are, and where they’re headed in the future. The course will consider future careers or graduate schools. Assignments will also focus on other areas of life, such as relationships, citizenship, and leisure. This course is built on reflection, critical thinking, empathic sharing and oral and written expression.

**Student Learning Objectives**:

* Students will be able to:

Understand how the past has affected their identity, values, and life-perspectives

Understand themselves in the present in relation to their strengths and weaknesses

Evaluate their education in relation to their strengths and weaknesses

Imagine future challenges and opportunities in careers, relationships, citizenship and leisure

Improve their ability to think critically and creatively and to respond empathically

Improve their ability to express themselves orally and in writing

**Class Sessions:** All activities in class are online as described in Canvas and include recorded sessions for viewing and assignments that will be recorded and submitted by students.

**Calendar**:

Suggested Pace for Ten-Weeks: Students have up to six months to complete the work.

Week One:

Introductions and Syllabus

Writing Rightly, Righteously, and Mindfully

The Idea of Self-Authorship

Recorded Lecture from Instructor: Outlining scope and sequence of class

Week Two:

Make Appointment for Mock Interview with Career Services

A Straightforward Approach to Writing: Writing Exercise

Draft Cover Letters and Resumes: Sandy Brown Recorded Presentation

One-on-One Consultation with Instructor: Writing Skills

Week Three:

Writing Focus: Clarity, Concision, and Active Voice

Writing Exercises: Getting started with an outline

Cover Letter and Resume revision; Final Drafts Due

Organizational Setting Paper Due

Recorded Guest Speaker: Their Life-Narrative

Week Four:

How to Outline: Outline of Self-Narrative Due

Draft Introduction and Chapter One of Self-Narrative

Writing: Punctuation

What is College Good For?

Recorded Lecture from Instructor: Intro to Self-Narrative

Week Five:

Revised Chapter One of Self-Narrative

Draft Chapter Two Self-Narrative

Editing Your Own and Other’s Writing

Finding Your Place in the World

Recorded Guest Speaker: Their Life Narrative

Week Six:

Revised Chapter Two Self-Narrative

Draft Chapter Three and Conclusion Self-Narrative

Mock Interview Due

Week Seven:

Life is More Than a Job

Revised Chapter Three and Self-Narrative

Draft Complete Self-Narrative

One-on-one Editing Consultation with Instructor

Week Eight:

Post full Revised Self-Narrative

Recorded Lecture from Instructor: Self Presentation Guidance

Week Nine:

Record and post Self-Narrative Presentation

Week Ten:

Recorded Presentation from Instructor: Future Options

Wrap-up, Self- Evaluation/Class Evaluation and Saying Goodbye

**Assignments**: All points indicated are out of 100 points total for the quarter.

**Learning Activities (20 points total): Due as assigned on Canvas Discussion**

Learning Activities will be assigned on the Discussion section of Canvas and will include readings, videos, and writing exercises. Each will be labeled “Learning Activity.” No grades but full credit awarded if the learning activity is posted on time and fulfils the assignment. ***Activities will be posted on Canvas Discussions. Checking your email and Canvas is essential.* Each will be graded *complete/incomplete* but must be finished and thoughtful. Submissions and edits of draft chapters of Self-Narrative posted under Assignments are included in these points.** All add up to 20 points.

**Organizational Setting Research Paper (10 points)**

(4-5 pages including a one-page organizational chart)

In this assignment, you will describe the organizational structure of an organization where you might want to work in the future: Include such information as:

* The number of employees as well as the kinds of functions of the employees;
* Date of founding;
* Organizational mission;
* Budgetary information, including sources of funding (if a public agency); the total budget of the organization must be included in actual dollars; the sources of funding may be represented in a pie chart or other form and may be presented as percentages if actual numbers are not available
* Reporting/authority structure (most easily displayed through an organizational chart which most organizations have on file). If there is no organizational chart available, you could sketch one based on information that you obtain from interviews of key people within the organization.
* Other pertinent information includes whether the agency has strong ties to other agencies, and whether they are part of a "system" of agencies -- such as the criminal justice system, or the health care system, etc. Note what those relationships are and whether the ties operate in both directions (i.e., each agency/organization mutually influences each other) or in one direction (one agency/organization has more control or influence over the other);
* Did you discover anything surprising?

**Draft Cover Letter, Resume (5 points)**

You will write a cover letter and a resume for a position that aligns with your professional interests. *A counselor with WWU's Career Services, will present a recorded Canvas video to talk about cover letters and resumes*. It will include information about identifying your knowledge and skills for a resume. Use the resources below. *You will then write a cover letter and a resume that you’ll edit and revise incorporating the instructor’s comments and responses via Canvas discussion.*

To assist you in developing a cover letter and a resume that matches as realistically as possible your career interests, go to a career website, such as one of the following, and conduct a search for a position that corresponds as closely as possible with your interests. Try to find a position that offers a good description of job requirements, which will help in crafting your cover letter and resume.

[www.CareerBuilder.com (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.careerbuilder.com/)

[www.Indeed.com (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.indeed.com/)

[www.Monster.com (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.monster.com/)

[www.glassdoor.com (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.glassdoor.com/)

Furthermore, use WWU's Career Services website. Here's instruction from staff:

*Finding a posted job is one of the best ways for students to gain skill at targeting their resume and cover letter. Please check out our online database Viking Career Link through Career Services. Each student needs to create an account (for free) and then they can start looking through them. Students will find Viking Career Link close to the middle of our website with the Viking helmet. Viking CareerLink Logo*

[*http://www.wwu.edu/careers/ (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.*](http://www.wwu.edu/careers/)

*Most of the jobs/internships in Viking Career Link are entry level or mid-level. If they are looking on Indeed, have them type in ‘entry level’ to filter only entry level positions.*

*Students can look at resume samples from our website to help format their resumes. Website Resumes: Blue online resources section on right side under “Prepare”.*

Some of you may have written a cover letter and a resume for another class. Don't reinvent the wheel. Simply use what you may have done in the past as a stepping stone for this assignment, revising it for a different sort of position or perhaps a different career path altogether.

Some of you may have career aspirations that are less conventional or simply revolutionary! That's cool. In that case, use your imagination to write your own position and job description. Granted, this makes the assignment more challenging, but it better fits you.

**Final Draft and Self-Evaluation of Cover Letter, Resume**

After reading your instructor’s comments, revise your resume and cover letter and post final draft under Assignments in Canvas along with your self-evaluation.  “Final draft cover letter, resume and self-evaluation) For your self-evaluation write a paragraph about the differences between your drafts and final versions and how you think your final versions will effectively help you search for a job.

**Mock Interviews with Career Services (10 points)**

Schedule and have a mock via video teleconferencing with Career Services. *You must make an appointment with Career Services for a mock interview. It’s vital that you follow through, because Career Services only has so many interview times available.*To make an appointment contact Career services by phone at 360.650.3240. Ask for Diane Flores.

Email a copy of your resume and cover letter to the interviewer and dress in interview attire for your mock interview. Your appointment is for 40 minutes, which includes feedback from the Career Services counselor. Be sure to mention that you need a camera so one is available to record the interview. You will post the video on Canvas Assignments for viewing.  Also post a self-evaluation under assignment.

**Wanted: A Good Life: 5 points**

Congratulations! You have just been hired for your dream job with (fill in the blank) that will provide with purpose, meaning, and financial security. However, you still have your work cut out for you. After all, your job only covers part of your day, week, and, for that matter, lifetime (assuming you’re not displaced by technology one day). Furthermore, even the best job and career won’t possibly meet all your needs and desires, not to mention the stress work can create that may suck the joy out of life. You have other “work” to do besides your dream job, including:  
• Relationships (friends, partners, family, community)  
• Citizenship (local, national, and global) and Environmental stewardship   
• Leisure or free-time pursuits (e.g., sport, adventure, travel, culture, knowledge, etc.)

Your assignment is to write a cover letter and a resume describing how you’re prepared for life beyond the workplace. Using your education and other relevant experiences, what in particular qualifies you for living an enriched, satisfying, meaningful, and happy life for the remainder of your days? Also, similar to professional development, explain in your cover letter how you intend to further your personal development over a lifetime that may reach triple digits! (And you thought getting a job would be tough. You also have to get, and keep, a life.)

**Self-Narrative Written (25 points)**

You will write a self-narrative describing how the past has formed you as a person in terms of your identity, values, and goals, where you find yourself in the present, including the role of your education and what you project for your future regarding your interests, obligations, and aspirations. Details:In keeping with the theme of sharing your story, I refer to each part of the self-narrative as a “chapter.”

*Introduction and Chapter One: The Road to the Present*. Before beginning with chapter one, you’ll write a brief *introduction*, which will do just that—introduce your story to the reader. It’s fine to grab the reader’s attention in the introduction, but do so right away. Don’t beat around the bush; it’s a waste of your words and the reader’s time. Get to the point engagingly, making the reader look forward to what’s to follow. And let the reader know what’s going to follow in the story, briefly describing its purpose and direction. Limit the introduction to a strong paragraph or two and no more than one page.

Write about your background in *chapter one*, including the key persons, places, events, and experiences that have helped make you who are and have brought you to the present. Due to space, you will need to be selective. Identify only those people and experiences that made a significant impact. Be concise while still conveying to the reader how your identity and development were affected. Identity typically includes such elements as family, ethnicity, religion/spirituality (or not), social class, gender, education, geography (urban, rural, country of origin). Keep in mind that events from the past usually include successes, achievements, and happy times, as well as struggles, failures, and painful times. Whether positive or negative, what’s important is the significance the past has had in shaping who you are and where you’re presently at in life. Also, describe your values and how they were formed. Try to limit chapter one to about three or four pages.

*Chapter Two: Crossroads.* In this chapter you’ll assess where you are in the present. (Of course, “the present” is relative. For some of you, it will be a matter of months, for others shorter or even longer. Take into account your identity. Obviously, you’re a student at WWU majoring in Multidisciplinary Studies, as well as, perhaps, an employee, an athlete, a roommate, a partner, a snowboarder and a volunteer, among other possibilities. Also describe your goals. *You must assess the impact of your education in general and your MDS major.* For example, what have you learned in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviors? What projects and assignments were worthwhile? What teachers influenced you? What other experiences have contributed positively to your education? How has your education been disappointing and what has it lacked? How could it be improved? Furthermore, comment on other significant events and developments, such as work, relationships, and activities (e.g., sports, outdoors, volunteering, music, etc.). Again, consider the significant aspects of your Western experience both in and outside the classroom in relation to your goals and personal development. Try to limit this chapter to around four pages.

*Chapter Three, Road(s) to the Future, and Conclusion*. In this chapter you’ll share your thoughts and plans for the future. You should include what’s on your mind as far as jobs and careers are concerned. Further, imagine the future in other important ways, such as relationships, your responsibilities as a citizen, education and interests you have that will require the freedom of leisure, such as travel, adventure, and other pursuits. Discuss your future identity and how you think it may be expressed (e.g., if you identify as an “entrepreneur,” what form might it take). Consider, too, changes that will occur as you age. Life in your twenties and thirties is different than in your sixties and seventies; and it will be definitely different when you reach 90 and 100, as some of you will live to discover. Try to limit this chapter to three or four pages.

The conclusion should consist of a *strong* paragraph summarizing the paper and leaving a strong impression on the reader. Don’t underestimate the power of a strong conclusion—or the peril of a weak ending—it can dramatically impact the quality of a paper.

***You must also submit an edited draft (drafts will be submitted under Assignments chapter by chapter) of your self-narrative along with the finished product.*** It will be evaluated based on substantial edits and revisions. An example will be shared in Canvas.

**The paper must comply with the following format**:

* Times New Roman, 12-pt. font.
* One-inch margins all around
* Double-spaced (Do not quadruple space between paragraphs or sections. You may need to change the default in Word.)
* All other style and format elements, including citations and references, must comply with either the American Psychological Association or the Chicago Manual of Style. Here are links to Wilson Library with information on both:
  + American Psychological Association: <http://libguides.wwu.edu/c.php?g=308303&p=2056452>
  + Chicago Manual of Style: <http://libguides.wwu.edu/c.php?g=308303&p=2056277>

Finally, the following is *very* important for you to read and to understand. Obviously, you’re going to be writing and sharing about yourself in the self-narrative, as well as the presentation. Much of what you share will be of a personal nature, which may include emotionally difficult and even painful episodes in your life. *First*, you are free to decide what to share and what to keep private. *Do not* feel compelled to share anything you would prefer to keep to yourself. *Second*, everything shared is this class should remain confidential, *except* information of an illegal or potentially harmful nature, whether to yourself or others, which I may be required to report. *Third*, I expect everyone to treat each other with care, respect, and empathy. Learning can be uncomfortable; indeed, I believe discomfort can lead to growth. And there will be *intellectual* disagreements over issues and subjects. It is imperative that everyone feels physically and emotionally safe in this class by being included, accepted and respected.

**Self-Narrative Presentation (15 points)**

Each student will deliver and record their self-narrative on Canvas, posting the recording under Assignments. Keep in mind that MDS 410 is a capstone, meaning an opportunity to pull together what you’ve become in college as you prepare for the next stage of life. Record on Canvas or YouTube and post the link.

So, *you* are the subject of the capstone. And the Self-Narrative paper was designed for you to “take stock of where you have come from, where you presently are, and where you’re headed in the future” as a graduate of Western Washington University with a major in Multidisciplinary Studies. The presentation is designed for you to share that with others while honing your oral communication skills.

* You will have 15 minutes
* Do not read the self-narrative. Deliver it in an engaging, interesting, and well-organized manner. You need to be in view. Only use PowerPoint as an illustration tool.
* You may share photos or short video clips that illustrate your story.
* You may use index cards to help keep you on track, but do not read from them.

The time will go by quickly. Be organized and know your material well! Read your paper multiple times and review your notes repeatedly. The key to a successful presentation is organization, organization, organization followed by practice, practice, and more practice.

A rubric is available on Canvas in the presentation assignment for you to see the evaluative criteria the instructor will use. There also is a helpful resource on presentations.

**Self - Evaluation (5 points)**

Write a thoughtful self-evaluation of your work in this class. Explain ways in which the class challenged you. What were some difficult assignments? Which assignments seemed most worthwhile? Describe what you learned through the course of the class? Would you recommend it to other students? Why or why not? Give yourself a grade and explain why you think the grade is appropriate (at least 5 paragraphs long)

**Evaluation**:

A 93 - 100%

A- 90 - 92.99

B+ 88 - 89.99

B 82 - 87.99

B- 80 - 81.99

C+ 78 - 79.99

C 72 - 77.99

C- 70 - 71.99

D+ 68 - 69.99

D 62 - 67.99

D- 60 - 61.99

F Below 60

**Readings**

All readings are available on Canvas.