

Senior Capstone Seminar FAQs

What is a Senior Capstone Seminar?

The Senior Capstone seminar is the culminating event of the BELL Core general education experience at Belmont University. By exploring the central theme of “What is a Meaningful Life?,” students reflect on their educational experiences at Belmont and prepare for their transition to life beyond Belmont through intentional thinking, discussion, and writing.

When do students take the Senior Capstone Seminar?

This will vary by school and/or department, but generally students will take the Senior Capstone during one of their last two semesters of enrollment at Belmont. Advisors are strongly urged to help students plan accordingly as some schools/departments may only offer the Capstone during the fall semester OR spring semester. Therefore students graduating in August will need to take the Capstone in the preceding fall or spring semester. Students may enroll in the course when they achieve senior status (96 credit hours). The chart below provides specific information on when capstone courses will be offered. Students involved in programs that require them to be away from Belmont for their entire senior year should work with their advisor and the General Education Director in their *junior* year to develop a plan for satisfying the capstone requirement.

Who is required to take a Senior Capstone Seminar?

The first Senior Capstones offered for General Education credit will be in the 2007-2008 academic year. All students who began in 2004-2005 and thereafter will be required to take a Senior Capstone. The 2004-2005 cohort will be the first group of students to complete all facets of the BELL Core.

Do transfer students have to take the Senior Capstone Seminar?

Yes. All students matriculating at Belmont after 2004 and graduating in Spring 2007 or later are required to complete the Senior Capstone Seminar. No transfer courses can be used in substitution for the Senior Capstone Seminar.

What criteria are required for a Senior Capstone?

While there are no required common readings or assignments among the different Capstones offered, there are a set of common outcomes that all Capstones should meet. Generated by the faculty teaching the inaugural set of Capstones, these outcomes are meant to promote and provoke students to consider who they will be and what they envision as a successful life after Belmont. In addition, students will consider how their Belmont education has prepared them to embrace their future. See the separate document “General Education Senior Capstone Seminar Expectations.”

What are the prerequisites for a Senior Capstone Seminar?

Completion of a Junior Cornerstone Seminar (XXX 3015) and Third-Year Writing (ENG 3010).

What should be the format and size of a Senior Capstone Seminar?

Given that the nature of this course is a seminar, reflective, and somewhat personal, the primary mode of instruction will likely be discussion. Extensive reflection and writing will be included in the pedagogical methods used. Other creative formats are encouraged (mini-conferences; use of films, drama, and other artistic media; various types of writing assignments; development of a resume; practice interviews; etc.) To facilitate these types of learning experiences, class sizes will be capped at 20 students.

Can a disciplinary experience like an internship or research course fulfill the general education Senior Capstone requirement?

No, these experiences cannot replace the Senior Capstone Seminar. However, some disciplinary capstone courses will include the required components of the BELL Core Senior Capstone by including at least one credit hour's worth of work dedicated to the General Education Capstone criteria and goals (typically 15 hours worth of instruction). Ideally, the major capstone goals complement and overlap with the BELL Core Senior Capstone criteria. All courses that meet the BELL Core Senior Capstone requirements will be identified by the course number 4015, regardless of prefix.

What is the catalog description of a Senior Capstone?

From the 2007-2008 catalog:

GND 4015. Senior Capstone (3). This course addresses the question of "What is a meaningful life?" through the reading of texts, through written assignments, and through personal reflection. Students will be asked to reflect intentionally on their whole educational experience at Belmont University. They will also reflect on and anticipate their transition from the university setting as they move toward the next stage of their lives. This course is to be taken in the student's last year at Belmont. Prerequisite: XXX 3015, Junior Cornerstone Seminar and ENG 3010, Third-Year Writing.

___ (any departmental prefix, including the prefix of CAS - College of Arts and Sciences) 4015. **Senior Capstone (0-3).** This course is a culminating experience in the major, which also addresses the goals for the Senior Capstone as defined in the course description for GND 4015. These goals include reflection on the students' whole educational experiences and on their transition from the university setting to post-graduation

How does a Senior Capstone Seminar get approved?

Once a department or school has developed a Senior Capstone Seminar or a major capstone that includes the required criteria for the Senior Capstone Seminar, documentation should be submitted to the Director of General Education. The Director will present the documenting materials to the General Education Council for approval. If a Capstone instructor wishes to be present at the meeting to discuss the course, this can be arranged by communicating with the Director of General Education. Documenting materials include: summary of the course, goals and objectives, syllabus, sample assignments, clear explanation of how the course incorporates the "Guiding Questions for Senior Capstone Seminar," and any other materials that describe the course. The Council meets approximately once per month; getting information to the General Education Director as early as possible will ensure that the course is considered as soon as possible.

How do students in my major know which Capstone to take?

Availability of Senior Capstone Seminars depends on the school and department. All schools have chosen to offer their own Senior Capstone, either as a separate course or incorporated into a broader capstone for majors. Students are required to take the 4015 class prescribed by their major or school. Refer to the following chart for specific details by school/department:

School	Capstone	Coordinator(s)	Semester Offered
Business Administration	School-level MGT 4015 1 credit hour	Jennie Carter-Thomas	F, S, Su (if needed) 8-week course
College of Arts & Sciences	All departments have elected to use the school-wide capstone CAS 4015 1-credit hour	Alison Moore, Chemistry	S
Entertainment & Music Business	Music Business MBU 4015 1-credit hour	Clyde Rolston	F, S
	Entertainment Industry Studies EIS 4015 1-credit hour	Mark Volman	TBA
	AET AET 4015 1- credit hour	Dan Wujcik	F, S, Su
	Songwriting SNG 4015 TBA credit hour	James Elliott	TBA
Health Sciences	Nursing NUR 4015 3-credit hour	Jane Shelby, Chris Algren	F, S
	Social Work SWK 4015 3-credit hours	Lorraina Scholten	S
Religion	School-level REL 4015 2-credit hours	Judy Skeen	F
University College	School-level LIS 4015 1 credit hour	Valerie Nichols	F, S, Su 8-week online
Visual & Performing Arts	Art ART 4015 3-credit hours	David Ribar	F
	Music MUS or MUG 4015 3-credit hours	Rick Hoffman	F, S
	Theatre & Dance TDR 4015 3-credit hours	Paul Gattrell	F

How many credit hours should a Senior Capstone Seminar include?

Senior Capstone Seminars should be 1-3 credit hours. Currently, most schools are offering a one-credit hour capstone or including one-credit hour's worth of General Education material into a capstone in the major. Typically one-credit hour is the equivalent of 15 hours of instruction.

How does the Senior Capstone Seminar appear on a DARS report?

GND 4015 will appear on DARS. In programs that prefer to blend in the 1-hour GND component into a disciplinary capstone, the GBD 4015 will most likely appear as a 0-hour "check-off" similar to JCS.

Why do we have a Senior Capstone as part of the BELL Core?

The BELL Core General Education curriculum incorporates a vertical structure based on the different stages of cognitive development that students go through during their educational experiences. The fourth stage, reflecting, is meant to bring the educational experience full circle by encouraging students to consider "the physical, mental, psychological, social, and spiritual challenges" they have had at Belmont and to "understand how these experiences will inform and guide" them in the future (General Education website, http://www.belmont.edu/bellcore/stages_of_development/index.html).

Recognizing that the transition from college can be as difficult as the transition students made as first-year students into college, the Senior Capstone was envisioned to be one component of the Senior Year Experience to support students in this transition to life after Belmont. The Senior Capstone Seminar complements and reinforces the "Belmont and Beyond" convocation series organized by staff in Career Services as well as programs offered by Student Affairs and Residence Life. Faculty teaching Capstone Seminars are encouraged to utilize the resources available from Career Services and Student Affairs.

How do I get more information about the Senior Capstone Seminar?

Faculty teaching Senior Capstone courses can access resources and dialogue with each other through a BlackBoard section set up for this purpose. Faculty are encouraged to post relevant readings and resources to share through BlackBoard. The Coordinators of Senior Capstone and the Director of General Education are also available for consultation. The General Education office and Teaching Center will offer workshops, presentations, and opportunities for discussion with other faculty teaching Senior Capstone Seminars.

What co-curricular programs are available to supplement the Senior Capstone Seminar?

Career Services sponsors the "*Belmont and Beyond*" convocation series that offers information on career planning, resume development, interviewing skills, applying to graduate school, etc. Contact them for more information at 460-6490, careerservices@mail.belmont.edu or <http://www.belmont.edu/careerservices>.

Seniors...

- *Are a captive audience*
- *Have high expectations*
- *Have special needs unique to them as students in transition*
- *Are our last chance*
- *Will soon be our alumni*

From Gardner, J.N. and G. Van der Veer. 1998. The Emerging Movement to Strengthen the Senior Experience. In: The Senior Year Experience [ed. J.N. Gardner & G. Van der Veer]. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.