

General Education Senior Capstone Seminar Expectations

For a course to be approved to meet the General Education Senior Capstone Seminar requirements, faculty are asked to incorporate the following components into their course. The sections in italics are from the original General Education document approved by the faculty. The bulleted items are recommended outcomes for each course.

The objectives of the Senior Capstone Seminar would include:

- A. *Asking senior students to reflect on their educational experience at Belmont University (in the major, minor, Gen Ed., experiential learning, Global Studies, co-curricular learning, leadership opportunities, social experiences, etc.) and to articulate that “meaning” both for their own personal enrichment and for Belmont’s assessment and improvement as an institution.*
1. Students tell the story of their educational experience through reflective thinking, writing, and discussion.
 2. Students integrate their learning through analysis of their experiences in different disciplines, co-curricular activities, various components of the General Education program, etc. Considering the strengths, weaknesses, successes, failures, and different approaches of these experiences, students reflect on the breadth of the university’s requirements.
 3. Students assess their role in their university experience by considering how engaged they were in their own education.
 4. Students look back and articulate what they have accomplished in their full college experience.
 5. Students identify skills and perspectives that they have gathered from their experiences at Belmont as well as areas needing further development.
 6. Faculty use student reflections to assess and improve the Belmont educational experience.
- B. *Asking senior students to reflect on, and look forward to, their transition from Belmont to the “beyond Belmont” stage of their lives;*
1. Students look forward at their life and consider what they want to contribute to the world.
 2. Students examine themselves to become more aware of what is innate, growing, and changeable about them while considering and understanding their strengths, weaknesses, fears, passions, inspirations, and uniquenesses.
 3. Using the skills and perspectives gained in college (identified in A.5.), students consider how these qualities are transferable to career and life.
 4. Students establish life and career goals. This could include the development of résumés, 1/3/5-year plans, practice interviews, and/or graduate school applications.
 5. Students are encouraged to participate in the “Belmont and Beyond” programs offered by Career Services.

- C. *Engaging students in asking “meaningful life” questions – i.e., “what is a meaningful life?” (according to various philosophers, writers, and other thinkers, etc., and according to the student), and to consider “why.”*
1. Students explore concepts related to vocation, meaningful life, and productive work to develop a life credo.
 2. Students consider the challenges and rewards of being lifelong learners.
 3. Students address the interplay of productivity, creativity, and spirit while considering their life goals.
 4. Students consider their life and career goals in relation to both individual and communal wants and needs.
- D. *Asking students to think, discuss, and write – very intentionally – about the issues listed above.*
1. Students use material from various texts and media to prompt reflection on their educational experiences and future life.
 2. Students connect their own experiences and reflections to those of their peers through discussion.
 3. Students express their reflections and discussions through critical and creative works.
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In general, 15 hours worth of the Senior Capstone should be dedicated to meeting these General Education goals. This can be done as separate units or embedded within the framework of a disciplinary approach.

To “qualify” as a General Education Senior Capstone Seminar, faculty will be asked to demonstrate where these things happen in their course. All courses will be designated XXX 4015 and need to be approved by the General Education Council.

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.