

GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR PROJECT

PREREQUISITE: You must satisfy the following prerequisite: Senior standing; Graphic communication major; completion of GWR; and STAT 217 and consent of the instructor ([pre-approval proposal survey](#)). You and your Senior Project advisor should agree on a general topic and format or style for your senior project.

SENIOR PROJECT: A capstone experience is a high-impact educational practice in which students (a) integrate and evaluate the knowledge and skills gained in both the General Education and major curricula and (b) demonstrate career or postgraduate readiness. As a bridge from college to career/postgraduate success, the senior project at Cal Poly is a capstone experience with achievable outcomes that culminates in a self-directed final production or product carried out under faculty direction.

Examples: <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/grcsp/>

The standard for a senior project in Graphic Communication is a research paper or a creative graphic design product that illustrates a student's ability to collect, analyze, and disseminate material in a well-written and organized document on a discipline-specific topic within their major. Although this is the standard, other types of senior projects are acceptable in consultation with your advisor. (See list below on types of senior projects.) The following guidelines should be carefully followed to fully meet the senior project requirements.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES: All senior projects at Cal Poly provide an opportunity for holistic, competency-based assessment that demonstrates a strong foundation in Graphic Communication as well as advanced proficiency in the core competencies of critical thinking, written and oral communication, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning. Archiving* is the required last step and expect to spend the \$12 senior project processing fee.

FORMS AND EXAMPLES: Senior projects may be research-, project-, and/or portfolio-based; Students may take forms including, but not limited to, the following:

- Experiment
- Grant proposal
- Graphic UX/Usability testing
- Student-generated research project
- Engagement in a graphic industry-driven project: Conducting additional stand-alone research based on an internship/industry experience
- Participation in a faculty-generated research project
- Participation in a graphic design project
- Portfolio of work documenting the results of creative practices
- Public presentation
- Community service projects/activities

REQUIREMENTS: All senior projects and senior project policies adhere to the following Cal Poly requirements. Senior projects shall commence when, or after, a student has earned senior standing, though completion of preparatory courses and/or research may precede senior standing; serve as a bridge from the college experience to professional/postgraduate readiness; include clearly defined student learning outcomes that are aligned with program learning objectives; have faculty oversight with scheduled meetings for which specific timelines/outcomes are defined; include a formal proposal and/or statement of intent to be submitted to the faculty advisor; involve inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and creation; demonstrate core competencies in critical thinking, written and/or oral communication, information literacy, and quantitative and/or qualitative reasoning; require a process/production and culminate in a final product as defined at the program level; include an explicit element of self-reflection; adhere to discipline-specific norms of academic integrity and ethical practices; be individually and formally assessed; include a minimum count of

3 units, or 90 hours of work, with no maximum; take no more than three quarters to complete; be assigned grades consistent with Cal Poly's grading policy.

Note: Senior projects shall neither consist solely of a co-op/internship experience nor solely of a test/exam of any kind, and senior projects shall not be unsupervised.

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH. All students planning on collecting research information from other people are required to conform to and follow Cal Poly's policies and guidelines on the use of human subjects in research. Request for Human Subjects approval must be compiled per university guidelines, and applications for such research are the responsibility of the students and must be submitted to the campus Human Subjects Approval Committee. More information can be found at the following link: <http://research.calpoly.edu/indexHS.html>.

FORMAT: The final project will include the following items in this exact order in APA style. For creative projects and services, include a copy of the storyboard, an online link address with a screenshot, and snapshots of interactive outcomes to chapter 8. Appendix.

1. Title page; 2. Table of contents; 3. Abstract; 4. Rationale; 5. Method or Production plan; 6. Results or Reflections of creative projects; 7. Reference list. 8. Appendix

***ARCHIVING:** It is the required last step and expect to spend the \$12 senior project processing fee. upload your process book to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly site, following the guidelines at <https://guides.lib.calpoly.edu/digitalcommons/SeniorProjects>. This step must be completed by the due date provided by your instructor to receive your grade. To receive your grade for the class, you must forward your Senior Project e-mail confirmation to your instructor by the stated due date.

Policies and procedures governing submissions to Kennedy Library's institutional repository are based on University policies under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), intellectual property rights, and CSU accessibility requirements. Senior projects submitted to Digital Commons, the institutional repository hosted by Kennedy Library, become part of the university's scholarly record.

SENIOR PROJECT: FAQ

1. HOW TO REGISTER FOR SENIOR PROJECT?: Senior project has three options: GrC 461, 462, and 463, which one is right for me? Who signs up for GrC 462?

- **461** is the senior project through independent research with a GrC professor, to research a project without the constraint of a single quarter.
Total credit: 3 units.
- **463** is the senior project through a group-based project including TAGA, Phoenix Challenge, and UGS. If you are (or will be) a board member of the TAGA or PHX team, or if you are a UGS manager in your senior year, you will enroll in 1-unit for each quarter for all the 3-quarters of your senior year. These 3 units will count as your senior project.
Total credit: 3 units.
- **462:** If the above 2 scenarios don't apply to you, you need to enroll in GrC **462** in your senior year. In the 10 weeks of your enrolled quarter, you will complete an individual or self-organized group project.
Total credit: 3 units.
- To sign up, you should be a **graduating senior**.
- GrC 462 is a one-quarter senior project. You will need to be organized and diligent because you will only have 10 weeks to complete your senior project.
- **Prerequisite:** Senior standing; Graphic communication major; completion of GWR; and [STAT 217](#) and consent of instructor.

When is it offered?

Although schedules are subject to change, **GrC 462 is usually offered in the fall, winter, and spring quarters.**

IMPORTANT: If you are in junior standing, start to think about senior project ideas. When you become eligible, take GrC 462 early on, **do NOT wait until Spring** (if Spring is your last quarter at Cal Poly) because:

- There may not be enough seats and you don't want to risk delaying graduation.
- The last quarter is usually hectic with a career fair, internship, commencement, etc.
- If you take it in the Fall or Winter, you will have a buffer time to refine your project as a portfolio piece.

2. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF A SENIOR PROJECT?

There are several factors that make something suitable for a senior project. In general, all senior projects have the following requirements:

- **Independence** - A senior project must be a discrete unit. There should be a well-defined beginning and end to the project, as well as clearly defined criteria for success or failure.
- **Ownership** - The student needs to be primarily responsible for the project. This means that the student is directly responsible for the project's success or failure.
- **Background Research** - The project should require some investigation before implementation. *Things to consider:* How have others approached this problem? What new techniques or technologies must the student learn (or invent) to successfully complete this work? – this part will be done in the pre-approval survey.
- **Collaboration** - If the project is done by a group, all members are expected to incorporate the above criteria. The workload should be a multiple of what an individual senior project would expect.

3. I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO FOR MY SENIOR PROJECT...?

- Think of something that you are passionate about, how can it be combined with your GrC skill sets? Few examples:
 - I'm really into music events or music artists -> how about a comprehensive campaign or branding for a real or fictional music event?
 - I'm a big fan of an NBA team -> how about a rebranding for an NBA team visual guide and marketing collaterals?
 - I'm a foodie and I love to cook -> Is a recipe book, or an interactive website/app for foodies like you to connect and form a community?
- Think of a class project you've worked on in a previous GrC class, which you wish you could change or improve. Maybe back then you and your group were swamped during finals season and didn't have the time or resources to further develop it.
 - This should NOT be a replicate of your previous class project.
 - This is a chance to expand that incomplete class project and make it more comprehensive, robust, and rigorous to be a portfolio piece.
 - By the end of this project, it should be a representation of who you are as a GrC graduate, what are you passionate about, and what are you capable of in the GrC realm.
- [Some of the previous senior project examples](#)

4. WHAT ARE THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE SENIOR PROJECT?

The Senior Project is an essential part of a student's education and the development of their professional life in their future career. In order to make it a successful learning experience, please review the following outline of objectives:

There are three objectives that should be accomplished within the Senior Project, and the grade awarded will be determined by the degree to which all are effectively exhibited.

1. **Technical Accomplishment:** The technical results presented in the Senior Project should reflect the maturity of a senior-level student in both the depth to which the subject is developed and in the degree to which a variety of information or viewpoints is brought to bear on the problem.
2. **Diligent Execution:** The senior project will be an independent student project, developed under his or her own initiative, and within a timeline under the student's control. The instructor who supervises the Senior Project is expected to supply only general advice and guidance to help the student avoid pitfalls and blunders. The day-to-day activities which affect the execution of the project, are the responsibility of the student.
3. **Effective Communication:** The Senior Project should include a well-polished piece of writing with careful consideration given to presenting the results in a way that provides the maximum of information with a minimum amount of effort required of the reader. Standard procedures for footnoting, referencing, and symbol usage (as utilized in technical literature) should be employed.

The final project document should provide evidence that the student can skillfully present a Graphic Communication subject to an audience less knowledgeable than the author. All media programs utilized in the project are to be completely and fully documented.

5. HOW DO I ENROLL FOR 462? WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The specifics will vary according to the project, but the pre-approved proposal survey link will be sent by Michelle (mrgodfre@calpoly.edu) via email (with the subject line “ATTN Seniors – GrC 462” from Michelle Godfrey) to all GrC students on the **Monday of week 6** of the quarter before taking the course. After week 10 of each quarter, the survey link will be deactivated until week 6 of the next quarter. That means if you miss the open window for registering, you will have to wait for the next round to enroll.

For example, if you are planning to enroll in GrC 462 in the Fall, the survey link is activated for you to fill out in week 6 during the Spring quarter (assuming 462 is not offered in Summer).

The survey will ask you to complete questions including the following components:

- A clear, concise statement of the problem the project is intended to solve, or an opportunity to improve a current product or service.
- An outline of the general scope of the work—including specific anticipated milestones and deliverables.
- A list of any special equipment or facilities that will be needed.

Proposals for group projects should also address:

- The division of responsibilities among group members.
- A means of evaluating the individual contribution of each member.

Your Senior Project pre-proposal survey is due before GrC 462 registration. To secure an available seat, **please complete the survey at least two weeks BEFORE registration begins**. Once the instructor has approved your proposal, a permission number will be sent to you for your registration.

6. HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED FOR MY SENIOR PROJECT? WHAT ARE SOME DELIVERABLES OF THIS CLASS?

In addition to being a technical consultant and providing suggestions that will permit the student to be more effective, **the instructor evaluates the work and assigns a grade for the course**. It is customary for the student and instructor to meet regularly to ensure continuous and effective communication. If additional advice is required, it is recommended that the student request a meeting with the instructor. Certain progress

reports and outlines of the work are required by the university and the instructor.

7. I HAVE AN INTERNSHIP LINED UP FOR THE SUMMER, CAN I USE THIS AS MY SENIOR PROJECT?

Yes. You can take an internship and use it for Senior Project credits, even if the timespan of your internship differs from the quarter that you plan to enroll in 462.

However, to get the full credits, you will still need to:

- Apply the project management skills taught in 462 to **improve or reflect** on the project you did during the internship. For example, reflect on something that you would do differently if given another chance, or use the time allocated during class to improve on deliverables you made during the internship.
- Complete all the class assessments and fulfill the enrollment requirements listed under questions #5 and 6.
- Actively participate in the class activities.

8. FINAL PROJECT DELIVERY

Once you have completed all project requirements, you must deliver your final project to the GrC 462 instructor. This includes a packaged folder that includes all of your media, web, and documentation files. PDF, DOC, .ai, and/or .indd format, and clearly labeled with your name, course, title, and date is required. The folder must also include a README file detailing all of the data included, with a short description of what is contained in each file.

9. PROFESSIONAL REVIEW PRESENTATION

Once your final project has been delivered to the GrC 462 instructor, you will give a formal presentation to a combined faculty and professional review committee. This presentation is usually scheduled during week 10.

10. FINAL PROJECT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Pay the \$12 senior project processing fee and upload your process book to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly site, following the guidelines at:

<https://guides.lib.calpoly.edu/digitalcommons/SeniorProjects>.

This step must be completed by the due date provided by your instructor in order to

receive your grade. To receive your grade for the class, you must forward your Senior Project e-mail confirmation to your instructor by the stated due date.

Important: If the instructor does not receive this confirmation within the stated time frame, you will receive an "I" grade for the class.

This is the last step required to receive your final grade. When your submission is complete, your project will be available in the GRC section of the DigitalCommons@CalPoly site at <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/grcsp/>.