MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES CAPSTONE

I. Description and Overall Objectives

The Modern Languages and Literatures Capstone for the Chinese, French, and German Programs consists of a semester-long research project. With departmental invitation, an Honors Capstone can take place over two semesters. The MLL Capstone involves two main components in the target language. With careful guidance, students produce a significant research project of 20+ pages and give an oral presentation that engages questions in the target language from an audience. The student as author must formulate a hypothesis, develop a consistent and purposeful argument, communicate to readers what research methods and tools were used, indicate research results, and underscore how results were interpreted to address the hypothesis.

The overall goal is to practice and refine effective interdisciplinary thinking as it relates to your areas of interest. Topics covered usually address issues that arise in your culture, film, and literature courses. Working closely with an MLL professor, you will **create, focus, and shape your topic**. You will **develop a research question**, **draft a plan and an outline for addressing that question**, **seek to answer the question in your analytical reading and research via primary and secondary source materials in the target language**, **write regular section drafts of at least 3-5 pages for bimonthly meetings**, **share and discuss your writing and research progress**, **add target-language bibliographic material to your one-to-two-page bibliography**, **make regular revisions in consultation with your professor**, and **prepare your oral defense**.

Each professor will have her or his own organizational and mentoring style and methods. For example, where one might provide a broad set of grading percentages, another might prioritize a two-part grade based on the 20+ page written project and the oral defense. Participation at Southwestern's "From Every Voice Symposium" may be encouraged. All professors will **provide the information below** and **share their scholarly insights and advising wisdom**.

You should feel free to consult at any time with the professor supervising the Capstone. You will find that the strong study habits developed at Southwestern serve you well in meeting interim and end-of-semester deadlines. In some cases, submitting certain materials by specific deadlines may be required. For example, you may be asked to have a prospectus ready by a certain date (including thesis, methodology, research proposal, literature review, and project significance), or to have a ten-page draft in MLA format ready by mid-semester (including various works cited).

II. The Capstone as Original Research

In MLL, the Capstone student's hypothesis and analyses map out a new critical horizon. This original work moves scholarship forward by challenging an audience to consider new perspectives and to think differently. The research and writing for the Capstone facilitates a level of skill and originality that will enable future publication of the student's work. Related outcomes in MLL include new perspectives on texts, transformative engagements with texts, and interdisciplinary projects for double majors. The originality of the research involves appropriately representing the integrative, interrelated insights brought to the interpretation of literature, culture, art, and/or film. In some cases, the original research may involve accessing archives and making accessible hitherto unknown materials. In other cases, it may involve collecting interview materials. Students learn to adopt the scholarly methods best suited to advancing interdisciplinary research. All MLL students completing a Capstone integrate aspects of previous Southwestern courses. They often integrate other sources of knowledge, such as study abroad experiences and civic engagement.

Originality of research in MLL involves progressing as a reader, writer, and critical thinker according to 2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL = *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*). MLL meets national ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines by offering numerous "Writing Attentive" courses and by prioritizing throughout its course sequence a progressive strengthening of writing and research skills. In second-year French and German at Southwestern, for example, students

move from meeting practical writing needs at the Intermediate level to beginning their practice of connected discourse of paragraph length and structure that corresponds to the Advanced level. In third- and fourth-year French and German courses, students practice a variety of rhetorical structures that direct their writing to an audience at the Superior level. Research and writing tasks for any given third- or fourth-year course continue practice of Superior-level skills, for example the ability to explain complex matters; to present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses; and to consistently structure and connect paragraphs that treat a variety of social, academic, and professional topics with intellectual sophistication, moving beyond the concrete to the abstract. MLL Capstone research then moves students to the Distinguished level. This means students can carry out formal writing tasks such as position papers and journal articles. They can write analytically and with intellectual rigor on professional, academic, and societal issues. In addition, Distinguished-level writers are able to address world issues in a highly conceptualized fashion, using persuasive and hypothetical discourse as representational techniques while communicating subtleties and nuances of opinion.

III. Scholarly Skills

To formulate a research question; to refine and expand the research question; to argue persuasively, fluidly, and with complex analytical insight in the target language; to read, analyze, paraphrase, synthesize, cite, and critique complex texts in the target language; to incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing; to craft arguments that matter in academic contexts; to skillfully structure a paper's organization; to effectively compile bibliographic materials; to develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing; to demonstrate an awareness of the strategies writers use in different contexts; to demonstrate satisfactory oral and written proficiency according to ACTFL criteria, including well developed presentation and argumentation skills; to field questions based on independent writing and research.

IV. General Skills

• Develop an initial question, paper structure, and outline
• Create a folder where you will regularly save files
• Back up your files regularly in separate locations (computer, flash drive, cloud, etc.)

• Find primary sources and textual evidence to support your hypotheses
• Locate secondary sources to support your hypotheses
• Identify your Interlibary Loan needs early in the semester

• Consider sociohistorical context
• Consider the context of experts' ideas, methods, and assumptions
• Consider your reader, who often asks that you justify, explain, argue, and convince, clearly and elegantly, with strong attention to the overall organization and flow of ideas

• Craft a clear, focused, original research question
• Follow the question as it evolves through your thinking and research – adapt as necessary
• Stay focused on the methods that work best for you – stick to a plan to generate steady content

• Use a variety of primary and secondary sources
• Balance your use of different media as appropriate – articles, books, films, web material, etc.
• Gradually expand your list of research sources

• Read wisely – sometimes slowly and carefully, sometimes focused on an Introduction or Conclusion
• Follow the experts' trail – find books and articles mentioned in their notes or bibliographies
• Try to paraphrase and synthesize – explaining someone's ideas and their relevance is a skill that complements locating and citing those ideas

• Take careful notes – cite each and every source used as soon as you use it
• Cite judiciously – not too much or too little, and always explaining citations' relevance

• Build a Works Cited list systematically – start right away with a few and build momentum

V. Honor Code: "I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not."

It is fine and normal for the Capstone to discuss your work with your professor, to ask for comments and suggestions, and to incorporate suggestions. For this assignment, the first part of the pledge regarding "honesty and integrity" refers to a) relying on strong sources for your written work, b) not using any material without citing your source(s), c) using as appropriate only an online or print dictionary to look up a term or phrase and not an internet translator or other translation software, and d) communicating respectfully and consistently with your professor. Please feel free to share any comments, questions or concerns before writing the Honor Code Pledge on your final draft of this assignment.

Modern Languages and Literatures
Capstone/Honors Writing Rubric 2015
May Be Adapted As Appropriate to Students' Target-Language Proficiency Level

Professor: _____ **Student:** _____

Modern Languages and Literatures: Capstone/Honors Writing Rubric

Criteria	Weak: 60-70%	Poor: 70-80%	Proficient: 80-90%	Excellent: 90-100%	
Introduction / Thesis	- weak introduction of topic, thesis, and subtopics -weak thesis lacks arguable position	- adequate introduction states topic, thesis, and some subtopics - somewhat clear and arguable thesis	- proficient introduction states topic, thesis, and all subtopics in proper order; some originality shown in framing topic and writing in a compelling style - proficient thesis makes a clear and arguable statement of position	- excellent introduction states topic, thesis, and all subtopics in proper order; grabs reader's interest with a well framed topic and a compelling writing style - excellent thesis makes a clear, arguable, original, and well developed statement	/10
Theoretical Framework / Critical Lens	- vague or confusing interpretation of the critical approach - may allude to the theoretical framework but does not use it to analyze the chosen texts	- emerging articulation of how theoretical frame(s) suggest(s) criteria for analysis - makes few or superficial connections between the criteria and the chosen texts	- articulates with mostly consistent clarity how theoretical frame(s) establish(es) criteria for analysis - makes many clear, explicit connections between the criteria for analysis and the chosen texts	- articulates with exceptional clarity how theoretical frame(s) establish(es) criteria for analysis - makes always clear, consistent, explicit, insightful, sophisticated, and original connections between the criteria for analysis and the chosen texts	/10
Quality of Research / Information and Evidence	- limited information on topic with lack of research, details or historically accurate evidence	- some aspects of paper are researched, with some accurate evidence from limited sources	- proficient research includes detail, accuracy, and important evidence consistently cited from a good variety of sources	- excellent research includes especially detailed and historically accurate critical evidence consistently cited from a wide variety of sources	/20
Support and Development of Ideas / Analysis	- limited connections made between evidence, subtopics, counterarguments, and thesis / topic, and lacking analysis - ideas are incomplete or largely undeveloped, sketchy, vague, irrelevant, or unjustified	- some connections made between evidence, subtopics, counterarguments, and thesis / topic, and showing some analysis - develops ideas simply, using some details from the supporting texts (artistic, cinematic, literary, theoretical)	- mostly consistent connections made between evidence, subtopics, counterarguments, and thesis / topic, and showing good analysis - clear, consistent development of ideas, with relevant, specific references to appropriate elements and techniques (artistic, cinematic, literary, theoretical)	- always consistent, critical, and relevant connections made between evidence, subtopics, counterarguments, and thesis / topic, and showing consistently strong analysis - clear, consistent, and especially full development of ideas, with relevant, specific, and particularly well integrated references to appropriate elements and techniques (artistic, cinematic, literary, theoretical)	/20

Organization of Subtopics / Paragraphs and Transitions	- paper lacks clear and logical organization of subtopics; little or no paragraph balance; weak transitions between paragraphs and ideas	- paper has somewhat clear and logical organization of subtopics, with some paragraph balance and transitions between paragraphs and ideas	- clear, logical, consistent, and argumentative organization of subtopics mostly supports the thesis; paragraphs are reasonably focused and balanced; transitions between paragraphs and ideas are good	- especially clear, logical, consistent, argumentative, and thorough organization of subtopics always supports the thesis; paragraphs are sharply focused and carefully balanced; transitions between paragraphs and ideas are excellent	/10
Conclusion	- paper lacks summary of topic, thesis, and subtopics; weak concluding ideas; paper trails off	- adequate summary of topic, thesis, and some subtopics; some concluding ideas; paper maintains adequate level of interest	- good summary of topic, thesis, and all subtopics, with no new information; followed by clear concluding idea(s) that suggest further area(s) of interest	- excellent summary of topic, thesis, and all subtopics, in proper order and with no new information; followed by clear, relevant, and original concluding ideas that suggest further area(s) of interest and are formulated, presented, and developed in a way that leaves an impact on the reader	/10
Language Conventions / Style	- paper has continual errors in grammar, spelling and paragraphing; style is choppy	- paper has many errors in grammar, spelling and paragraphing; style is readable	- paper is mostly clear and concise, with mostly proper grammar, spelling and paragraphing; mostly fluid and varied in its development of a personal yet professional style (syntax, vocabulary, action verbs, conjugations, tenses) addressed to knowledgeable readers	- paper is always clear and concise, with consistently proper grammar, spelling and paragraphing; always fluid and varied in its development of a compelling personal yet professional style (syntax, vocabulary, action verbs, conjugations, tenses) addressed to knowledgeable readers	/10
Bibliography / Overall Formatting	- paper lacks proper format and has limited source detail; sources are often missing or incomplete	- paper has adequate MLA format and source detail; some variety of sources; some citation	- paper has mostly proper MLA format and level of detail (alphabetization of Works Cited; formatting per MLA Handbook; credit usually given where credit is due; almost every source mentioned in paper appears in Works Cited); Works Cited has at least one page of sources in the target language	- paper has always proper MLA format and level of detail (alphabetization of Works Cited; formatting per MLA Handbook; credit always given where credit is due; every source mentioned in paper appears in Works Cited); Works Cited has one to two pages of sources in the target language	/10
				Total:	**/ 100**

Modern Languages and Literatures
Capstone/Honors Oral Presentation Rubric 2014
May Be Adapted As Appropriate to Students' Target-Language Proficiency Level

Professor: _____ **Student:** _____

Modern Languages and Literatures: Capstone/Honors Oral Presentation Rubric

Proficiency	**Weak: 60-70%**	**Poor: 70-80%**	**Proficient: 80-90%**	**Excellent: 90-100%**	
Structure / Overall Clarity of Argument	- weak structure strays from topic, thesis, and subtopics -weak thesis lacks arguable position	- adequate structure provides topic, thesis, and some subtopics - somewhat clear and arguable thesis	- proficient structure provides thesis, topics, subtopics, and conclusion in mostly clear order; some originality shown in framing topic in a compelling speaking style; any use of audiovisual aids is mostly effective - proficient thesis develops into a clear argument for most of the presentation	- excellent structure provides thesis, topics, subtopics, and conclusion in clear order; grabs reader's interest with a well framed argument and a compelling speaking style; any use of audiovisual aids is particularly effective - excellent thesis develops into a clear, original, and well developed argument throughout the presentation	/25
Preparation / Timing and Flow	- speaker poorly prepared; not aware of audience; lacks focus	- speaker somewhat prepared; somewhat aware of audience; has some focus	- speaker mostly well prepared for presentation and questions; mostly effective in pacing; mostly aware of audience; mostly focused; may digress occasionally; limits hesitation	- speaker always well prepared for presentation and questions; always effective in pacing; always aware of and sensitive to audience; always focused; does not digress or distract from argument; shows little or no hesitation	/25
Grammar / Syntax	- lacks variety of sentence structures; shows inadequate accuracy	- has some variety of sentence structures; shows some accuracy	- proficient grammar includes some variety of sentence structures, with mostly effective use of complex sentences and advanced grammatical forms and reasonable accuracy; mostly clear and understandable	- excellent grammar includes a variety of sentence structures, with compelling use of complex sentences and advanced grammatical forms and consistent accuracy; always clear and understandable	/25
Vocabulary / Accuracy	- basic language use; inadequate grasp of idiomatic expressions; inadequate accuracy	- some variety of language use; some grasp of idiomatic expressions; some accuracy	- mostly consistent in varying language use; mostly consistent attention paid to idiomatic usage appropriate to the topic; reasonable accuracy; some measure of originality in personal expression	- always consistent in varying language use; always consistent attention paid to idiomatic usage appropriate to the topic; consistent accuracy; distinct measure of originality in personal expression	/25
				Total:	**/ 100**