412:702 – Forensic Science Research & Capstone Presentation

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Course Description

Forensic Science Research & Capstone Presentation (702) is the conclusion of the Capstone Project for students in the MSFS program. Typically, this phase of the project is conducted during the student's final semester. It is focused on drafting the capstone paper and preparing a final presentation of the project and its results. Students in this phase of research should be in regular contact with their advisors. Advisors should provide feedback on drafts of the final document as well as the presentation. Students should expect to rehearse their capstone presentation with their primary supervisor prior to the formal presentation date. By the end of the course students will have:

- Completed all data analysis;
- Conducted a final full committee meeting to review the final data;
- Drafted and submitted a capstone paper that communicates the aims of the research, its relevance to forensic science, relevant literature review, project methodology, results, discussion of data, conclusions, and suggestions for future research;
- Prepared and delivered a 30 minute presentation of the research project.

Course Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Present their research project in written and oral form;
2. Synthesize and incorporate feedback on their research products;
3. Craft professional correspondence to update their advisors and to revise document drafts;
4. Follow guidelines to submit a journal article;
5. Utilize online platforms (Google Drive, Slack, etc) to share documents and content and to organize generated material/data.

Online Format & Schedule

This course has no in-person meetings; however, there is an expectation that students will provide occasional updates on their progress to the course coordinator and a requirement that students provide bi-weekly updates to their research committee. It is up to students to set their own schedules and work at their own pace. This course represents the completion of their research projects, the submission of the final capstone paper, and the final capstone oral presentation. Students are expected to work independently. The course coordinator is there to offer support, guidance, and advice when requested but will not be checking up on students' progress.

The course has an online presence in Canvas where students can find resources. A limited number of assignments will be posted to the course's Canvas page. Students should expect to spend between 20-30 hours a week working on various aspects of their capstone project: data

analysis, writing and revising the capstone paper, preparing and practicing the capstone presentation.

Required Texts

There are no required readings for this course. However, a suggested reading list related to conducting research, data analysis, and writing will be posted to Canvas. Announcements with useful resources may be posted from time to time.

Weekly Schedule

It is up to students to develop their own weekly schedule using the timelines they developed during their research proposals. Students need to decide for themselves their working hours. They should plan to spend at least 20-30hrs a week. It is recommended to set regular hours and a predictable schedule to help establish a routine. If students are sharing lab space, supplies, and/or instrumentation with other students, they should talk with those students to organize schedules.

Assignments & Assessments

The grade for this course is principally based on an assessment of the student's research efforts by the student's internal and external advisors. However, the following assignments will be posted to Canvas and will contribute to the student's final grade:

1. ***Semester research schedule*** – this is a weekly breakdown of the days/hours you plan to work; setting weekly goals/milestones is advised
2. ***Minutes from full committee meeting*** – a template is provided on Canvas; you must have at least one full committee meeting; upload the minutes to Canvas
3. ***Evidence of bi-weekly check-ins*** – it is essential that you check-in with your advisors regularly, even if you have nothing to report; I should never get an e-mail from an advisor saying that they haven't heard from you in a while; you can CC or Bcc me on your e-mails or you can take formal minutes and post them to Canvas.
4. ***Capstone Paper*** – Submit the final paper to Canvas.
5. ***Capstone Presentation*** **–** a 30-minute presentation will be delivered to the students' full committee. Committee members will submit an assessment.
6. ***Final File-sharing*** – all research files should be uploaded to a file-sharing platform and shared with the MSFS program director.

Evaluation and Grading

Semester research schedule	5%
Minutes from full committee meeting	5%
Evidence of bi-weekly check-ins	5%
Final File-sharing	5%
Capstone Paper	40%
Capstone Presentation	40%
Total	100 points

File Sharing

Each student must utilize an online file sharing platform to help organize and share material. This will help coordinate documents (such as capstone drafts and presentation slides) that you wish to share with advisors, organize all the material and data you will generate, ease the publication process, and facilitate future projects based on your work for future MSFS students. The student may choose which platform they wish to use. Some suggestions are Google Drive, Slack, Dropbox, Box.com, and Microsoft Teams.

Publishing & Presenting

Students are strongly encouraged to submit their research for publication and to present their projects at conferences even if they have graduated. Capstone papers will have to be revised in accordance to journal submission requirements. Plan in advance to do this. Check the abstract submission dates for the conferences in which you would like to present. It is challenging to have the energy to push towards publication and presenting but it will enhance your CV and help you towards employment.

Academic Policies

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity (https://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/faculty/faculty-resources/academic-integrity-policy/). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. All writing assignment should be an original work by a student. Students are highly recommended to educate themselves on the subject; http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/whatisplagiarism.html Forensic science is a profession that is internally maintained by ethics and personal integrity.

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: **https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines**. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: **https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form**