

University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education

**Education 6006A: CAPSTONE**  
Spring, 2013

**Format:** Blended Course Delivery (*online & face-to-face*)  
**Moodle:** EDUC6006  
**Room:** TH 373

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### Calendar Description

The Capstone course, as a culminating activity of the M.Ed. program, is conducted in a supportive seminar and/or online environment that draws on your experiences in the graduate program in order to synthesize learning. It involves the creation of a project that constitutes a significant contribution to scholarship and professional practice.

### Course Description

This course aims at providing you with a context of support and direction leading to the completion of your Capstone project in a collaborative community of researchers and writers.

During this culminating course in your M.Ed. program, you will select, develop, and elaborate on a **research question** related to a topic or theme that has arisen from your M.Ed. program of studies and that is interesting and relevant to you and to the profession. This topic should allow the you to focus on research and writing that matters to you and to demonstrate how learning experiences in your Master's program have resulted in coherent new understandings of particular aspects of theories, philosophies, and practices as they apply to your work as counsellors. Where the thesis option allows students to pursue a single topic in great depth, the Capstone allows you to express your learnings over the course of your M.Ed. in greatest breadth.

Products of the Capstone course will include writing and research that have been generated and developed through a process in several courses and that are now shaped into a final document. It does not normally involve significant new original action or other practice- or field-based research conducted during the Capstone course. However, it will likely involve focused exploration of relevant literature as you expand on your research question.

The Capstone course also includes an oral presentation of excerpts of that writing and research at a final celebration. These presentations may be presented in a variety of creative writing and other formats, including art and multimedia, to demonstrate the acquired knowledge, craft, and skills.

## Objectives

Through the Capstone course, with the help of structured timelines, instructor feedback, and collegial support and feedback, you will have opportunities to:

- Generate, focus on and articulate a research question on a topic of your interest that is relevant to and reflective of your graduate studies and professional practice.
- Shape this research question into a cohesive, comprehensive project of writing and/or other media.
- Affirm your rights and responsibilities as counsellors, writers, and researchers to contribute to transformative actions in counselling settings and society.
- Strengthen and expand your connections and relationships with your peers as part of a professional learning community.
- Further develop your confidence and craft as writers and researchers.
- Gain experience and confidence in presenting your academic work in a public forum with peers and the larger community.
- Pursue possibilities for further presentation and publication of your writing and research.

## Evaluation

The Capstone course is graded as **Pass/Fail**. In order to receive a passing grade, you are required to fulfill the following criteria:

1. Attend face-to-face seminars (as outlined in the schedule) unless otherwise agreed on by special permission.
2. Participate and contribute regularly in the Moodle activities of online discussion and postings (four (4) postcards of writing progress and three (3) drafts of Capstone project).
3. Submit three (3) drafts of your Capstone project to the instructor and at least **two** other class members at the specified dates.
4. Receive and respond to feedback from at least **two** other participants; give feedback to at least **two** other participants.
5. Submit a final Capstone project as the culminating piece of the your journey through the Master's program.
6. Give an oral presentation of your research and writing at the final gathering.

## The Capstone Project

As a written paper, the project should be approximately 40 - 45 pages (12-pt font, double-spaced) in length. Quality matters rather than length, however, and papers may be shorter if concisely and cogently written, or longer if successful development of the material requires it (while still writing concisely).

A **passing** grade for the Capstone project is contingent upon meeting the following criteria:

- Posits a central cogent question or theme supported by research, thoughtful analysis and reflection, rational arguments and carefully selected supportive details.
- Presents grounded theory arising out of research, reflection, practice and current thinking on the chosen topic; builds to a consistent and meaningful conclusion.
- Demonstrates an ability to think critically and creatively in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of relevant information.
- Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of M.Ed. course material, including an in-depth understanding of the relevant concepts, theories, and issues related to the topic addressed.
- Synthesizes recent research on the topic to support the themes that emerge in the project (i.e., it is not expected that the writer/researcher embark on extensive new reading or action research, but s/he should be able to demonstrate a mastery of the research literature in at least one area).
- Demonstrates an awareness of differing viewpoints and a rigorous assessment of these where relevant.
- Presents a demonstration of growth over the course of the program.
- Demonstrates originality, insight, and creativity, and a new understanding of theory or practice related to the question or topic addressed in the Capstone project.
- Constitutes a clear, fluent, well-organized, and well-written project:
  - (a) In the case of a standard paper, it should show mastery of grammar, structure, style, based on the APA 6<sup>th</sup> ed. style of referencing, and the ability to communicate in writing **at the level expected for publication in an academic journal.**
  - (b) In the case of a creative writing or multimedia project, it should demonstrate the ability to work creatively and competently in the respective genre(s) and with the components of the media.

## The Capstone Presentation

The Presentation portion of the Capstone will consist of an oral presentation of writing and/or other text and media to the EDUC6006 class and other members of an interested audience: other graduate students, instructors, and members of the larger educational community.

The members of the EDUC6006 class will meet on **April 13, 2013** to participate in such a symposium, consisting of the presentation of their final projects followed by an open forum discussion period.

The instructor will evaluate effectiveness of the presentations by the following criteria:

- ✓ Interest: clarity and ability to capture the audience's interest, involving as well as informing the audience.
- ✓ Thoroughness: the presentation should give the audience a sufficiently thorough grasp of the material to be able to discuss it thoughtfully and cogently.
- ✓ Depth of analysis: an insightful awareness of differing viewpoints is demonstrated.
- ✓ Originality and creativity: the presentation contributes to new understanding of the topic; the presentation represents the author's original thinking.
- ✓ Discussion: the audience's appreciation should be reflected in their responses.

<b>Tentative Schedule</b>
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(Note: Minor adjustments may be made in postcard and draft due dates.)

Topic	Description	To Do	Date/Due Date
Face-to-face meetings	Whole class face-to-face meetings on U of L campus	Attend and participate  Present Capstone and celebrate	<b>Jan 18<sup>th</sup></b> : 18:00-21:00 Room: TH 373  <b>Apr 13<sup>th</sup></b> : Time: TBA Room: TBA
Postcards	Progress reports on writing	Submit online to whole class	1 <sup>st</sup> : Fri Jan 25 2 <sup>nd</sup> : Fri Feb 8 3 <sup>rd</sup> : Tue Feb 26 4 <sup>th</sup> : Fri Mar 15 5 <sup>th</sup> : Fri Apr 5
Drafts of writing	Progressive drafts of Capstone project	Submit online to instructor <b>and</b> at least 2 (two) class members  **Exception: Submit research question by email to instructor only.	Research question: Fri Jan 25 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> draft: Mon Feb 11 <sup>th</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft: Mon Mar 4 <sup>th</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> <u>final</u> draft: Fri Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>

**NOTE:** Attendance at **ALL** classes is mandatory unless otherwise agreed upon by instructor in *special circumstances only*.

The Capstone project is an opportunity to celebrate all that you have learned and accomplished during your M.Ed. experience. I look forward to collaboratively engaging with you in meaningful dialogue and exploration of issues you have identified as critical to your personal growth as a professional and the development of your profession. As counselling students, I invite you to reflect on your ethical obligations in the areas of Competence and Development of Knowledge as you engage in this project. I hope that together we can respond to these responsibilities in a meaningful way.

## Course Policies

**Respect:** In order for this to be an optimal learning environment for you, it is critical that we treat each other professionally and with respect, including: arriving on time for class; completing peer reviews in a timely manner; avoiding abusive language; avoiding use of cell phones, checking email, and using the internet during class; demonstrating respect for different opinions; and adhering to confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to not sharing identifying details of classmates' stories/experiences with others outside the class AND not talking to each other about other classmates' stories/experiences. Also, please only share what you are comfortable sharing.

**Learning responsibilities:** In order to be an active learner, you are responsible for engaging fully in all course activities. You are also expected to complete all course assignments.

**Attendance:** Mandatory attendance at all on-line and on-campus classes is required, except in exceptional circumstances approved by the instructor. Should you be absent from class, you are required to assume responsibility for catching up on all the material and information missed by contacting a fellow classmate. Please notify the instructor if you will be absent from class.

**Academic accommodation:** If you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please follow the procedures outlined in the university calendar. In addition, please notify the instructor within the first week of the start of the course or for a more recent disability, due to an accident or illness, no later than a week upon your return to class.

**Academic dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty is a very serious ethical issue and will not be tolerated, including not properly crediting others when paraphrasing or quoting their work, copying another student's work, submitting work that is not completely your own (except in situations of group work), and submitting work (or substantial portions of work) previously submitted in another course. Please consult the U of L's calendar for the definition and consequence of this behaviour.

**Assignment submission and late policy:** Postcards and Capstone drafts must be uploaded to Moodle by 23:55 on the day they are due; otherwise they will be marked as late. Instructor and peer feedback will not be provided on late submissions. Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances that are unpredictable and out of your control. Documentation must be provided by a relevant professional (e.g., doctor).

**Assignment assistance:** I want you to succeed in this course and am happy to work collaboratively with you towards that goal. I am only able to help you, however, if you come to me with your questions or concerns. So, please email me or set up an appointment to see me, as I am here to support you and your learning.

**Computer problems:** You must do everything in your power to find a way to connect to the internet or access a computer as needed to complete your work. You must still submit assignments on time.

**Professional conduct:** All students in the course are required to adhere to the Standards of Professional Conduct as outlined in the most recent edition of the U of L Calendar, Faculty of Education section VI. Any violations will result in dismissal from the class and/or a failing course grade being awarded.