

The Capstone Curriculum Development Project

Master of Science in Education, Social Studies Adolescence Degree

What is the Curriculum Development Project?

The Curriculum Development Project is the professional capstone component of the Master of Science in Education, Social Studies Adolescence degree. Successful completion of this course indicates that the candidate is capable of focus, independent work, research and synthesis, and long-range planning. The project is not a tutorial, but rather an exercise in the development and presentation of complex information suited to the adolescent as prepared by a mature intellect. The project provides candidates with the opportunity to apply the content and pedagogical knowledge they have acquired in their graduate coursework to the creation of a set of comprehensive curricular materials relating to a specific topic of the candidate's choice, in consultation with a faculty advisor. The intention is for the student to create materials that they will be able to put to practical use in their own classrooms. Completion of the project indicates that the applicant can plan, focus, and effectively research; use time wisely; and expend sustained effort. It demonstrates the skills and competencies of research, analytical thought, and lesson planning expected of a professional teacher.

The capstone project is an **independent research project** that the candidate must manage. Each project is subdivided into **three basic phases**: 1). the **Proposal**, 2). **Research and development** of the project itself, and 3). the **Oral Defense**. All phases of the project are developed in consultation and with the approval of a tenured/tenure-track faculty advisor in history or political science.

How are the Phases of the Curriculum Development Project structured?

Phase One—Application for Admission to Professional Program (HIST 670):

For all students, the Curriculum Development Project begins with a decision to enter into HIST 670. To be eligible for admission to HIST 670, candidates must:

1. Have completed **FOUR content area courses** (History or Political Science); one of the four **MUST** be a **History Research Seminar (HIST 633 or 653)**.
2. Have discussed the potential project with 2-3 tenured or tenure-track faculty in history or political science who agree the topic is viable and are willing to be listed as potential project advisors.
3. Consulted with the Graduate Coordinator about the suitability of project and prepare a brief (1-2 page) **preliminary project proposal** describing the overall project, noting the primary research question to be investigated, the project's scope, and possible sources to be consulted.
4. Once the preliminary proposal is approved by the Graduate Coordinator, complete an **application for admission to HIST 670** and secure approval of the Graduate Committee.

Deadlines for submission of applications:

October 15 for Spring and J-Term registration
March 15 for Fall and Summer registration

Phase Two—Development and Completion of the Curriculum Development Project:

Once the preliminary project proposal is approved and the candidate has been admitted to HIST 670, the student will be formally assigned a project advisor and may select a second reader. The candidate may then register for HIST 670 and begin working on the project.

For students entering the program in Fall 2007 and continuing students who have chosen the new program option, HIST 670 will be offered as a 2-credit, one-semester course leading to completion of a formal project proposal and a full draft of the project. Ideally, the formal proposal will be completed and approved by the Graduate Committee **within the first several weeks of the semester**. The **formal project proposal** should reflect a more fully developed understanding of the project and its parameters achieved through the development, in consultation with the advisor, of a research plan and preliminary reading and research on the topic. It should include **3-4 page description** of the project, reflecting **some knowledge of the historiographical context** of the proposed research question, and a **preliminary working bibliography** of sources to be consulted.

For students who entered the program before Fall 2007 who have chosen to follow the old program, HIST 670 will be offered as a 3-credit, one-semester course leading to the **completion of their final curriculum project**. In this case, the “preliminary” proposal submitted with their Application for the Professional Program will, of necessity, reflect a more fully developed sense of the project and will constitute their only formal proposal to the committee, since they are expected to complete their projects during the course of one semester.

What are the components of the Curriculum Development Project?

For all students, the Curriculum Development Project consists of five components, listed below. Detailed instructions for various components are attached. For specific formatting of the final project, consult the university guidelines for M.A. capstone projects. All documents, instructional sheets, and forms are available online in ANGEL.

1. The **introduction** should describe the research question to be examined and include an overview of the curriculum unit.
2. The **historiographical essay** should be **8-10 pages** long. It should detail the principal arguments contained in the scholarly literature (secondary sources) on the topic, comparing and contrasting them and discussing changes in interpretation over time. Sources should be cited properly in foot/endnotes using Chicago style.
3. The **annotated bibliography** should contain a **minimum of TEN secondary sources, TEN primary source documents, and FIVE scholarly websites**. The annotation for each source should consist of a three- to four-sentence summary of the source. For secondary sources, the annotation should include a summary of the author’s argument. For primary sources and Internet sites, the annotation will of necessity be more descriptive of the source and its relevance or usefulness to the project. The entries should be in proper bibliographic format according to Chicago style.

4. The **curriculum unit** should consist of **at least TEN lesson plans** and **an explanation of how you will assess student learning at the end of the unit**. Each lesson plan should explain how it could be adapted for students of at least two different ability levels (i.e., mainstream, modified, accelerated) and/or grade levels. Please refer to Attachment A, Required Lesson Plan Components, for specific guidelines. **Note:** It is expected that the curriculum unit will reflect what you have learned in doing your secondary research and historiographical essay, as relevant. It is also expected that your lesson plans will make use of the primary sources and websites included in your annotated bibliography (i.e., for readings, DBQs, etc.).
5. The **project summary** should contain reflections on the research process, the progress made toward answering the initial research question, and the development of the curriculum unit.

All portions of the project must be completed and presented to the project advisor for approval before a defense date can be set. The decision that a student is ready to defend is made by the advisor with input from the student. The project advisor will also indicate when the student is ready to begin sharing relevant portions of the project with the second reader.

Phase Three—Oral Defense:

The defense is an oral interview where the candidate will present his/her dossier to the three members of the committee. The candidate will be expected to explain the topic and its historiographical context, the findings, and the reasons for choosing the particular lesson plans (including pedagogical strategies and techniques) and their structure, as well as to answer questions. The committee will make recommendations for revisions and the final date for completion of the project.

For students entering the program in Fall 2007 and continuing students who have chosen the new program option, the defense will occur either at the end of HIST 670 or early in the semester of enrollment in HIST 671. Required revisions to the project, including final editing, formatting, and production of the finished project for submission to the Graduate Office, will be completed in HIST 671 (1-cr.). Completion of HIST 670 and HIST 671, **including submission of the final approved project to the college** is the final requirement for the degree.

For students who entered the program before Fall 2007 who have chosen to follow the old program, the defense will be completed as part of the requirements for HIST 670. Required revisions to the project, including final editing, formatting, and production of the finished project for submission to the Graduate Office must be completed as part of HIST 670. Successful completion of HIST 670, **including submission of the final approved project to the college**, is the final requirement for the degree.

Setting up the Defense:

The process for setting up the defense and working out the time-line is described in Form B and in the sample schedule (attached). It is important to remember that the committee members need time to examine the complete dossier, to formulate their questions, and to prepare for the candidate's interview. Applicants should not expect an overnight, or even a two- or three-day turnaround. Ideally, **candidates should present full copies of their project to their committee at least two full weeks prior to the proposed defense date**. Scheduling the final defense will require a minimum of two weeks and can easily require three, once class schedules, meetings, and other commitments of four people are taken into consideration.

NOTE: In addition, according to University guidelines, the deadline for submission of theses in final form to the department is **three** weeks before the date of the expected award of the degree. All four copies will be forwarded within **two weeks** thereafter to the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies where it will be reviewed to insure that it meets the college requirements as to format and style. A thesis is not considered acceptable until the student's advisor and the committee, the department chairperson, and the dean of graduate studies have approved it. **Keep these time-lines in mind as you work toward completion and defense of your project.**

Defenses will not normally be held during summer sessions unless prior arrangements have been made. Even a summer defense will not guarantee an August graduation date. Graduation applications must be filed by the date indicated by the registrar's office. **Applying for graduation is the student's responsibility**; deadlines for graduate degrees are identical to undergraduate deadlines. **Students must plan accordingly.**

General Policies

Probationary Status and Dismissal from the Program:

All graduate students are expected to maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and a 3.0 in all history and political science courses to remain in good standing. Students whose semester GPA falls below 3.0, but whose overall GPA remains above 3.0 will be given an academic warning. Students whose GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on Final Probation and may be dismissed from the Program if the problem is not corrected within one semester. *In addition, students who receive a grade below B- in any history or political science course will automatically be placed on Academic Probation; a second grade below B- in any history or political science may result in dismissal from the program [pending approval by the Graduate Council].*

Course Repeat Policy:

With prior written approval of the Chairperson of the Department (offering the course) and the Dean of Graduate Studies, graduate students wishing to improve the final course grade may retake up to two (2) courses during a single degree program and then may exercise the course repeat option after the grade for the retaken course has been submitted to the College Registrar. After the Course Repeat Option is processed, neither the previous course grade nor its earned credit will count toward the student's cumulative GPA or overall credit hours. A single course may be retaken only once and must be completed within two (2) years after the completion of the original course. Tuition waivers may not be used to pay for a repeated course.

Plagiarism:

ALL written graduate coursework, including the Curriculum Development Project, is expected to be the student's own, original work. As students and scholars in an academic environment, it is imperative that we all observe the rules of **academic integrity**. This means that you MAY NOT copy, quote, or paraphrase information from ANY SOURCE (book, encyclopedia, magazine, online website, or another student's work, etc.) without explicitly giving that source credit in the form of a footnote, endnote, or textual citation. Students caught plagiarizing ANY assignment in ANY course will be prosecuted according to the procedures specified in the Graduate Bulletin

under “Academic Integrity Policy.” If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, you should consult with the course instructor or the Graduate Studies coordinator.

Use of Internet Sources:

The History Department recognizes that the Internet has become an invaluable tool for teachers designing lesson plans. However, **including lesson plans that have been downloaded from the Internet in the Curriculum Development Project is plagiarism and is unacceptable.** Students may include materials such as maps, pictures, and primary sources from internet sites in their lesson plans and it is permissible for students to include activities that they learned about on the web in their plans, as long as they cite the sources of these materials and activities accurately and in compliance with recognized academic standards regarding citations and bibliographies. However, **the lessons that students include in their Curriculum Development Projects should be plans that the students themselves have developed.** It is unacceptable to include entire lesson plans downloaded from the Internet, even if the student has made some alterations to the plans. It is unacceptable to include lecture notes downloaded from the Internet. It is unacceptable to include entire DBQs or tests and quizzes downloaded from the internet. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the acceptability of internet materials, you should consult with your project advisor.

Final Grades for CDPs and Posting of Degrees:

The CDP is not considered to be completed until the candidate has satisfactorily revised, edited, and formatted the project in accordance with the committee’s suggestions arising from the defense and in compliance with college guidelines for Masters theses and projects. For this reason, all students will receive grades of “X”(continuing enrollment) for HIST 670 and HIST 671 **until the project is completed and submitted to the advisor for final approval.** At that point, the advisor, in consultation with the other committee members, will assign a final grade for the project and the “X” grades will be changed appropriately. The registrar cannot post the degree until the finished project (including all paperwork) has been formally submitted to the Vice President for Graduate Studies and has received his signature and approval. At that point, the appropriate calendar for posting of degrees takes effect. For example, turning in a finished project in late August or early September will result in the posting of the degree in December.

Letters Certifying Completion of the Degree Prior to Posting of the Degree:

Faculty advisors **cannot** write letters certifying that the candidate has completed all requirements for the degree until the project has received the Vice President for Graduate Studies’ formal signature and approval.

Typical Program Sequence

- 1st Semester: 9 hours of course work
- 2nd Semester: 9 hours of course work
- 3rd Semester: 9 hours of course work
- 4th Semester: HIST 670: complete formal proposal, research, and initial draft
- 5th Semester: HIST 671: complete oral defense & final editing, revision, and formatting of project for submission to Vice President for Graduate Studies.

Program configurations can vary if a student does not take a full load or registers for courses during J-Term or Summer Sessions. **ALL** students **MUST** have completed a **minimum** of **FOUR content courses (History or Political Science)** to be eligible to apply for admission to HIST 670. Because of the intense nature of the work required to research, develop, and produce the CDP, students are encouraged to structure their coursework in a way that enables them to devote sufficient time and energy to HIST 670 and HIST 671 to allow for timely completion of their projects.

Attachment A

Required Lesson Plan Components

Each lesson plan should demonstrate how it could be adapted for students of at least two different ability levels (i.e., mainstream, modified, accelerated) and/or grade levels.

Each of the lesson plans required for the CDP should contain all of the following components:

1. Instructional Objectives
2. List of Materials necessary for the lesson
3. Anticipatory Set/Focus/Warm-up (a question or visual/audio aid that sets students' attention on the topic at hand; for example, a question based on a reading assignment, a blank outline map for the students to begin filling in, a piece of relevant music playing in the background. An anticipatory set should be a very brief activity—no more than 2 or 3 minutes long.)
4. Description of instructional activities (everything you, as the teacher, plan to do in class and everything you plan to have the students do): a clear, detailed description of **all** the instructional activities you plan to use, including detailed lecture notes*, **specific** questions to check for understanding and for discussion (if appropriate), and detailed explanations of how any cooperative activities will be organized (including all materials given to groups, tasks assigned to each group and each individual within the group, description of how groups are organized).
5. Copies of **all** handouts and visual aids
6. What state standards does this lesson address?
7. How would you modify this less to meet differentiated learning environments?
8. Explanation of daily assessment: how will you know that your students have learned what you outlined in your objectives?
9. Closure

*Detailed lecture notes include an outline of the points to be covered in lecture, written explanations of these points, definitions of key terms, and specific examples/anecdotes that illustrate main points and themes. Lecture notes should also indicate when in the lecture specific questions will be asked, when visual aids will be shown, and when handouts will be distributed.

FORM I
Application for Professional Program

Name: _____

Campus Address: _____

Campus Phone: _____ Preferred Email: _____

Home Address: _____

Graduate Courses Completed: _____

Current GPA: _____

GRE Results: Verbal: _____ Math: _____ Analytical: _____

Semester you wish to enter HIST 670: _____

List 2-3 professors* with whom you have discussed your project and who would be willing to serve, if called upon, as your advisor: _____

How do the research interests of your proposed committee members aid your project?

*Project advisors must be tenured/tenure-track professors in history or political science—preferably someone whose research specialty is in the area of your topic. You may discuss possible second readers with your advisor.

******Attach a 2-3 page statement describing your proposed project.******

DEADLINES: October 15 for Spring and J-Term registration
March 15 for Fall and Summer registration

FORM II
Application for Scheduling a Defense

The project advisor will indicate the candidate's readiness for defense.

Please indicate available times for BOTH the candidate and the project advisor. Please indicate available times at least two weeks hence from the date of application submission.

Ten days prior to defense ALL committee members must have a hard copy of the entire Curriculum Development Project. The committee will consist of the Graduate Director, your advisor, and your choice of a third member. The third must be a member of either the History or Political Science Department. Please request permission from the third member BEFORE submitting the application.

The candidate will be informed in writing of either approval of the CDP or recommendations for revisions. The candidate must complete recommended changes in order to complete the course requirements and graduate. The candidate will NOT be required to re-defend the CDP before the committee.

Application to Schedule a Curriculum Development Project Defense

Name: _____ **Date of Application:** _____

Advisor Name: _____

Second Reader: _____

Available times for student, advisor, and second reader: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Signature of Advisor: _____
(Certifying readiness to defend)