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GPHY 400.01: Geography Undergraduate Capstone

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GPHY 400 – Geography Undergraduate Capstone

Department of Geography

The University of Montana

Instructor: **Student Advisor**

Credits: 01

Fall 2013

T 3:40 -4:30 p.m., Stone Hall 217

Course Description

Offered autumn. Prereq., Senior standing. Co-convenes with GPHY 500 - Geography Graduate Colloquium. Exploration of current research, projects, and programs of geographers and scientists/practitioners in allied disciplines and fields. Preparation for post-graduate professional and academic careers is emphasized.

Learning Goals

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Compile and prepare a professional resume and curriculum vitae.
2. Prepare a letter of interest for a professional position or in support of an application to a graduate program of study.
3. Compile a portfolio detailing your post-graduate aspirations (e.g., in the letter of interest), academic preparation (e.g., in the resume/CV), and knowledge and skills gained in your undergraduate degree program (e.g., in course papers and projects).
4. Evaluate current research, projects, and programs of geographers and scientists/practitioners in allied disciplines and fields, who are guest lecturers in the Geography Graduate Colloquium, in relation to the discipline of geography and systematic areas of study within it.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will demonstrate the following levels of understanding corresponding to the course materials and content (i.e., Learning Goals and Course Requirements):

1. Strong understanding: very well-organized, very well-composed, and completely error-free (i.e., spelling, grammatical, punctuation): a) resume, b) curriculum vitae, c) letter, d) portfolio; and e) colloquium reflections that evidence they are informed by and consider relevant geographic theory and approaches.
2. Good understanding: well-organized, well-composed, and generally error-free: a) resume, b) CV, c) letter, d) portfolio; and e) colloquium reflections that are informed by and consider relevant geographic theory and approaches.
3. Weak understanding: poorly-organized, poorly-composed, and contains significant errors: a) resume, b) CV, c) letter, d) portfolio; and e) colloquium reflections that are not informed by and consider relevant geographic theory and approaches.

Course Requirements

Resume	10 percent
Curriculum Vitae (CV)	10 percent
Letter of Interest	10 percent
Attendance/Colloquium Reflections	30 percent
<u>Completed Portfolio</u>	<u>40 percent</u>
Total	100 percent

The Capstone will, by necessity, require that you continue to work on your portfolio throughout the final semester of your senior year. As such, if you are planning to graduate following Spring Semester, you will be given a grade of N (i.e., “work in progress”) for Fall Semester. You will receive a grade for the course only after your portfolio has been submitted to the department for archiving.

Resume

A well designed and compiled resume will include: contact information, academic and professional credentials/preparation, relevant work and/or volunteer experience, and references. It may include a statement of interest/desired position. It should not include your hobbies and avocational interests and pursuits! Resumes are generally best tailored to the specific position that you are applying to if there is sufficient experience to merit this.

Curriculum Vitae

A well designed and compiled CV will include all of the same information that you will have compiled into a resume, but will expand on this to include all or most of your lifetime accomplishments that are of a professional nature. It should be complete and well organized with appropriate headings, be consistent in how information is presented (i.e., dates, ordering, formatting), free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, and should be structured in such a way that it presents information in order of its importance and relevance (i.e., for an academic post, including graduate school admission: degrees and other credentials, awards, research publications and activities, grants and contracts, relevant work experience, etc.).

Letter of Interest

As important as a resume or CV is in conveying your qualifications for a professional position or for entry into a graduate program, a strong letter of interest better conveys your interest and fit for such. Probably the first item that a potential employer or graduate admissions committee reads, it offers you a chance to personalize your qualifications, include relevant information not suitable for inclusion in a resume or CV, and to demonstrate your written communication skills.

Attendance/Colloquium Reflections

In addition to helping you to prepare for your post-graduate life, this capstone course will provide you with exposure to the current research, projects, and programs of geographers and scientists/practitioners in allied disciplines and fields who will be presenting their work as guest speakers/lecturers in the annual fall semester *Geography Graduate Colloquium*. These speakers have been recruited by the department’s chairperson to offer presentations that provide faculty and students and other audience members with the opportunity to see how basic geographic thinking, skills, techniques, and approaches are playing a role in solving real world problems. Though only five (5) reflections are required for submission as per the requirements of this Capstone, you must attend all scheduled presentations and colloquium meetings.

In order to assess your engagement with the presentations of colloquium speakers, you will prepare and submit written reflections that: 1) summarize the nature of the work presented, 2) identify appropriate geographic theory/approaches relating to the presentation, 3) analyze the relations between theory/approaches and the work described by presenters, and 4) are well composed following style guidelines common to the discipline.

Completed Portfolio

It is useful for college seniors and graduates to compile and present to potential employers and others a portfolio of written and technical work and projects completed in satisfaction of course requirements and in relation to internship and service learning projects. Portfolios also assist the Department of Geography in assessing what students know and can do in the context of discipline specific learning outcomes (the review of these aid the department in identifying areas in which curricular and/or pedagogical improvements might be needed).

A portfolio should be formatted following the style guidelines common to the field (i.e., those of the *Annals of the Association of Professional Geographers, Turabian/Chicago*). It should include a title page, a table of contents, a brief preamble that describes the content, and appropriately organized items (e.g., chronologically, by level of difficulty (i.e., 100, 200, 300, and 400-level coursework). ***It must include one sample product from each of the following courses in the major (Geography) that you have completed while in the program, and the Capstone Reflections.*** Term projects or papers are most appropriate.

- GPHY 284 – Intro to GIS and Cartography
- GPHY 385 – Field Techniques
- GPHY 335 – Water Policy – OR – GPHY 433 – Cultural Ecology
- Any 300-500 level courses taken for the Major, an Option, a Certificate, and/or a Minor in Geography (including Community and Environmental Planning Option, Physical Geography Option, GIST Certificate, Mountains Minor, etc.).

In order to receive credit for this capstone, and to graduate, you must submit this Portfolio electronically, as a pdf document, to your Advisor near the end of your last semester in your degree program. A grade of “N” (work in progress) will be assigned for Fall Semester if you will be completing the capstone in Spring.

Text

None.

Course Schedule

The Capstone schedule will follow, in part, that of the Colloquium. You must also schedule an appointment to visit with your advisor first thing in the fall semester to: 1) obtain sample resumes, CVs, and portfolios to consider as models for your own, 2) identify appropriate Colloquium presentations for you to focus on for the reflections, and 3) to discuss the schedule for completion of the portfolio throughout your final semester on the UM campus.

Policies

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321> .

Whenever possible, and in accordance with civil rights laws, The University of Montana will attempt to provide reasonable modifications to students with disabilities who request and require them. Please feel free to setup a time with me to discuss any modifications that may be necessary for this course. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321> .

It is extremely disruptive and disrespectful to Colloquium presenters to have people arrive late and/or leave early. Please be mindful of this.