

## OIELSX07 - Capstone

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**Professor:** Sophie MERITET  
**Contact information:**  
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**Department:** International affairs  
**Semester:** 1

**Course level:** L3 undergraduate  
**Domain:** Electives  
**Teaching language:** English (and/or French)  
**Number of in-class hours:** 36  
**Number of course sessions:** 11 + Exam  
**ECTS:** 6

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### Course description and objectives

The Capstone is defined as a client-oriented group research project, based on original field research which generates a deliverable product. The Capstone project is designed to demonstrate students accumulated training in a single original project, subject to the instructor's approval and under the additional supervision of a faculty mentor.

Although the most common way of completing this course is the writing of a research thesis of approximately 8000 words, alternate projects can be explored in consultation with the instructor of the course (and home universities).

The completed thesis or project should bring together a theme, a region, a foreign language expertise (sometime), and an overseas experience (most of the time). The Capstone necessitates multiple drafts of research that are subjected to heightened peer review and regular feedback from the instructor, peers and mentor.

Objectives:

By the end of the seminar students will be able to clearly articulate their research argument in a well-written and orally presented project.

### Prerequisites

Students are required to work in small groups, advised by a specialist, in order to conduct a high-quality research project. Depending on the project's complexity, students will work individually or in small teams on a problem statement (in coordination with home universities).

### Learning outcomes

- To improve skills in writing, oral presentation and research
- To recognize, explain, and juxtapose academic arguments within the context of students' own research
- To evaluate competing positions in academic debates and to use evidence-based arguments to develop and defend their own position
- To conduct and respond to criticism through peer-review.

### Assignments and grading

Capstone project is graded according to norms of academic quality.

- Assignment # 1 : 15%
- Assignment # 2 : 10%
- Assignment # 3 : 10%
- Assignment # 4 : 15%
- Assignment # 5 : 50%

Percentages could be changed after discussion with home universities.

Capstone products are mainly conducted in English, yet students with a good ability in French can, on a case by case basis, conduct the project in French (if accepted by the home institutions).

Capstone projects can be focused on an academic research topic, a firm project, a university question.

The numerical grade distribution will dictate the final grade. The passing grade for a course is 10/20.

**Class participation:** Active class participation – this is what makes classes lively and instructive. Come on time and prepared. Class participation is based on quality of comments, not quantity.

**Exam policy:** In the exam, students will not be allowed to bring any document (except if allowed by the lecturer). Unexcused absences from exams or failure to submit cases will result in zero grades in the calculation of numerical averages. Exams are collected at the end of examination periods.

## Course structure

Session	Topic
1	There is one class meeting at the beginning of the semester to explain the organization.
2	
3	<p>Week 3: Assignment # 1: Proposal</p> <p>The outline should address the following: (1) your thesis topic – choose a preliminary topic; (2) why your topic is important; and (3) why you should be the one to write this project.</p>
4	
5	<p>Week 5: Assignment # 2: Expanded &amp; Revised Research Statement</p> <p>This assignment should introduce the reader to the main aspects of your thesis and formulate your research questions. It should set the stage for the next phase of your thesis in the following manner: State what the project is about, what you hope to demonstrate, the significance of the project, how did this idea come about (optional), what kind of sources / theoretical framework will you be using to analyze your questions (also provide a preliminary evaluation of the sources you will be using), introduce a preliminary plan of your study including an initial division into sections/chapters.</p> <p>Length: 750-1000 words.</p>
6	
7	<p>Week 7: Assignment # 3: Literature Review / Theoretical Background if relevant.</p> <p>This assignment may draw from the content of your proposal but it has to be significantly expanded upon feedback received. Having compiled and read the appropriate bibliography, or most of it, you should now be able to provide the background for your topic, applying broad and narrow perspectives. Some of the questions that should guide you when you are researching/compiling your literature review are: 1. What has been done thus far in the field? 2. Do you see any trends or shifts in the study of your topic? 3. What methodologies and approaches were applied? For example, the issue was handled by such and such in his work... where he explored x (but not y); ... there's a lacuna here and there; scholars relied too much on statistical analysis and less on oral testimonies; used theory a but not b; ignored or over-emphasized a comparative analysis, used one group/type of sources but not another, did or did not account for the bias in the sources used, etc. etc.</p> <p>Length: 1500-2000 words.</p>
8	
9	<p>Week 9: Assignment # 4: Case Study/Analysis of your data</p> <p>Here you provide all the details of your actual study. This is the part of the thesis you will be most familiar with. Analyze and discuss your data in relation to the main question you</p>

10	<p>proposed and taking into consideration the literature you discussed and juxtaposed in your Literature Review. This is the part of your thesis that you zoom in the actual region/country/area you are interested in and discuss the relevance of the data in broader questions. We will discuss this assignment further in class. Length: 2000-2500 words.</p>
11	<p>Complete Rough Draft with Conclusions and an Executive Summary Although this is not the final product, treat the rough draft as if it were. Structure your paper with titled sections, integrating your previous assignments into a single essay, expanding and altering them as needed. Pay attention also to editorial concerns (style, footnotes, etc., per our Style Sheet). In your conclusion, summarize the major points of the thesis, reflect upon relevant parts from the literature review, and indicate, if applicable, recommendations for further inquiry, be it of a scholarly or policy-related nature.</p>
12	<p><i>No compulsory: Project presentation. You are required to submit an abstract to present your project. Plan a 15-minute talk, guiding the audience through the contents of your work. Pay attention to form and style. Your presentation should be professional, informative, clear and concise.</i> <i>The time and date of the oral presentation will be decided with the tutor, instructor and students.</i></p> <p>Week12: Assignment # 5: Final Paper with revised conclusions and executive summary. You should revise your rough draft several times before submitting the final version. Historically, poor marks occurred mostly because students did not heed to the advice and comments on the rough drafts. Your final paper should be professional and ready for publication.</p>

## MyCourse

This course is on MyCourse: **No**

## Academic integrity

Be aware of the rules in Université Paris Dauphine about plagiarism and cheating during exams. All work turned in for this course must be your own work, or that of your own group. Working as part of a group implies that you are an active participant and fully contributed to the output produced by that group.

Academic calendar

<b>Dates</b> <b>(Monday/Sunday)</b>		
02/09/19	09/08/19	<b>Welcome Week + French seminar</b>
09/09/19	15/09/19	1
16/09/19	22/09/19	2
23/09/19	29/09/19	3
30/09/19	06/10/19	4
07/10/19	13/10/19	5
14/10/19	20/10/19	6
21/10/19	27/10/19	7
28/10/19	03/11/19	<b>Holidays</b>
04/11/19	10/11/19	8
11/11/19	17/11/19	9
18/11/19	24/11/19	10
25/11/19	01/12/19	11
02/12/19	08/12/19	Review w.
09/12/19	15/12/19	<b>Exams</b>
16/12/19	22/12/19	
23/12/19	29/12/19	<b>Holidays</b>
30/12/19	05/01/20	
06/01/20	12/01/20	