The Senior Project and Presentation

The senior project involves both research and a public presentation of that research. The abilities of reasoning, inquiry and communication are engaged in the process. The senior project presentation is the student's opportunity to demonstrate how these abilities have developed.

Students may select a senior project from among five categories:
- social science research paper
- rhetorical analysis paper
- career exploration paper
- public relations project
- media production project

For complete details on these options, see the Senior Project page on the Communication Studies website (http://www.luther.edu/coms/project/). See below for a list of sample project topics from recent years.

Senior Project Guidelines & Help

All students enrolled in COMS 490—Senior Project are assigned to a member of the Communication Studies faculty who serves as the project advisor. The project advisor is the best source of help, tips, advice and answers to questions concerning all aspects of the project.

Students should carefully review the criteria detailed for their particular type of project on the main Senior Project page, and should follow these directions carefully. In the Communication Studies Department, the Project Oral Presentation constitutes one third of the grade for the overall project. Students should design presentations with the Senior Oral Presentation Grading Criteria in mind (see the presentation grading criteria, below).

All Senior Project written papers should adhere to the style guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). The current APA Stylebook is the Sixth Edition (APA/6). An abbreviated summary of key points in APA/6 may be found at this website:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/

Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) approval

All Senior Projects involving research with human subjects, including surveys, polls, questionnaires, focus groups, or interviews must have prior approval from the college's local institutional review board (IRB), known on this campus as the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB).

Applications for HSRB approval are currently conducted through Luther's course management system, "Katie." Follow these steps:

1) Log into Katie. At the bottom of the "My Courses" block on the left hand side of the main Katie homepage is a link to "All courses." Click on this link and it will bring up a list of all Katie courses.

2) Scroll down to the "Miscellaneous" category (towards the bottom of the screen) and then click on the "Miscellaneous" link.

3) The Human Subjects Review Board link will then appear on a screen with other courses listed. The Human Subjects Review Board link will be on the lower left hand side of the page. Click on this link and Katie will ask you to confirm that you want to be enrolled in the course.

You must enroll in the course to submit a proposal. Once you have enrolled yourself in the course, subsequent submission will not require that you re-enroll. The "Human Subjects Review Board" link should appear in your "My Courses" list.

When you enter the site you should find instructions and two different forms: Short and Full Forms.

"HSRB Short Form" will be used by many faculty and most students for senior papers and independent research. To use this form, the research must adhere to the following requirements:
   ✓ No minors or mentally infirm
   ✓ Informed consent will be obtained from participants (informed consent template included)
   ✓ No risk or harm
   ✓ No deception
   ✓ Anonymous and/or confidential data collection
"HSRB Full Form" will be used in any instance in which the above criteria are not fully met.

Upon selecting one of these two options, you should click the "Add Entry" tab and complete the form. Use the email link at the bottom of the page to email the HSRB chair that you have submitted a proposal (or simply email her when finished). Be sure to click the save button at the bottom of the page when finished. After your form is completed and saved you can view it by clicking "View Single."

PowerPoint Presentation Guidelines

NOTE: You are not required to use presentation software for your presentation. Please ONLY use PowerPoint if it is necessary for and adds to the quality of your presentation.

Fonts
- Use no font size smaller than 24 point.
- Use a consistent and easily read font throughout the presentation.
- Clearly label each screen. Use a larger font (35-45 points) or different color for the title.
- For bullet points, use the 5 x 5 Rule. One thought per line with no more than 5 words per line and no more than 5 lines per slide
- Use dark text on light background or light text on dark background. However, dark backgrounds sometimes make it difficult for some people to read the text.
- Do not use all caps, except for titles.

Graphics and Design
- Keep the background consistent and subtle.
- Use only enough text when using charts or graphs to clearly explain the graphic.
- Use parallel structure when wording bullets.
- Keep the design clean and uncluttered. Leave empty space around the text and graphics.
- Try to use the same style and type graphics throughout the presentation (e.g. cartoon, photographs).
- Limit the number of graphics on each slide.
- Check all graphics on a projection screen before the actual presentation.
- Avoid flashy graphics and noisy animation effects unless they relate directly to the slide.

Color
- Limit the number of colors on a single screen.
- Bright colors make small objects and thin lines stand out. However, some vibrant colors are difficult to read when projected.
- Use no more than four colors on one chart.
- Check all colors on a projection screen before the actual presentation. They may project differently than what appears on the monitor.

General Presentation
- Check the spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Do not read the presentation. Practice the presentation so you can speak from bullet points. The text should be a cue for the presenter rather than a message for the viewer.
- Display images or bullets only as you are talking about them, otherwise the audience will read slides and not listen to you. DO NOT display an entire slide of text at once. Use a blank screen between slides if a slide is not needed.

25 Past Communication Studies Senior Paper Topics
These are several sample paper topics from past Communication Studies majors:

- Hip Hop is Dead: A Rhetorical Analysis of the NBA Dress Code
- Cultivation Theory and the Representation of High School Life Within the Laguna Beach TV Show
- One is the Loneliest Number: A Qualitative Study of the Communication of Only Children
- Tweeting Together: Examining the Potential of Tweets in Restoring Social Capital
- The Mystery of Manson: A Generative Criticism of A Cult Leader's Persuasive Subjectivities
- Childhood Friend or Foe: A Narrative Criticism of The Rainbow Fish, The Giving Tree and The Story of Babar
- From Material to Kabbalah Girl: A Feminist Critique of Madonna's New Music Videos Material Girl, Express Yourself and Frozen
- Is This What I'm Supposed to Be? A Rhetorical Analysis of Masculinity Using Marxist Theory
- Real Beauty? A Look At Dove Advertising with the Agenda Setting Theory
- Cultural Adaptation and the American College Student
- I'm Color Blind "I'm not Racist, but…" Racist my Ass!
- But I'm Still a Woman: An Autoethnographic Account of a Women's Quest to Have it All.
- The Rhetoric of The Cell Phone: How Communication Technology And Advertising Affect Our Connectedness to Society
- Believing in Coke: An Ideological Criticism of the Holiday Campaigns
- A Fantasy Theme Analysis of Romantic Relationships within Romantic Comedies
- Creating A New World Through The Disney Experience
- Interracial Relationships: Experiences of a White Female Dating a Black Male.
- Google v. China: The Perfect Society Imposed by Media Censorship
- An Ideological Criticism of the "Best Rapper Alive" Lil Wayne and His Lyrics
- Beyond Celebrity Gossip: An Ideological Criticism of People Magazine
- The Ideology of Health: A Rhetorical Criticism of "Quick Fix" Products
- Too Cool For You: An Analysis of Fashion and Group Hierarchy Formation

COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT
CRITERIA FOR GRADING SENIOR PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

To receive a <u>C</u> on your presentation you must meet the following standards:

____1. The presentation must be original

____2. The presentation must be appropriate for the assignment.

____3. The topic must be sufficiently focused and adapted appropriately for the audience.

____4. The presentation must fit the time requirements of the assignment (8-10 minutes).

____5. Main ideas must be supported with facts and figures, testimony, examples, or narratives.

____6. The presentation must have a clear sense of purpose.

____7. The presentation must have a clearly identifiable and appropriate design, complete with an introduction and conclusion.

____8. The presentation must be presented **extemporaneously**.

To receive a <u>B</u> on your presentation you must meet the following standards:

____1. Satisfy all requirements for a C presentation.

____2. Reflect a greater depth of research (at least 3 cited sources).

____3. Clearly identify sources of information and ideas.

____4. Create and sustain attention throughout the presentation.

____5. Make effective use of transitions, previews and summaries.

____6. Utilize presentation aids effectively.

____7. Use good oral style.

____8. Present your presentation with poise.

To receive an <u>A</u> on your presentation you must meet the following standards:

____1. Satisfy all requirements for a B presentation.

____2. Demonstrate imagination and creativity in topic selection and development.

____3. Develop and sustain strong bonds of identification among the speaker, audience and topic.

____4. Consistently adapt information and supporting material to the experiential world of your audience.

____5. Reflect an even greater depth of research.

____6. Demonstrate artful use of language.

____7. Make a polished presentation that artfully integrates verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

A <u>D</u> presentation does not meet one or more of the standards for a <u>C</u> presentation or

____1. It is obviously unrehearsed.

____2. It is based entirely on biased information or unsupported opinions.

An <u>F</u> presentation does not meet three or more of the standards of a <u>C</u> presentation, reflects either of the problems associated with a <u>D</u> presentation or

____1. It uses fabricated supporting material.

____2. It deliberately distorts evidence.

____3. It is plagiarized.