

M.A. in Liberal Studies Capstone: The White Paper

MALS students doing capstones are required to submit a white paper to the program and library along with their capstone project.

In the white paper, students should explain their project's aims and accomplishments. They should discuss how the capstone relates to major theories and methodologies in their field of study and provide a literature review that links their project to others' work. Students may link their capstone project to their course work and concentration and describe what they have learned from the project. If relevant, students may describe problems they encountered and recommended best practices for overcoming these issues.

All reports should be approximately **twenty pages (double spaced, 12-size font)**, excluding front material (cover page, signature page, and abstract), bibliography, and appendices. The white paper must be submitted to the department with the capstone project three weeks before the library deadline. It should be formatted following the library's guidelines for submitting a thesis (<http://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/dissertations>). When approved by the department, it should be submitted to the library.

Examples of white papers are available on the MALS website.

Formatting Guidelines for the White Paper:

1. Cover Page

The cover page should include your name, your concentration, the title of the capstone project, and the year and month of submission.

2. Capstone Signature Page

This page should be signed by the Advisor and Department (like the thesis signature page). It must be signed by the Advisor before it is submitted to the Department.

3. Abstract

Include an abstract of the white paper.

4. Discussion of the Capstone Project (20 pages, double spaced, 12-size font)

The following list may help guide the narrative description of the report. This description should not replicate any information or text that is included in the actual capstone (i.e., text from a website). You may use the following headings to organize your white paper. We anticipate the first two sections being the longest.

- *Introduce and Provide a Description of the Capstone Project*
 - Explain the impetus for the project.
 - Describe the aims of the project.
 - If the project is digital in nature, please provide the URL.

- *Theoretical Framing and/or Methodology Used*
 - Discuss the theoretical framing that informed the student’s capstone project. Please make reference to specific scholars and academic works.
 - Please discuss the methodology used in the capstone project. Please explain how you developed your methodology in dialogue with the work of other scholars.
 - Please also refer to the work of writers, filmmakers, digital designers, artists, etc. (whichever is relevant to your work) and explain how your work is a response to theirs.
 - Discuss how the capstone project relates to your concentration and previous coursework.

- *Evaluation*
 - Provide an evaluation of the project that assesses how strongly the completed version captures your objectives.
 - If relevant, discuss what setbacks and challenges you faced and how you handled them.

- *Continuation of the Project*
 - Indicate if you have any plans to continue working on the project after the completion of your MA. Specify if this is due to the success of the project or a desire to see the project through if it has not yet been completed.

5. Appendices

Include any supporting material that would contribute to an understanding of the project and its accomplishments to date. These materials can include representative samples or screenshots of completed work, articles submitted to journals, publicizing materials, illustrated field reports, exhibition catalogues, examples of fiction, and the like.

6. Select Bibliography

Include sources that were important to the capstone project. The bibliography must be consistent and follow one of the major style guides, such as Chicago, MLA, or APA. Please see the library’s website for more information.

Updated by E. Macaulay-Lewis, K. Miller, and D. Humphries, July 2019