THDA 799—Capstone Project
Youth Drama and Secondary Theatre Education

The following is intended to give guidance to students who undertake Capstone Projects in Theatre and Dance. It is not intended as a series of absolutes.

Course Objective:
These Capstone Project guidelines are designed specifically for students in the theatre education areas of theatre arts. This course offers students the opportunity to reflect upon and utilize the many theoretical ideas, practical skills, and artistry they have cultivated throughout their undergraduate studies. The course is meant to serve as a testing ground of the depth of students’ knowledge and ability in the area of their choice.

Course Requirements:
Students must satisfy the course objectives through the execution of a significant piece of performance, directing, or teaching project. Students are also required to submit two major pieces of writing: a research paper that also incorporates reflections and examples from the project; a final portfolio neatly compiling all major projects for every theatre education course. Finally, students are required to participate in an oral defense of their artistic and written work before a panel of THDA faculty. This panel may also include qualified theatre artists. At least two people must serve on the committee: the advisor and someone appointed by the Department of Theatre and Dance. If the student wishes to have someone from their project site serve as the second advisor, s/he should make this clear on the departmental capstone application.

Performance and/or Teaching Work:
Students enrolled in the emphasis areas of Youth Drama or Secondary Theatre Education are required to follow the criteria set by the faculty of those emphases. The project must contain teaching of some sort (or teaching-related activities such as directing) and be a challenging culmination of knowledge. If teaching, a theatre education major must have at least 10 contact hours of teaching with students for this project.

Written Work:

1. Students must submit a paper of no less than ten pages (length to be determined by the amount of other paperwork involved; e.g. lesson plans, director’s book, etc). The paper should conform to accepted standards of academic writing. The department stresses that the student is required to submit both artistry and written work for this course. These papers should include anecdotal writing from the student’s project experience, but must also include clear evidence of research on a specific educational pedagogy thesis statement. The student must have six or more sources; to count, sources must be academic and scholarly (either articles, research studies or books). ALL internet sources must be from academic sites produced by reputable organizations rather than sites posted by individuals, but these do not fulfill the minimum 6 source requirement. (Students may negotiate with the advisor for exceptions.) The student must submit at least two drafts for revision review by the advisor. At least twice during the project, the student must have a face-to-face meeting with the advisor.

2. A culminating portfolio of major project assignments from every theatre or education course should be neatly organized and presented in a published-ready version. You may choose to do this digitally, but it could also be a physical binder. There are two purposes for this requirement: if you attend graduate school to get certification, you will need to have a portfolio or materials by the time you graduate with your Masters. Materials collected as an undergraduate will supplement the work you do as a graduate student. In addition, whether you pursue
certification or not, having your materials organized and easily accessible in one place provides you with an impressive artifact to take with you on job interviews and as a valuable resource as you begin your teaching career. **This binder should include your final capstone paper and any other materials (either journals, directors’ books or lesson plans) that you produce for THDA 799.**

**Oral Defense:**

The Student is required to assemble a faculty panel of at least two people who will evaluate the artistic project and read the submitted paper or script. The oral defense will last approximately one hour and must take place within a reasonable amount of time following the completion of the project. The student’s Capstone Project faculty advisor must serve as one of the members of the panel. Additional members may come from the THDA department but may also include qualified theatre artists approved by the course advisor. All committee members should be chosen and approved before the project begins.

**Assessment:**

The student will be assessed by the faculty panel in the following areas:

**Performance/Teaching Portion: 40% of overall grade**

Areas of evaluation:

- Overall quality
- Ability to exhibit command of artistic and technical skill
- Evidence of artistic growth
- Organization and planning

**Written Work: 40% of overall grade**

- Content
- Style
- Overall Quality
- Evidence of growth/improvement through rewrites
- Ability to meet deadlines set by advisor

**Oral Defense: 20% of overall grade**

- Ability to clearly articulate and defend choices and ideas exhibited in the artistic portion and/or paper.
- Evidence of a clear understanding of the theoretical ideas and/or the artistic process apparent in the artistic portion and/or paper.

This syllabus serves as a time frame template. Specific times and other adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Capstone Project faculty advisor. Typically, the student would enroll during her or his final year, but due to teaching opportunities in the summer, students could do the project during the summer after junior year and register to write the paper in the fall. During the semester prior to enrolling, the student should fix upon a topic with her/his theatre education advisor.