Senior Capstone Guidelines

A senior capstone course in a major should be designed to be a significant culminating experience which leads students to reflect on the various components of their major curriculum. By and large, senior capstone courses will:

• be distinctive, different in significant ways from usual department courses.
• emphasize students’ active role in the learning process, which implies limited reliance on lectures and extra weight given to students using the methods of the discipline to explore fields and topics at least partly on their own; rather than repeating others’ work, students should independently (individually or in groups) wrestle with the unknown, or discover knowledge, or develop their own expertise, skills, and capabilities.
• stand as culminating experiences, in which students consolidate their knowledge, or synthesize knowledge, or bring fields together, or use higher-order learning, or put elements of practice together in an original form.
• involve students communicating their explorations or discoveries, at least partly through significant writing; this communication includes (but should not be limited to) a final product, and its precise form will vary by field, encompassing the possibility of artistic expression as well as customary forms of scholarly communication.