

## SECTION D Capstone Requirements

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## **SECTION D**

### **Capstone Requirements**

#### **D.1 Capstone Options**

The thesis option is designed for the student seeking a more concentrated, intellectual focus and in-depth experience in independent research. This option requires the student to investigate a communication topic, develop a hypothesis or key question, and then test the hypothesis by conducting original research. The thesis is strongly recommended for students intending to pursue the doctorate.

Students have two capstone options in the MACOM program. The student may choose to design and implement a major research project in Thesis I/II (COM 7150/COM 7250). Or the student may choose to demonstrate application of professional knowledge and skills in an internship (COM 7290) and through successful completion of a comprehensive examination (COM 7300). These two choices reflect the decisions students must make early in their program, whether to pursue a mostly academic track or a professional track.

#### **D.2 Graduate Project/Comprehensive Examination.**

The graduate project/comprehensive examination is one of two capstone alternatives the student may select. COM 7290 (Graduate Project) allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to actual practice in a communication position whether it be an advertising agency, television station, publishing company, corporate communications department, or similar environment. Students may specify a specific area of interest including, but not limited to, advertising, public relations, journalism, speech, theater, visual communication, or communication technology. They must spend a minimum of 200 hours on-site in a professional capacity under the direction of a full-time communication professional.

COM 7290 is normally taken with the semester before the student enrolls in COM 7300, but students should not plan to take more than nine semester hours when enrolled for COM 7290. Students must have completed all core courses plus an additional 15 semester hours of masters-level coursework to be eligible to enroll in COM 7290.

#### **Procedures for completing the practicum:**

- 1) The Communication department office houses the binders with all approved practica. If you do not see a practicum that appeals to you, you may try to locate one on your own. Use a Corporate Application form for this (available from the COM office). Have the Permit to Enroll form signed by the supervisor, returned and approved by the instructor, BEFORE you begin work or enroll in the class. Work hours will not be credited retroactively.
- 2) Call the supervisors listed on the forms and make an appointment for an interview. Keep in mind that other students may be applying for the same practicum so make your appointment as quickly as possible.
- 3) Read the material provided in this packet about resumes, cover letters, and interviewing. Polish your resume and take extra copies, along with any work samples you might have, to the interview with you.

- 4) Be sure to clarify with your supervisor during the interview about the amount and type of work you will be expected to do, about how they will evaluate your ability, about working conditions, and about how actively they plan to supervise your activities
- 5) Your supervisor will let you know if you have the practicum. If you do not hear from the person you interviewed with after a week, call them back. If you are not selected for the first one, continue to make contacts and go for interviews until you are accepted. The more practicums you apply for, the more likely you will find one quickly. Be sure to notify all of the people with whom you have interviewed when you accept a practicum. They may be holding a position open for you and denying other students an opportunity while they wait to hear from you.
- 6) Once your practicum is confirmed, arrange a schedule of regular hours with your supervisor and specify your work location. Be sure you understand what is expected of you, how to deal with problems, who you will work with, where you are to work, and how you will be evaluated.
- 7) If you are not an American citizen, you must obtain a Work Authorization Permit from International Student Services at HPU (1164 Bishop Street #1100 (UB 1100)). You **MUST** obtain your work authorization **BEFORE** you begin working at the practicum. Call 356-5299 to make an appointment to see one of the International Student Advisers. Obtain an “employment checklist” from the receptionist at the counter and fill it out. You must bring:
  - a) a valid passport with I-94 form (small white card, usually stapled into passport.)
  - b) original I-20 (Student copy) issued by HPU, and any previously issued I-20’s
  - c) the COM 6980 information sheet describing the practicum you have selected.

Students on F-1 status must have their I-20 reflect the fact that they are doing work directly related to their majors. As a Communication major, your practicum will meet this criterion. Immigration will allow you to work full-time during the summer months until school recommences. You will be asked by someone in International Student Services to sign several forms. The Curricular Practical Training Contract will show that you understand the rules and regulations pertaining to off-campus work for credit.

- 8) Because you will be working off-campus as a part of your degree requirements, HPU follows the standard practice of protecting itself from litigation resulting from non-malicious or non-intentional wrongdoing. You will be required to sign an Agreement Not to Sue and Authorization to Participate in University Function form in your packet before participating in a practicum. Return it to the instructor. You must complete this step, and obtain your Work Permit if required, **BEFORE** you go to work.
- 9) You have been issued a stack of forms. Some of them should be given to your supervisor. Some are for your reference and some must be filled in and returned.
- 10) Go to work and give the Corporate Practicum Policies handout to your supervisor.
- 11) You must complete 200 hours on work on-site during your practicum. Foreign students are only allowed by law to work a maximum of 20 hours a week. You must keep a log of your hours and your activities on the Weekly Report form. A sample is in the packet to show you what a completed form should look like. Be sure you fill it in completely and be sure it is **LEGIBLE!** Turn in one Weekly Report every week to the instructor and keep a copy so you can keep track of your hours. You have

been given 15 forms but if you need more, come by the Communication Office and pick them up. You should return any unused forms after you complete the practicum.

12) To get academic credit for your practicum, you must register for COM 7290 the semester you begin your practicum.

13) When you have completed at least 100 hours of work, give the mid-term Evaluation of Intern form to your supervisor and ask her, or him, to fill it out. The mid-term and final evaluation forms look identical on the front but the one with the questionnaire on the back should be used for the final evaluation. Ask your supervisor to sit down with you to discuss the evaluation before they send it to the University. You should pay particular attention to suggestions for improvement. *Evaluations submitted late will result in a deduction from your grade.*

14) At the same time, fill out the Evaluation of Practicum form yourself and give it to the instructor.

15) When you have completed 200 hours, give the final evaluation form to your supervisor. Again, you should ask your supervisor to sit down with you to discuss the evaluation. Fill out the Evaluation of Practicum form yourself.

### **Procedures for enrolling in and completing COM 7300:**

COM 7300 (Comprehensive Examination) should be taken during the student's last semester. Prerequisites are completion of at least 27 semester hours including all core courses and COM 7290, although you may enroll concurrently with COM 7290. Students must pass both written and oral comprehensive examinations to pass the course. Students will be tested over three content areas.

*Content area questions:* Content area questions will be unique to each student based on three annotated content areas submitted by the student and approved by her/his committee. Content areas should reflect three different major areas or concentrations that the student is willing to defend. Examples include, but are not limited to: strategic communication, human communication theory, media and culture, quantitative methodologies, American public address, history of American journalism etc.

*Written comprehensives:* Written comprehensives will be offered during midterms and finals. They will be closed book, and all students must take the exams in multiple two-hour sessions over a designated period. Electronic translators or live internet connections will not be allowed. Students must correctly answer two questions from each of the three content area proposed by the student and accepted by their committee. The student will be given three questions from each content area and will answer two. If a student passes all three sections at midterm, he or she advances to orals. If she or he passes two of three sections, the student must retake the failed section during the final examination period. If the student passes only one section, or fails all three at midterm, she/he must retake all sections at finals. Finals questions will be different from midterms.

*Oral comprehensives:* Students will proceed to oral comprehensives only after passing written comprehensives. The faculty will allow up to 45 minutes for each student to include oral queries from faculty. Orals are open to all faculty and will be offered during both midterm and final exam periods. All faculty may participate in questions and the subsequent discussion, but only the student's committee shall vote. Students passing orals shall pass the course

### **D. 3 Thesis**

Sections D. 3 through D. 19 overview the expectations for the thesis option. The thesis reflects mastery of the discipline and is strongly recommended for those who plan to pursue doctoral studies. It requires a student to:

- (a) identify a current problem or issue in the communication discipline which is sound in terms of an accepted communication theory;
- (b) investigate related issues, questions, and the historical development of the problem;
- (c) effectively gather, analyze, and evaluate data using replicable methods and criteria;
- (d) conduct precise and thorough research;
- (e) resolve pertinent issues in a systematic and defensible manner;
- (f) interpret the results, and present recommendations for action and further research consistent with the findings.

In summary, the thesis represents a tangible piece of work, which demonstrates a synthesis of learned theory, research methods, and practical applications. It is a professionally meaningful research work of interest to those in the communication field.

### **D.4 Choosing a Topic**

Students should choose a topic early in their program of study and begin to gather resources before enrolling in COM 7150/7250. Factors for successful completion of the work include choosing a topic that the student is truly interested in, choosing a topic that can be researched in the time available and from Hawai'i, and locating a sample piece of research that clearly illustrates methodology that can be applied to the work. It is essential that the topic relates to communication and is of value to future practice in the field.

Selection of a topic should be based on timeliness, access to pertinent information, impact of the subject on the field of communication, and the value of the research contribution to understanding communication theory or practice. A thesis can investigate a current issue or practice, explore the development and implications of an event, or relate historical perspective to an emerging problem.

It is imperative that the student be excited and enthusiastic about the topic. The student will spend many long hours reading about it and even longer researching and writing about it. Original research is frustrating and challenging, and if the topic is not chosen carefully, the task will be very difficult. The student should find an issue he or she is passionate about and that is considered intrinsically valuable and rewarding to work on.

The student should select a topic with which he or she is already familiar or has experience. Establish an overview before beginning active research. It will be extremely useful if preliminary excursions into various related issues have been made during the course of graduate study. If the student has written one or two research papers on various aspects of the topic in previous courses, he or she will begin writing the proposal knowledgeable about the field. Familiarity with scholars who are writing in that field will help formulate issues and develop the literature review.

Once the topic is chosen in collaboration with the COM 7150/7250 instructor, the student should seek active guidance. The closer the topic is to the expertise of the faculty readers, the more helpful they

will be. The selection of a topic is often negotiated between the student and adviser so it is suggested that the student develop a short list of possibilities rather than a single concept.

Read the abstracts of other theses in *Journalism Abstracts*, the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *The Journal of Communication*, and similar academic research publications found in the Department of Communication and in the HPU libraries. **Check the University of Michigan microfilms of unpublished dissertations and theses at <http://www.umi.com> and on other sites. It is often helpful to see what others are doing in the same field.**

Restrict the scope of the topic to a manageable size. A student is not expected to resolve a major controversy between two competing schools of thought in the discipline. There must be current research on the subject. The topic must be focused enough to research and write in the time allotted, and it must be original and demonstrate skill in research and argument.

## **D.5 Developing a Proposal**

The student must prepare a research prospectus for either the thesis in COM 7150. The purpose of the proposal is to help the student focus on a specific topic and effectively articulate the depth and scope of the paper. It also serves as a research plan for developing the topic and as a model for evaluating progress.

When the prospectus is complete, the COM 7150/7250 instructor will assist the thesis candidate in selecting two additional readers from the graduate faculty who will constitute the paper/thesis committee. The student may begin the process of completing either the thesis only upon approval of the prospectus.

The prospectus must be completed under the supervision of the COM 7150 instructor and must include the following components:

- Description and background of the topic
- Statement of purpose
- Importance or relevance of the project
- Relevance to communication theory
- Specific questions or hypotheses

The prospectus must be approved no later than the fourth week of COM 7150- Thesis I. Failure to gain approval of the prospectus by the fourth week may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw from the course and re-enroll during the next semester.

The first three chapters of the thesis must be completed by the end of COM 7150/7250 class--Thesis I. The chapters are introduction, literature review, and methodology.

Upon completion of COM 7150, the student must enroll in COM 7250, Thesis II, continuously until the work is completed and approved. In some instances, a student may find it necessary to enroll in more than the required six credit hours to complete the work on the thesis.

When the student completes the thesis, the Committee will convene for a formal public defense. The Committee may approve the work as it has been submitted, pass it with minor revisions, pass it with major revisions to be approved by the COM 7150/7250 instructor, pass it with major revisions to be

brought before the entire committee, or reject the work. A failure to approve the work may result in a recommendation that the student be terminated from the program or repeat specified coursework.

## **D.6 Formatting Requirements**

All papers should be prepared using the guidelines set forth in the current edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is available in the University bookstore.

Symbols, formulae, and special type will usually be available on the word processor or text editor being used. If special symbols or drawings are required consult with your instructor. No hand drawing or hand lettering should be used. The rules of punctuation and word division as given in a standard dictionary should be followed. If more than one punctuation or spelling is available, choose one and use it consistently.

The writing style should be depersonalized; that is, do not use “I”, “our”, “you” or the imperative form of verbs. Communicate in a professional tone, avoiding contractions, extremes, slang, hyperbole, or colloquialisms. Properly cite all statements from other sources and attribute opinions or conclusions from other authors. Never use the work of another student unless specifically authorized to do so by the instructor, and the student, in writing. All work on the paper must be done by the individual student, rather than collaboratively, and the student must be able to defend it with supporting documentation.

The left-hand margin is 1.5 inches and the right hand margin is 1.0 inch to allow for binding. The top margin is 1 inch; the bottom margin is 1 inch. However, the heading on the first page of each chapter should start between 2 and 3 inches from the top of the page.

## **D.7 Standard American English**

It is the responsibility of the student to see that the thesis is written in Standard American English and is correct in sentence structure, grammar, style, accuracy, neatness, proper form of references, tables, and other illustrative material. Papers with excessive misspellings or typographical errors may not be defended until the errors are corrected. It is strongly recommended that manuscripts be submitted for preliminary examination to a professional editor for scrutiny of style and bibliographic notation before requesting the defense to avoid delays. It is also recommended that a student not follow the format of another thesis/professional paper because errors may be compounded and the APA style may have changed.

## **D.8 Proofreader Requirement**

Each student is responsible for arranging to have the final edit of the thesis/professional paper proofed. All corrections must be completed before the degree will be conferred. Papers must be proofread so that typographical and grammatical errors are corrected, the paper meets the formatting requirements as set forth in these guidelines, and the style is consistent with *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. *Students must use a proofreader approved by the department. A list of approved proofreaders is available in the Department of Communication office.*

## **D.9 References**

The list of references used during the researching and writing of your thesis is a very important part of your document. The quality of your thesis paper will be improved if you keep accurate and complete records of all references you use from the very beginning of your research. Verifying references after the fact can be very time consuming and difficult. The list of references should be collected at the end of the thesis paper. APA style must be consistent throughout. Footnotes do not take the place of a bibliography and should be placed at the bottom of a page.

References acknowledge the contributions of other authors; they assess and verify assertions made in the text of the thesis; they allow readers to seek more information than provided in the thesis itself. They also verify your intellectual honesty, show that your work is current and complete, and allow someone else to replicate your work.

Your list of references must include all references you note in the text and all other references that were of use to you in your work. Do not include material you have not reviewed yourself or include references just to "pad" your list.

References are placed at the end of the text. The format of references must be consistent throughout the thesis. Within a reference list, or bibliography, entries are single spaced with an extra space between each entry. Use the format of a bibliography, not that of footnotes. References are listed alphabetically by author's last name. Complete information must be given in order to easily identify each item.

#### **D.10 Tables, Plates, Graphs, Illustrations**

Tables or other illustrative material may be single, 1.5, or double-spaced. These must conform to the same margins as text, and may be inserted into a page of text. Wide tables or figures may be placed landscape style with the top heading toward the binding edge of the page. Long tables may be continued from page to page. Every effort should be made to have figures fit on one page within the usual margins. All tables, figures, or illustrations should have accompanying unique numbers and titles, which are referenced in a listing in the introductory pages. In the body of the thesis, the number and title of a table goes above the table; the number and title of a figure appears below the figure. These may be set off in boldface type. It is not acceptable for table titles or figure captions to be on separate pages from the body of the table or figure. Figure and table captions should be single-spaced. Reduction can be used to improve fit on the page as long as legibility is preserved.

Original photographs, if required, may be printed in half-tone or color directly onto a page (of 100% rag paper), or they may be mounted. If mounted, they should be secured by the dry mount process. Photocopies may be used provided they are of high quality and clearly reproduce the subject matter. If color illustrations are used, color copies must be placed in all copies of the thesis. Please be aware that many photographs or photocopies will not reproduce well when microfilmed or photocopied.

#### **D.11 Thesis Structure**

Each of the major divisions of the thesis, such as the introduction or chapters, begins on a new page. This page carries the heading or chapter number in the center typed in capitals or boldface and placed not less than two nor more than three inches from the top of the page. Titles of chapters are capitalized or bolded and centered below the chapter number. A larger type size may be used for chapter headings and numbers if desired. The text begins three spaces below the last line of the chapter title. Chapters

may be divided by use of subheadings if desired. A thesis should typically include the following parts in this order:

1. Front flyleaf (blank)
2. Title page with copyright statement
3. Acknowledgment and/or dedication (optional)
4. Table of contents including chapter titles, section headings
5. List of tables
6. List of figures
7. Abstract
8. Body of thesis paper
9. References
10. Appendix(es) (optional)
11. Back flyleaf (blank)

### **D.12 Title, Table of Contents, Dedications, and Abstract**

The thesis is new research that may, in turn, be used by other scholars so the title should be meaningful and descriptive. Acronyms (e.g., PRSA, VNR) should be spelled out. The author's name should be given in full (no initials). Previously granted degrees may be listed under the author's name. The submission statement should read:

A thesis presented to the faculty of the  
Department of Communication  
at Hawaii Pacific University  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Communication

The title page should also have the month and year in which the degree is being granted.

The approval page is a separate sheet immediately following the title page (see Appendix D for a sample approval page). The thesis advisor (COM 7250 instructor) should be identified at the head of the list of approving faculty members. The position of each member should be indicated beneath his or her name. For example:

John Hart, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor  
Professor, Department of Communication

Serena Hashimoto, Ph.D., Reader  
Associate Professor, Department of Communication

If dedications and or acknowledgments are included they should be centered on a separate page immediately following the approval page.

The Table of Contents lists all parts of the thesis except the title page, copyright page, and approval page. It should include chapter numbers and titles as well as major subheadings. Empty space after a subheading should be filled with periods over to the page number. The heading "Table of Contents" is centered, and margins correspond to those of the main text (see Appendix E).

A List of Tables and List of Figures should follow the Table of Contents, each on a separate page. Each table or figure should have a unique number assigned to it.

The abstract consists of a brief statement of the problem, a short description of the methods used in gathering the data, and a summary of the results. It is written in the third person. The abstract should not be more than 350 words in length. The heading “ABSTRACT” appears centered in the form of a chapter heading. The title of the thesis should be centered below this with the author's full name centered below it. Previously granted degrees may be listed after the author's name. The degree being granted now and the school name are centered below the author's name. The supervising professor's name is centered below the school name.

Example:

**ABSTRACT**

A Study of Something Relevant to the Field of Advertising  
Charlene D. Whatshername, B.S., M.S.

M.A. Communication, Hawaii Pacific University, Department of Communication  
May 2013  
Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Hart

**D.13 Appendixes**

Appendixes, if included, should follow the margin requirements of the main body of the thesis. Pagination should continue that of the text and the list of references. Material in the appendixes may be single-spaced.

**D.14 Timeline for Completion of the Thesis**

Completion of the paper within the time allotted (23 or 26 weeks) requires use of an established timeline with dates for completion of specific goals. As goals are met, the timeline must be appropriately revised. Keep a copy of the timeline with the working materials for quick reference. Missing timeline milestones usually signals serious trouble. Students falling behind can expect to repeat coursework. Table 1 shows a recommended timeline for successful completion of the MA/COM thesis. Students who fail to complete thesis II by the end of the semester have the option of accepting an I (incomplete) grade and re-registering for a one-hour credit 7250 the following semester.

Table 1 Recommended timeline for completion of MA/COM thesis

MILESTONES	FALL/SPRING	SPRING/SUMMER	SUMMER/FALL
Proposal 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	Week 2	Week 2	Week 2
2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 4	Week 4	Week 4
Chapter 1 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	Week 7	Week 7	Week 7
2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 9	Week 9	Week 9

Chapter 2	1 <sup>st</sup> draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 10 Week 12	Week 10 Week 12	Week 8 Week 10
Chapter 3	1 <sup>st</sup> draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 11 Week 13	Week 11 Week 13	Week 12 Week 14
Chapter 4	1 <sup>st</sup> draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 17 Week 19	Week 16 Week 18	Week 16 Week 18
Paper	1 <sup>st</sup> draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	Week 22 Week 24	Week 20 Week 22	Week 20 Week 22

### **D.15 Production Facilities and University Resources**

Permission to use University production facilities as part of a thesis must be obtained prior to the submission of the proposal. The permission must be submitted in writing and contain a statement of the student's competence to use the facility and/or equipment, a statement granting the student appropriate access to the facility, a tentative schedule of hours adequate to complete the work to be done in the facility; and the signature of the person in charge of the facility to be used.

Other resources or expenses necessary for completion of the thesis paper are solely the responsibility of the student and are not provided by the University. Assurance that expenses can be met should be made before the student undertakes the work.

### **D.16 Publication and Copyright Protection**

The thesis is not usually published unless the student wishes to do so. However, one of the purposes of a thesis is to share the research with others in the field so publication by University Microfilms International (UMI) is required. A thesis is a publication and copyright protection for it exists from its initial creation. However, it is suggested that copyright privileges be protected by placing a copyright notice on the title page. Typical notices are:

Copyright 2012, John Whatshisname or  
©2012 Jane Whatshername

Since 1989, documents do not have to be registered or bear the copyright symbol in order to be protected but there are advantages to copyright registration. The registration form is part of the [Proquest](#) agreement available online. As of October 2011 copyright fee is \$55.00. Questions concerning copyright and ProQuest may be answered by calling 1-800-521-0600 ext. 77020 or via email at [disspub@proquest.com](mailto:disspub@proquest.com).

### **D.17 Thesis Committee Form**

Students enrolled in COM 7150 must submit a "Thesis Committee Form" (see Appendix F) to the 7150 instructor by the last day to drop classes in each semester.

### **D.18 Thesis Defense**

When the thesis is complete and the student's committee deems that it is ready for defense, the committee will meet with the student to examine the paper. The procedure is as follows:

1. The student completes an "Application for MA/COM Thesis Defense" form (see Appendix F). The form must be completed and turned in to the 7250 instructor. The student must have a GPA of 3.0 or better at the time of filing. Three copies of the final paper must be submitted with the form to the committee members.
2. The COM 7250 instructor will schedule a one-and-half hour appointment for the defense of a thesis no sooner than 10 days following the defense application and no later than the last day of class. The COM 7250 instructor will email the defense copy to the entire communication faculty members so that others who are not on the student's committee will also have enough time to review the thesis before the defense. The Department of Communication will assist in arranging an appropriate facility, and in notifying all faculty members and other graduate students of the date, time, and site of the defense.
3. The student is responsible for arranging presentation materials, handouts, or equipment.
4. The student will be given ten minutes to present. This initial presentation is open to the public. The student will present an overview of the work describing the question, the methodology, the research, findings, and recommendations or conclusion.
5. After the initial presentation, other students must leave and the faculty members may question the student regarding any aspect of the work.
6. When the faculty members feel that the questioning has concluded, the defending student is asked to leave the room.
7. The committee members will then discuss the merits of the work and make suggestions for improvement, revision, or modification. The committee members will then vote on whether the work is acceptable. There are five possible outcomes: Pass, pass with minor revision, pass with major revision, pass with major revision and a second defense, or fail. If failed, the defense may be retaken once. Failure to pass the defense on the second try will result in recommendations that the student retake specific coursework or be terminated from the program.
8. The COM 7250/7250 instructor will discuss the revisions with the student, and the student must track the revisions and return the paper/thesis to the whole committee.
9. The paper/thesis is only to be professionally proofed after the revisions have been accepted.

#### **D.19 Required Copies and Costs**

After revision and editing, all degree candidates are required to submit copies of the final thesis as a .pdf file to the COM 7250 instructor serving as adviser and to the additional reader(s). One **electronic copy** will be sent to ProQuest/UMI. Information is available from [ProQuest](#). You are strongly advised to copyright your work, which costs \$55 and can be done for you by ProQuest.