Overview
At this point the courses you've taken for the Minor in Writing have given you a range of experiences and skills in writing, both within and outside your major; and the Gateway has prepared you to be (among other things) a reflective writer, especially attuned to the ways that the writing situation and medium affects the writing. The Capstone course builds on your experiences so far in three main ways: first, by instructing you in how to synthesize reflections on your writing development into a cohesive, thesis-driven essay, so you are better prepared to understand and communicate your writing development; second, by providing instruction and guidance on how to present this development via a portfolio designed for outside audiences; and third by providing individualized instruction to help you develop an ambitious writing project that demonstrates your capacity as a rhetorically effective writer.

Course Goals
These broader goals imply the following specific goals:
1. To find connections, through reflection, between the various modes and genres in which you have written
2. To synthesize a narrative of your writing development for a broad readership via an electronic portfolio
3. To identify specific audiences via the capstone project, and to identify specific scholarly or creative conversations in which this writing takes part
4. To practice revision and research strategies that deepen and further writing aims while making the writing increasingly relevant to its audience(s)
5. To refine voice and style
6. To consolidate academic relationships with faculty as you identify topics for projects and avenues of research

How I Hope to Facilitate Learning and Writing Development
While you'll be reflecting on work from previous courses, I envision this semester as an opportunity for you to develop further in your writing. With that in mind:
1. Early on I'll ask you to reflect on your writing to date and discuss your goals for your development this semester. This will give me a way to understand how best to teach you, and we'll make a plan for your learning and writing development together.
2. Handouts, instruction, and writing/research activities will help you consolidate and add to your repertoire of writing practices. Rather than using these just to perfect the documents you create this semester, I encourage you to acquire them as concepts
and skills you can carry with you into future writing and thinking.

3. While there are common prompts for each assignment, what you produce will be highly individual. To facilitate individualized learning I’ll provide comments and suggestions on your drafts at key points (as well as in face-to-face meetings), keeping in mind the plan for your development.

4. In order to make significant progress, it will be important for you to address the key features of each assignment and to work through difficulties via drafting and revision. This is particularly relevant to the Capstone Project. It’s important to spend time early to make sure the project is both manageable and rich—projects that are unfocused at the beginning or that get oversimplified in the process can fall short, and it’s hard to grow as a writer from these.

5. In addition to my comments, you’ll share your work and review that of your peers; you’ll also be expected meet twice with a faculty mentor in the subject area of your project.

6. There will be ample opportunities for reflective writing this semester, to explore and identify areas of inquiry and growth. One regular occasion for reflective writing this semester is in response to my comments, so I can know what you’re learning from them and how I might help you further.

**Course Requirements**

- The Writer’s Evolution Essay (including an annotated bibliography and drafts)
- The Capstone Portfolio
- The Capstone Project (including a proposal, a production plan, and drafts)
- Peer reviews and participation
- Research, exploratory, and draft development writing
- Attendance in class and at 2 individual meetings.
- Contacting, and meeting twice with, your mentor.

The Capstone Portfolio, which is intended as a composition in itself, will house your Capstone Project, selected artifacts, and Writer’s Evolution essay focused on a theme (or themes) of your writing development. Details of these requirements are included on the Assignment Prompts page.

**Texts**

Readings are available on ctools and linkable through the schedule as pdfs or as external weblinks. There are no texts to purchase. There are relatively few shared readings because you will be expected to read a substantial amount for your own research. You’ll will have the opportunity to demonstrate and share this reading via your production plan, reading log, précis, and informal presentations.

**Writing Assessment**

- Writer's Evolution Essay 17%
- Capstone Portfolio (elements other than Essay and Project) 18%
- Capstone Project 35%
- Peer Reviews, Blogging, and Participation 15%
- Research, exploratory, and draft development writing 15%
I will hold your writing to a high standard this semester, because:
- Research shows that writing ability is not fixed but grows with effort
- I want everyone to excel in their writing in this class and beyond
- My honest assessment and critical feedback reflects my confidence in your ability to achieve a high standard.

Based on what I value and what I know about the aspects of writing valued in the University and nationally, I created the following assessment rubric to score your writing. I’ve broken down the characteristics of each level to help you connect your overall performance to specifics and see what you need to work on.

*Writing Assessment Paul 2014 Rubric*

While this rubric is all encompassing, to provide common ground for the class, you will have the chance to add to a refine these criteria specific to your project via your production plan.

*The letter in the grade reflects the overall picture.* Plus and minus grades should be viewed in relation to this overall picture. For example, a “B” means that the writing overall shows proficiency. A plus or minus will communicate a little bit more. (e.g., “B-” means that this proficiency is not consistently sustained; B+ means that in addition to sustaining proficiency, there may be flourishes of sophistication).

**Policies**

**Accommodations**
In accordance with University of Michigan policy, I make accommodations for students with learning disabilities and protect the confidentiality of students’ individual learning needs. I also encourage you to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please email me by the second week of the term if you would like to show me your letter from SSD describing approved accommodations. We can also set up an appointment to discuss this confidentially.

**Religious Observances**
If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me so we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but, in accordance with U-M policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

**Students Experiencing Financial Need**
If financial need makes it difficult for you to purchase books, a laptop computer, or other classroom materials, the Gayle Fund (established in honor of Gayle Morris Sweetland) can help you get the necessary materials. You can talk to me (confidentially) about how to apply, or you can get an application form from the receptionist in the Sweetland office at 1310 North Quad.

**Attendance**
Attending class is very important to making the most out of this class and to building a community of individual writers. Really, we miss you when your not here. If you can’t attend
class for some reason, I also appreciate an email before or after. This doesn’t necessarily excuse an absence, but helps to maintain our connection. Since grades are incentives to keep us on track, my attendance policy is as follows:

- I will excuse your absence for religious observances, or if you have signed documentation from a health professional, University team or program, or documentation of a family emergency.
- You may miss one unexcused class sessions without penalty.
- You may miss one additional excused class session without penalty (two total).
- Each absence over two will lower your daily engagement grade by one letter (e.g., A becomes B, etc, for each absence) and each unexcused absence over five will lower your final grade by one-third (e.g., B becomes B-, etc, for each absence).
- Six absences or more will result in failure of the course.
- If you miss class, please ask another student to share his/her notes and tell you about what you missed.
- I will make every effort to be in contact with you, but because I’m often busy preparing for or commenting for class it is your responsibility to stay on track.

Participation

Your preparation and participation are essential to your individual success and our success as a class. A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities, asking questions of others and following up on their contributions to the class. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not acceptable.

Guidelines for Class Participation

- Respect others’ rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. Challenge or criticize the idea, not the person.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said. Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker’s comments.
- Be courteous. Don’t interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit; if you are hesitant to speak, look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.
- If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up and don’t leave it for someone else to have to respond to.

Electronic Devices

These may be used for the purposes of writing and research. This means you may take notes on a laptop or tablet. However, I ask that you not use them for entertainment or social communication during class time. For example, if someone is communicating with someone
outside the class during class, it can distract you, me, and others. If technology becomes a
distraction, I'll ask that you leave it turned off and packed away. If you need to be in class
but anticipate being contacted because, for example, someone close to you is undergoing
surgery, please let me know before class begins.

**Submitting Assignments**
Submit a hard copy of all drafts of the major essay assignments for workshop. All other
work should be submitted as a Word file in your dropbox on ctools. If something happens
so that you can't make a deadline, please let me know the circumstances ahead of time.
Points for late work will be reduced by 10% for each day is late.

**Manuscript Format**
For workshop essays should be typed, stapled and page-numbered if more than one page.
Smaller assignments should be single-spaced. No need to include cover pages. Use standard
type, 12-point font, with 1” margins on all sides. Please put your name, and email address,
and a title on the first page of each work.

**Plagiarism and Cheating**
Plagiarism, an academic crime, is the misrepresentation of other people’s words or ideas as
your own. Whenever you borrow an idea, paraphrase a writer, or quote directly, you must
signal in your essay that you have done so. You may either cite the source within the text—
“DuBois, famously, explores the idea of the ‘veil’”—or within parentheses: “The term ‘the
veil’ by this point has acquired much meaning (DuBois 2).” In each case, you should provide
a list of works cited at the end of the essay.
Cheating, also an academic crime, occurs when students either hand in work done by
someone else or work they have done for other classes.

Please don’t be tempted to plagiarize or cheat. If you’re caught, you will get a zero for the
assignment and will fail the course, and the Dean may impose additional sanctions. Let’s
hear your voice, your words—that’s what matters. Please refer also to this link on the
English Department web site.
SCHEDULE
I’ve divided the schedule roughly into four “months” which track more or less with the calendar months. The description for each month will give you a rough sense of what you’ll do and what you should accomplish by the end of that month.
The bolded headings for each date announce the class focus and stand as umbrellas so you can contextualize the specific skills, techniques, and concepts you’ll be learning. Because you’ll be working in a variety of genres and will have a variety of needs, I’ve chosen these areas of focus to help you learn the major stages in producing a substantial manuscript. At all points, you should be building connections to your own project and work with me to receive individual instruction via scheduled meetings, written comments, your responses to my comments, and office hours—I appreciate it when you help me to help you!
Please note that the major due dates are fixed, so we can stay on track (essential for graduation!). Please also note that smaller changes of topic and class focus may be necessary to address your needs and our pacing as a class.

MONTH ONE: In these four weeks, for your project you’ll decide the topic and frame it, explore its dimensions, practice finding a form, and decide on research methods; along the way you’ll formalize this in a proposal and production plan; you’ll also create an annotated bibliography from your prior writing artifacts and from this will draft an evidence-based essay of your writing development.

Thursday, January 8: Introducing Ourselves
Structure of the course, shape of classes, what you can expect, and an invitation to excel
Making Another Writer’s Decisions
Project proposal and annotated bibliography assigned
Request for support from faculty mentor (letter template, via email)

Tuesday, January 13: Framing a Substantial Project
Project models, dissection and discussion, toward framing a project and establishing relevance
Reading before class: Welcome to Pine Point, Kira Curtis Project; sample annotated bibliography (toward the Evolution Essay)
Writing to bring in: Paragraph on the exploration of subject area using the Library Research Guides; Individual Learning Goals Reflection
Writing in Class: Practice framing projects and establishing relevance.

Thursday, January 15: Investigating Subject Area via Research
Research as a key component of depth, richness, and relevance
Reading: Sal Aiello, Deliver Us from Evil and The Mini 300, 000
Writing to bring in: brief written proposal pitches due for group peer-review
Reading/Writing in class: sample précis and précis practice for individual research

Tuesday, January 20: Individual Meetings—First Attempt at Framing the Proposal
One-on-one meetings on Project proposals
Writing to bring in: First Précis relevant to project; written draft of Proposal.

Thursday, January 22: Evolution Essay—from Gathering to Focusing
Small group workshop peer review of annotated bibliographies; The Writer’s Evolution Essay assignment; how to develop reflective writing into an evidence-based essay.
Reading: **TWO EVOLUTION ESSAYS FOR DISCUSSION**; independent reading towards project.
Writing to bring in: Annotated bibliography due
Writing in class: Developing inferences and claims towards a thesis “Claim plus Reasons”
Evolution Essay Assigned

**Tuesday, January 27: Peer Review with a View to Opening up the Project further**
Proposal Workshops/Discussion; how to open up the topic; deepening and refining proposal ideas
Reading: independent reading towards project
Writing to bring in: Project proposal due
Writing in class: Brainstorming proposals further for questions, organization, and research methodology: “3 Perspectives” and “Cubing”
Production Plan assigned.

**Thursday, January 29: Categorizing and Exploration toward Finding Form**
Proposals; structuring and dividing up the project; structures and forms, types of evidence, and methods of research.
Reading: **The Last Supper, by Jon Mooallem** Independent reading towards project
Writing to bring in: Second Précis due
Writing in class: Writing and drawing strategies to group and shape ideas.

**Tuesday, February 3: Matching Research Methods to Question, Genre, and Expectations**
Interviewing and other field research
Writing to bring in: Project Production Plan due; developmental essay intro/thesis due
Writing in class: Framing the right questions to ask interview subjects.

**Thursday, February 5: Peer Review; Evolution Essay—Focus, Argument, and Narrative**
Informal peer group workshops of essays
Reading: Independent reading towards project; sample essays for mock full-group workshop; workshop guidelines
Writing to bring in: Evolution Essay draft

**MONTH TWO: In the next four weeks, you’ll continue to gather research and writing towards your project, revise your Evolution Essay, and begin the portfolio.**

**Tuesday, February 10: Deepening Project and Gathering Material while Maintaining Focus**
Small group workshops; early mid-semester reflection; framing writing challenges
Reading: Independent reading towards project
Writing to bring in: Writing on project due, plus a list of questions for your peer group
Writing in class: writing toward further gaps and questions.
Thursday, February 12: Peer Review; Evolution Essay—Expanding Analysis, Making Points Consequential
Reading: Independent reading on project plus workshop essay(s)  
Writing: Third précis (optional)  
Writing in Class: “Beginning with your last line”; “Chains of Reasoning”

Tuesday, February 17: Evolution Essay—Growing the Portfolio from the Essay  
Refining language for depth and precision; reflecting on Gateway Portfolios with a view to looking forward  
Reading: Independent reading on project  
Writing in Class: Using the evolution essay to suggest rhetorical strategies for the portfolio; Portfolio Planning Document

Thursday, February 19: What Makes an Effective Portfolio?  
Design, navigation, usability, and the role of reflection  
Reading: From *Don’t Make Me Think*; from *White Space Is Not Your Enemy; Picture This*, by Molly Bang

Tuesday, February 24: Individual Meetings  
Evolution Essay graded draft due  
One-on-one instructor meetings, check in on the portfolio/project/essay

Thursday, February 26: Creating Direction and Focus in the Portfolio  
Small group workshops, sharing technical woes and wealth, writing an action list, and a check in on the synthesis of Portfolio, Essay, and Project.  
Reading: Independent reading towards project.  
Writing to bring in: Rough Portfolio Draft Due

Tuesday, March 3, Spring break, no class  
Thursday, March 5, Spring break, no class

MONTH THREE: This month, you’ll shape your project into a draft, play around with structure, assess areas for further research and writing, develop the project’s conclusions, its effect, and sense of consequence. You’ll also complete a most of the portfolio.

Tuesday, March 10: Providing Texture and Interest; Adding Other Voices  
Workshop of ______ and _______.  
Reading: Independent reading and workshop drafts.  
Refresher on the 9 methods of development; thematic/segmented structure; incorporating research  
Reading: Selections from *Writing True* on the segmented essay and incorporating other voices  
Writing: None to bring to class, making progress on Project.  
Writing in class: Invisible thesis exercise

Thursday, March 12: Uses of Narrative in the Project  
Workshop of ______ and _______.
Reading: Independent reading and workshop drafts.
Scene, summary, and reflection; considerations of voice; purposeful description
Reading: Selection from Writing True on Scene, Summary, and Reflections
Writing: None due in class, making progress on Project.
Writing in class: manipulating time exercise; Gardner’s Barn exercise

**Tuesday, March 17: Reassessing the Project; Cutting, Growing, Reorganizing**
Workshop of ______ and _______.
Reading: Independent reading and workshop drafts.
Writing to bring in: Project draft due; peer review critiques.
Writing in class: "Reverse outlining"; "Reveal the headings" exercise

**Thursday, March 19: Refining Depth and Focus**
Small group workshops of Project drafts.
Reading due: Peers' drafts.
Writing due: Peer review critiques.
Writing in class: refining/redefining focus (while monitoring for oversimplification)

**Tuesday, March 24: Portfolio Trial Run**
In class, informal small group workshop of portfolios
Reading: Portfolio rubric, sample portfolios
Writing due: Complete portfolio due, including essay, elements, design, all but remainder of project and polishing.
Writing in class: What would you ask the Evaluation Committee about your own work?
Using the Evaluation Rubric—how would you craft a response?

**Thursday, March 26: Peer Review; Attending to Precision in Language**
Workshop of ______ and _______.
Reading: Sample paragraphs, workshop drafts.
Writing due: Peer critiques
Writing in class: "Fixing the bad relationship fallacy"

**Tuesday, March 31: Peer Review; Developing Endings, Conclusiveness, and Consequence**
Workshop of ______ and _______.
Reading: Sample endings, workshop drafts.
Writing due: Peer critiques
Writing in class: "Imaginary grant writing (the 'so-what' scores the dollars)"

**MONTH FOUR: Refining the language of the project and portfolio; trying to view the work with the eyes of the audience; polishing and attending to streamlining the project and portfolio; a turn towards reflection and self-presentation as a Sweetland Minor in Writing.**

**Thursday, April 2: Refining Paragraphs and Sentences**
Workshop of ______ and _______.
Reading: Workshop drafts; "On Writing Well," by William Zinsser (esp, if you haven't read it before)
Writing due: Peer critiques

**Tuesday, April 7: A Dozen or So Ways to Be Nitpicky When Polishing**
Workshop of ______ and ________.
Reading: Workshop peer drafts
Writing: Peer critiques (I suggest doing these early so they don't get short changed)
Project draft 2 due

**Thursday, April 9: Project Small Group Workshop**
Reading: Peer drafts
Writing due: Peer critiques

**Monday, April 13: Portfolio Complete and Turned in for Evaluation, 11.59 p.m.**

**Tuesday, April 14: Looking Forward—Packaging Yourself and the Minor**
Writing application materials and packaging the Minor in:
an elevator speech
job, grad school, or fellowship applications, grant proposals.
Translating your portfolio for other documents (a return to repurposing/remediation)
A crash course in application materials.

**Thursday, April 16: Peer Review of Professional Documents**
Informal peer review of application materials and professional documents.

**Tuesday, April 21: Reflections, Going Forward, Looking Back**
Putting the semester and the Minor in perspective.