

Senior Capstone Project
TDF 492
Description and Proposal Format

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.—Peter Brook

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1. Capstone Overview

All senior Theatre Majors must plan and carry out an independent study project related to a particular area of interest within theatre. Capstone projects should build on the individual student's prior knowledge acquired through course work and/or significant experiential learning. They are intended to be carefully planned artistic and/or scholarly projects that synthesize past knowledge and future artistic/professional interests. Capstone projects will ideally serve as a first step on your artistic path post-graduation.

2. Capstone Project Ideas

Below are some capstone project ideas. Students are not limited to this list; it is intended to spark interest and illustrate the varied forms a capstone project may take.

- Dramaturgy Packets for a TDF mainstage production or a paper production
- Assistant Design for a TDF mainstage production under the guidance of a full-time TDF faculty member
- Performance-based capstones such as preparing and performing monologues and/or songs from one's audition book

- Directing a one-act play or scenes from a full-length play with the creation of a director's book (as if it were to be fully produced)
- Directing a Playmakers Independent Student Production to be presented by TDF as part of the annual production season. (See Playmakers Independent Guidelines for more details)
- Design-based capstones that focus on a paper production
- Designing one or more elements of a Playmakers Independent Student Production to be presented by TDF as part of the annual production season. (See Playmakers Independent Guidelines for more details)
- Writing an original play, including a staged reading of the work
- Research-based capstones, such as (but not limited to) writing a research paper on the production history of a particular play, a biography of a playwright, the evolution of various stage technologies over time, or a literature review of articles published on a theatrical discipline

3. *General Guidelines*

Grading Breakdown

Capstone project & public presentation 60%

Reflection Paper 40%

Total grade 100%

Capstone Guidelines

A detailed capstone proposal must be submitted to the faculty for review. (See #10 Capstone Proposal Form below)

All Theatre majors are required to attend the senior capstones of their classmates.

Students are required to have a capstone advisor for their project who is a member of the ordinary faculty of the Department of Theatre, Dance and Film (not an adjunct or visiting professor).

Capstone projects are the culmination of your education at TDF and ideally serve as a stepping stone in your academic and professional development. When planning a capstone, consider the following questions:

-What lessons and skills have you learned that impacted you the most?

-What do you hope to learn through your work on your capstone?

-What questions/problems do you want to explore?

Students in the Musical Theatre Track are expected to have a musical component to their capstone.

Stage Management or Acting in a Mainstage production cannot be used as a capstone project.

4. For Performance-based Capstones

Capstones that would require licensing from a play publisher are not permitted unless it is a Playmakers Studio Production. *Due to budget and resource limitations, licensed musicals will not be accepted as capstone projects or Playmakers Independent Student Productions.

Performance-based capstones may not exceed 60 minutes and must run without an intermission.

A performance project, whether devised or comprised of published material, should be bound by a specific theme or idea. The published material, if taken out of context of the play or musical, may only be selections, and cannot include more than two selections from the same published play or musical.

Students may not direct a Playmakers production unless they have successfully completed the Principles of Directing course (TDF 309).

Proposals that include a student director will only be approved if the student director has successfully completed TDF 309 Principles of Directing.

Budget

For capstone projects that include music, TDF has a standing agreement with Mike Kregler to serve as accompanist for **one** dress rehearsal and **one** performance. If you provide the music for him early enough, he is sometimes able to create rehearsal tracks for use during rehearsals.

There is no budget to purchase items or materials for capstone projects.

Scene Shop Furniture Borrowing

Capstone students have access to the rehearsal furniture in the Bowab Theatre. For specialty items, capstone students may request up to five pieces of furniture in our

downstairs storage, as long as they are not slated for use in a mainstage production in the TDF season. Students must make an appointment with the Technical Director to discuss use of these items. Borrowed furniture items may not be altered.

We will have limited storage in the Bowab due to its function as a classroom so please reach out to the Managing Director if you hope to bring pieces to the Bowab in order to discuss storage for rehearsals and performance. **After each rehearsal, all set pieces must be cleared for classroom use the next day.**

Costume Borrowing

For specialty pieces, capstone students have access to the costumes in our downstairs storage. Students may request up to five costume pieces, as long as they are not slated for use in a mainstage production in the TDF season. Students must make an appointment with the Costume Shop Manager to discuss use of these items. Due to the nature of many of the costume pieces, a deposit may be requested before items are borrowed. Deposits will be returned promptly upon the return of the item in its original condition. Borrowed items may not be altered.

Props Borrowing

For specialty props, capstone students may request up to five props from our downstairs storage, as long as they are not slated for use in a mainstage production in the TDF season. Students must make an appointment with the Technical Director to discuss use of these items. Borrowed props items may not be altered.

Sound/Projection

If needed, capstone students will be given access to Qlab. Performance-based capstone projects will not have access to the projector.

Lighting

If needed, capstone students will have access to 10 preset “looks” in the Bowab through Qlab. These preset designs may not be altered.

Student Crew & Assistants

Because capstone projects should focus on process over product, performance-based capstone projects may have one crew member who can run Qlab. If a student is stage managing or assistant stage managing a mainstage production in an overlapping

production slot, please be mindful of their workload and seek other students to serve as crew.

Production Office Assistance

TDF will provide a template for posters and programs through Canva which students can then personalize with the details of their project. All programs and posters should be 8.5x11 that can be printed on the printer located in the main office. For ease of design and printing, programs should not include folds.

5. For Tech/Design-based Capstones

Budget

There is no budget to purchase items or materials for capstone projects.

Scene Shop Access

Depending on the nature of the capstone project, tech/design capstone students may request use of tools and machines in the scene shop. To request access, the student must schedule an appointment with their advisor, the Managing Director, and the Technical Director to discuss access and material needs. Because requests, needs, and experience will vary widely, requests for access will be granted or declined on a case-by-case basis.

Costume Shop Access

Depending on the nature of the capstone project, tech/design capstone students may request use of machines in the costume shop. To request access, the student must schedule an appointment with their advisor, the Managing Director, and the Costume Shop Manager to discuss access and material needs. Because requests, needs, and experience will vary widely, requests for access will be granted or declined on a case-by-case basis.

Props Borrowing

Tech/design capstone students may request access to props from our downstairs storage, as long as they are not slated for use in a mainstage production in the TDF season. Students must make an appointment with the Technical Director to discuss use of these items. Borrowed props items may not be altered unless express permission is granted by the Technical Director and Managing Director.

Sound/Projection

Tech/design capstone students will be given access to Qlab. Depending on the nature of the project, capstone students may request use of the projector. An appointment must be made with the Technical Director to discuss use of the projector.

Lighting

Tech/design capstone students will have access to 10 preset “looks” in the Bowab through Qlab. These preset designs may not be altered without express permission from the Technical Director and Managing Director.

Student Crew & Assistants

Because tech/design-based capstones may vary in scope and needs, if student crew members are needed, this should be discussed with the Managing Director and capstone advisor to determine an appropriate crew size.

If a student is stage managing or assistant stage managing a mainstage production in an overlapping production slot, please be mindful of their workload and seek other students to serve as crew.

Production Office Assistance

If there is a public display of the design work, TDF will provide a template for posters and programs through Canva which students can then personalize with the details of their project. All programs and posters should be 8.5x11 that can be printed on the printer located in the main office. For ease of design and printing, programs should not include folds.

6. For Original Work Capstones

Capstones that focus on an original work, such as writing a play, the presentation of the work should be a staged reading followed by a Q&A session with the actors and audience to discuss feedback. The reading and Q&A will not last more than 60 minutes.

Budget

For capstone projects that include music, TDF has a standing agreement with Mike Kregler to serve as accompanist for **one** dress rehearsal and **one** performance. If you provide the music for him early enough, he is sometimes able to create rehearsal tracks for use during rehearsals.

There is no budget to purchase items or materials for capstone projects.

Scene Shop Furniture Borrowing

In a staged reading, furniture is typically limited to chairs and music stands, which will be provided by TDF.

Costume Borrowing

Costumes are uncommon, though not unheard of, in staged readings. For specialty pieces, capstone students have access to the costumes in our downstairs storage. Students may request up to five costume pieces, as long as they are not slated for use in a mainstage production in the TDF season. Students must make an appointment with the Costume Shop Manager to discuss use of these items. Due to the nature of many of the costume pieces, a deposit may be requested before items are borrowed. Deposits will be returned promptly upon the return of the item in its original condition. Borrowed items may not be altered.

Props Borrowing

Props are not commonly used in staged readings as actors have their scripts in hand.

Sound/Projection

If needed, capstone students will be given access to Qlab. Capstone students will not have access to the projector.

Lighting

If needed, capstone students will have access to 10 preset “looks” in the Bowab through Qlab. These preset designs may not be altered.

Student Crew & Assistants

Because capstone projects should focus on process over product, capstone projects may have one crew member who can run Qlab. If a student is stage managing or assistant stage managing a mainstage production in an overlapping production slot, please be mindful of their workload and seek other students to serve as crew.

Production Office Assistance

If the capstone includes a public reading of the original work, TDF will provide a template for posters and programs through Canva which students can then personalize with the details of their project. All programs and posters should be 8.5x11 that can be printed on the printer located in the main office. For ease of design and printing, programs should not include folds.

7. For Literature & Research-based Capstones

Budget

If specific research materials are needed (such as print books, eBooks, or other digital research resources), there are a few ways they can be acquired. If materials are chosen before the beginning of the student's capstone class enrollment, they can be added by their advisor as required class materials. This will make them available through the PC Bookstore at no charge to the student. If research materials need to be purchased during the semester, the student and their advisor can meet with the chair to discuss available funds. The librarians at the Phillips Memorial Library on campus are also available for research support.

Projection

If needed, capstone students may request access to the projector for use during the presentation of their work.

Technical Needs

It is generally assumed that literature and research-based capstone projects will have few, if any, technical needs. If the student feels that furniture, costumes, props, sound, or lighting are necessary to the presentation of their work, they may follow the guidelines listed above (See Performance-based capstone guidelines and Tech/design-based capstone guidelines) to request use of those resources.

Production Office Assistance

TDF will provide a template for posters and programs if the capstone includes a public presentation of the student's research. All programs and posters should be 8.5x11 that can be printed on the printer located in the main office. For ease of design and printing, programs should not include folds.

8. Capstone Reflection Paper

Each capstone student will write a paper reflecting on their capstone experience. The paper should be five pages in length. While the reflection paper will be shared with the full TDF faculty as part of the end-of-the-year portfolio, students will work with their capstone advisor to determine an appropriate due date that allows the advisor time to grade the reflection paper before final grades are due. Address the following questions:

- ✓ What challenges did you face, and how did they change your process, goals, etc?
- ✓ Looking back at your learning objectives (please include them here), how would you rate your progress towards each objective?
- ✓ If you could go back and do any part of the process differently, what would you change and why?
- ✓ What else would you like to share with TDF faculty about your capstone experience?

9. Faculty Review of and Response to Capstone Proposals

Faculty Review and Response to Capstone projects

1. The TDF faculty will review all capstone project proposals.
2. A proposal must receive written approval by the TDF faculty in order to be authorized as a capstone experience.
3. The student project leader or director will be informed of the status of the proposal in a timely manner once a determination has been made by members of the TDF faculty.
4. Approved projects will be:
 - a. Assigned a faculty advisor. Students may request a specific advisor, however, in order to ensure that students receive adequate one-on-one work time with their advisor, TDF may not be able to pair a student with their requested advisor.
 - b. Provided with specific information concerning the use of rehearsal and performance facilities for the project, and the final performance date once the production season calendar has been finalized.

10. Capstone Proposal Form

For all those proposing to direct a Playmakers Rep student production, please use the application form that has been provided to all theatre majors. It is available online on the [TDF website](#).

All other students should respond to the ten points listed below with detailed answers and submit your proposal to the Chair of the Department of Theatre, Dance & Film as a Microsoft Word document.

1. Project Title:
2. Project type (Performance, research, other, etc):
3. Semester in which you would request the project to be completed: fall or spring?
4. Brief description of project:
5. Learning objectives:
6. General timeline (How long you expect to work on the project):
7. Resources required (facilities, funding, number of people etc.):
8. What do you hope to learn from this project, and why does it excite you?
9. How will this project build upon and synthesize knowledge and skills you have already acquired within the major?
10. How will you know if you have succeeded at this project?

Playmakers Independent Student Production Guidelines

(See the [Playmakers proposal form](#) on the Student Resources page for more details)

- a. Only small cast plays with manageable production values will be given consideration for independent student production.
- b. Several students may participate in the same project. For example, a fully realized, student-directed and designed production in the Bowab Studio Theatre might serve as the capstone experience for two or more students. However, each student must write up a separate proposal that reflects his or her specific learning

activities and objectives within the production and receive individual approval by the TDF faculty.

c. Final decisions regarding Independent Student Productions will need to wait until after the main stage season selection process is completed.