Minnesota State University, Mankato

Curriculum Proposal

Please type or select the requested information. Print completed forms, add appropriate paper attachments, and route through MSU’s curricular process for recommendations and decisions.

(Check all that apply):  
- Proposal # 152
- Effective Date of Change: 06-06
- Academic Year: 05-06

College: Arts and Humanities  

Undergraduate  

Department: N/A  

Graduate

Program: OPEN STUDIES  

CIP # (For Office Use Only)

Type of Change: COURSE PROPOSALS

Proposed: New Course

Title Current:  

Title Proposed: Capstone Experience

24-Char. Abbrev: Capstone Experience

Course Designator Number of Credits

OPEN 496 3 (three)

(if applicable)

Include a course or program description for the Bulletin (30-40 words maximum for courses, 100 for programs):

Project synthesizing student's three academic areas of concentration, to be arranged in consultation with program director and academic advisors after minimum nine credits earned in each academic area. Project will culminate in presentation to director and advisors.

Rationale or Justification for change:

Required Capstone Project currently is done under OPEN 499 Individual Study. The project does not fit the usual description of an individual study. The proposed course name/number/grading method will better reflect the nature of the work the student is expected to do.

***For General Education or Cultural Diversity Courses Only***

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- For Writing Intensive Courses, attach a description of the kind and quantity of writing.
- For Upper Division Courses, include a description of the respects in which it is broad and general rather than narrow and specific, and so suitable as GE.

Attach paper copies of the following:

a. Syllabus or course outline.

b. Course's student learning outcomes associated with each GE competency or CD designation.

c. List of strategies to be used to assess students' achievement of each GE competency or CD designation.

***For New Courses***

(Check all that apply):

- Instructional Type: Special Problems
- Course is an elective.
- Course is required for program: YES
- Pre- or Co-requisites: Nine credits in each chosen area of concentration.
- Other courses are being changed or eliminated. (Explain.) OPEN 499 Individual study. New course will replace it. See above.

Course will be offered:

- Fall Semester
- Spring Semester
- Summer Session

- Course content or title is similar to courses in other departments. (Attach copy of letter of agreement with other program(s) contacted. Indicate the nature of the discussions and/or resolution of differences or potential conflicts.)

Attach paper copies of the following:

a. Syllabus or course outline.

b. Course's student learning outcomes.

c. A list of resources required to offer and support this course.

d. A description of how teaching this course will affect department staffing.

e. If 400/500 level course, an explanation of added expectations of graduate students.

See attached.
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Curriculum Proposal

***For Program Proposals***

Attach paper copies of the following:

a. Student learning outcomes for the program.

b. Minutes from department and college curriculum meetings in which action was taken on this proposal.

c. Program Assessment Plan. Forms are available on the Academic Affairs Web site:  
http://www.mnsu.edu/academic/words/PRASampSLOAssessPlan.doc

d. List of program requirements for New programs, or a list of Current and Proposed program requirements for Redesigned programs.

e. A list of resources required to offer and support this program.

f. A description of how offering this program will affect department staffing.

g. A list of additional library holdings required for this program.

Please include rationale for any proposed changes in number of program credits:

***For Programs Requiring MnSCU Approval***

If any of the following changes are proposed, please fill out and attach MnSCU Program Approval Forms, which are available on the Academic Affairs Web site:  
http://www.mnsu.edu/academic/html/currformsprocesses.htm

1. Creation of an entirely new program.

2. Redesign of existing programs, which takes any of the following forms:
   
a. Addition or deletion of a program option. Options are part of program design in which 30-50% of the courses are required as part of a common core for all students, and which offers curriculum alternatives greater than 30% of the total number of credits in the major. Options are appropriate to baccalaureate or masters programs.

b. Addition or deletion of a program emphasis. Emphases are part of program design in which more than 50% of the courses are required as part of a common core for all students, and which offers curriculum alternatives with a minimum of nine credits. Emphases are appropriate to associate and baccalaureate programs.

c. Change in program name.

d. Change in program CIP #.

e. Change in TOTAL program credits.

f. Change in degree award. For example, changing a B.A. to B.S.

g. Creation of a new degree award in a related academic area. Examples include creation of a certificate program from an existing degree program, or a new degree program from an existing degree program (e.g., Art History BA from Art BA.)

3. Relocation of an existing program. This is a proposal to move an existing program from one site to be exclusively offered at another site, and requires closing the program offered at the original site. For example, a program offered both on-campus and through extended campus is to be offered only at the extended campus site.

4. Replication of an existing program. This is a proposal to offer an existing program at a new site, which may be an existing MnSCU-approved site, or another campus of the same institution. Replicated programs are offered at both the original site and the new location.

5. Suspension or reinstatement of a program. This proposal suspends admission of students into an existing program, and is good for three years. Reinstatement proposals request the reopening of student admissions into a given program.

6. Closure of a program. This proposal requests closure of an existing program and its from an institution's official inventory of academic programs. Unless a department seeks to re-open a suspended program, it should be closed within three years of suspension.
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Open Studies 496: Capstone Experience

A. Course outline or syllabus:
See attached.

B. Learning outcomes the course satisfies:
It is important to keep in mind that, by approving Open Studies as a major, Minnesota State University has decided that certain qualified students may step outside the traditional major/minor format and, in effect, create “one-off” programs to fit their own unique needs. Each individual program will be set up within careful parameters established by the program director and three academic-area advisors. Details of the outcomes and assessments involved with each unique program will vary according to the type of program being considered but will be guided by the Open Studies Program learning outcomes:

- Each student will acquire broad knowledge from taking a variety of courses rather than specific preparation for professional or other occupations.
- Each student will complete a program designed to fulfill unique educational needs and academic goals unavailable in another forum.
- In keeping with the unique nature of each individualized program, specific learning outcomes for each program will be established by each student and his/her committee.

This course will address each Open Studies learning outcome (listed above). Specifically, it will:

- Require the Open Studies major to demonstrate the broad knowledge he/she has acquired in the program by melding material from three academic disciplines into a succinct, coherent final project.
- Allow the student to culminate his/her program with a project that demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness of the three selected areas of study.
- Allow the Open Studies director and the three academic advisors to determine the student’s success in achieving learning outcomes unique to his/her individualized program as established at the inception of that program.

Specific course-related student learning outcomes associated with the program outcomes:
The individualized nature of the Open Studies degree makes it challenging to define the specific outcomes sought in this capstone course; as noted in the program’s learning outcomes listed above, each Open Studies major and his/her committee will establish specific outcomes that are compatible with the selected areas of study. It should, however, be clear that the course will expect each student to demonstrate (1) a clear understanding of the chosen areas of academic concentration, and (2) an understanding of the interrelatedness of those areas.
Methods of assessing student learning outcomes:
The diverse types of capstone projects that could come out of this proposed course make it difficult to specify every method of assessing the learning outcomes; as already noted, specific learning outcomes will best be determined by the type of program each student and his/her committee create. Despite that, it seems logical that assessment methods could include such things as:

- Committee examination of the written report accompanying the capstone project.
- Oral discussions between the student and the Open Studies director, the entire committee and/or individual academic-area advisors regarding the capstone project, with such discussions potentially occurring at any phase of the project and certainly at its completion.
- Director and/or advisor observation of student presentations related to the project.
- Director and/or advisor discussion with people involved in or affected by the project.

C. Resources required to offer and support this course:
The Open Studies director will oversee the project in consultation with the advisors in each of the student's three areas of concentration. No additional resources will be needed.

D. How teaching of this course will affect staffing in the department:
Supervision of the capstone project is not currently so demanding as to interfere with the director's obligations to his home department. If the program develops to the level that its demands are affecting the director's other professional obligations, the issue will have to readdressed.
A major in
Open Studies
at Minnesota State University, Mankato

The Open Studies baccalaureate major is designed to give highly motivated, self-directed students an opportunity to create their own programs and earn an undergraduate degree. It is a liberal-education program designed for students who wish to major in an interdisciplinary area with a coherency of design.

Students seeking the Open Studies degree will select three academic areas in which to concentrate their work and will arrange for a faculty advisor in each of those areas to oversee their work in each area. The areas of study must represent three distinct academic disciplines at Minnesota State University. The student must file a plan of study that provides a reason for choosing these areas of study and that demonstrates why the proposed work cannot be accomplished under the usual major-and-minor(s) format at MSU.

Before beginning work in Open Studies, the student must meet eligibility requirements and must complete a formal application to the Open Studies program. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

• Student must have a current, cumulative GPA of 2.80 or higher, according to MSU records.
• Student should apply after earning a minimum of 32 semester credits and before completing 80 semester credits, according to MSU records. Student having more than 80 credits may still be considered for the Open Studies program if they are willing to meet all other requirements of the program.
• Student must submit a formal application on a form provided by the Open Studies director.

The following rules explain the requirements for a student to continue in the Open Studies program and to receive a university degree. The Open Studies major must:

• Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.80.
• Apply grades of A, B and C to the three required academic areas in the major. No P/NC credits will apply to courses in the three areas unless specific courses are offered only on a P/NC basis.
• Complete the university’s general-education program.
• Complete at least 64 upper-division semester credits.
• Complete a minimum of 15 semester credits of study in each of the three selected academic areas of concentration. A faculty advisor in each area must be willing to serve on a committee with the Open Studies director to oversee the student’s work.
• Complete a capstone project synthesizing the areas of concentration. The completed project must be acceptable to members of the student’s committee.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Marshel Rossow, director of Open Studies
131 Nelson Hall, MSU
Phone (507) 389-5522
E-mail: marshel.rossow@mnsu.edu

"Your degree is more than just a collection of credit hours"
Open Studies 496: Capstone Experience
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Professor of record: Dr. Marshel Rossow, professor and director of Open Studies
Office: 131 Nelson Hall
Phones: 389-5522 private office (with 24-hour answering machine)
        345-1487 home (with 24-hour answering machine)
        389-1712 College of Arts & Humanities office
        MRS/TTY 800-627-3529
E-mail: marshel.rossow@mnsu.edu
Fax: (507) 389-5525
Office hours: 7 a.m.-noon Tuesday/Thursday; 7 a.m.-8 a.m. and noon-1 p.m.
Wednesday; 7 a.m.-8 a.m. Friday. Other hours are available by appointment.

FIRST, A NOTE ABOUT THIS SYLLABUS...

This syllabus is, in effect, a contract between instructor and student -- a "bill of rights," as it were. The instructor can't make significant changes in it once the course begins (although he reserves the right to make minor changes as unforeseen circumstances dictate). Likewise, the student shouldn't expect the instructor to alter the material that follows if there's something the student doesn't like as the course progresses. The student should study and understand the syllabus -- he/she is responsible for following it.

PURPOSE OF COURSE

The Capstone Experience course is intended to give the Open Studies major an opportunity to create, undertake and complete a project that uniquely demonstrates the student's understanding and mastery of the three academic areas in which he/she has chosen to concentrate. Successful completion of the course will illustrate the student's ability to synthesize the subjects studied.

STRUCTURE

While the Open Studies director and three academic-area advisors are available for consultation at all stages of the course, the capstone experience is largely a self-motivated experience for the student. There are no regularly scheduled class meetings and no traditional examinations. Because of the unique nature of each student's individualized program, the type of capstone experience to be completed will be determined by agreement between the student and the Open Studies director, in consultation with the student's academic-area advisors. Possibilities range from primary research to practicum-based experiences.

GRADING

This three-credit course is available only on a Pass-No Credit basis. A final grade will be determined and administered by the Open Studies director after consultation with the student's academic advisors and according to his academic standards. The grade will be based on the student's proven understanding of the areas of concentration, including the relationships among those areas.
GUIDELINES

The student is expected to follow these guidelines for the capstone experience:

• The experience should be undertaken and completed in the student’s final one or two semesters as an Open Studies major.

• The student should have completed at least nine (9) of the fifteen (15) required credits in each academic area of concentration before beginning the capstone experience.

• The student must present to the Open Studies director, in writing, a succinct proposal explaining the capstone experience. The director, in consultation with the three academic-area advisors, must approve the proposal before the student may begin work on it. No credit will be granted for work done before the proposal is approved.

• The student must register and pay tuition for the capstone experience course according to normal university procedures for all courses. The course carries three (3) undergraduate credits and is available only on a Pass/No Credit basis.

• The experience must clearly and directly address each of the three academic areas of concentration.

• To conclude the experience, the student must (1) provide a written report summarizing the experience, and (2) meet with the committee made up of the Open Studies director and three academic-area advisors to discuss the experience. The written report and oral discussion should exhibit a clear understanding of the relationships among the areas of concentration addressed in the experience.

• The completed experience, including the report describing it, must receive the approval of the Open Studies director and the three academic-area advisors before the student will be approved for graduation.

Exceptions to these guidelines will be made only under extraordinary circumstances and only with the approval of the program director after consultation with the academic-area advisors.

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at (507) 389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY).