

Senior Capstone Requirement

In addition to the full-time field study, another distinctive feature of the major is the emphasis placed on the capstone. Each student must fulfill this requirement, either through a senior essay, a senior thesis or a student-directed seminar. For a thesis or student-directed seminar, the student must work directly with a faculty adviser, usually for two quarters.

Senior Essay: All students complete a senior essay that incorporates field study observations and contextualizes their findings historically and theoretically. Most students pursue this capstone option. The minimum length is 25 pages, plus bibliography. The senior essay is completed entirely in course 194, Analysis of Field Materials.

Senior Thesis: Outstanding students may choose to complete a senior thesis, which is comprised of field-study observations, historical and theoretical contextualizations of the field study, and deeper analysis of the social justice issues at the heart of the field study. The thesis also involves post-field-study research; typical length is 40–50 pages, including bibliography. The senior essay completed during course 194 will become the foundation for the thesis, whether as a template to be elaborated or as one or more chapters of the completed thesis.

Student-Directed Seminar (SDS): The SDS capstone option is reserved for exceptional students. Under the direction of a faculty adviser, the student develops and teaches a Community Studies 42 course related to the student's field study and academic course work and submits a seminar completion report. Student-directed seminars need advance planning; a proposal for the SDS must be completed before beginning the field study.