HON 498-01 Honors Capstone Seminar
Course Syllabus
Fall 2025

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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:00 PM & by appointment
Office: DeMille Hall (DH) 108
Classroom: Doti (DT) 105
Class Schedule: Mon. / Wed. 04:00–05:15 PM
Credits: 3
Prerequisite: Acceptance in the University Honors Program; senior standing

Course Description
1. Each senior Honors student is required to complete a significant interdisciplinary research project, which is comprised of two parts: (1) an interdisciplinary research paper upon which the project is based; and, (2) an oral presentation of the project at the annual University Honors Conference. In the capstone, students will evaluate, clarify, and frame their project fusing perspectives and scholarship from relevant disciplines.
2. Students are expected to develop and sustain a close analytical reading of the sources used in their capstone projects along with strong logical coherence and persuasiveness of arguments in their in-class and conference presentations of their capstone projects as well as in their research papers.
3. This course is a seminar in which classes take the form of a writers' workshop. As such, class meetings will involve open discussions of students' research projects. Therefore, students are expected to be engaged in ongoing research for their departmental senior project, to give a presentation of their departmental project, to expand this project by adding the methodology and content of at least one other discipline, to present the results of this expanded research to their classmates, to participate in class discussions of their interdisciplinary research and the interdisciplinary research of others, to make a somewhat formal presentation of their interdisciplinary project to the class in the course of the semester, and to present their interdisciplinary Honors capstone project at the Chapman University Honors Conference on the first Saturday in May.

Restrictions
Acceptance into the University Honors Program.

Program Learning Outcomes
1. Obtain a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
2. Sharpen the ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
3. Understand how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing dramatic challenges shaping the world;
4. Develop effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. Complete a significant interdisciplinary project – Program Learning Outcome 1;
2. Provide students in the University Honors Program with the opportunity to pursue an interdisciplinary research project and to present the findings of their research to the University community and to the Honors faculty and students – Program Learning Outcomes 2 & 3;
3. Create a community of scholars where students have a chance to converse with each other about their research and thus be participants in a semester-long interdisciplinary conversation – Program Learning Outcome 4;
4. Provide a supportive environment for the completion of the Honors capstone project.

Required Texts
1. The Honors Capstone Handbook and the online Capstone Initiation Form – be familiar with both, they can be found on the "Courses" link of the Honors website.
2. Required reading of all students: Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (6th edition), New York: W. W. Norton, 2024.

Recommended Further Reading
Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Instructional Strategies
Weekly seminar meetings

Methods of Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on class attendance, participation in the semester-long interdisciplinary conversation, the quality of the final interdisciplinary project and/or research paper, and the presentation at the Chapman University Honors Conference.

Attendance & Participation – 10 points:
- Class attendance is required. You are expected to attend all class meetings and to have assignments prepared when they are due. For each **excused or unexcused absence beyond three** there will be a 5% deduction from your possible course grade.
- Participation does not mean mere presence in the classroom. Instead, it means active listening – that is, the willingness to engage in the back-and-forth of open-ended and reasoned conversations by being open to what others have to say, risking our opinions, asking questions, and surfacing disagreements. Such "active listening" is essential to a successful seminar and to being a community of scholars.

Outline and Presentation of a chapter in They Say / I Say – 10 points

The following is required of each student: (1) explore one of the chapters of *They Say / I Say*, and (2) lead the class discussion of that chapter. This will involve preparing (1) an outline and (2) a slide show of that chapter, both to be turned in and graded.

Outline of Capstone Research Paper – 1 point (Due by October 1, 2025)

A full outline of the proposed project paper is due by week 6 of the semester. This outline should provide a roadmap for your research including a statement of your research thesis or creative activity topic, the disciplinary perspectives that will be engaged in your research or creative activity, and the proposed structure of your capstone paper.

Annotated Bibliography – 4 points (Due by October 15, 2025)

A bibliography of key texts, articles, or other sources that will provide the foundation of your research paper is due by week 8 of the semester. It is strongly recommended that students utilize the desktop version of EndNote (available to Chapman students and faculty) to organize collected sources. Your annotated bibliography should contain a citation for each of the key sources and a description of the relevance of each source to your capstone paper. Information on the relevance of the sources can be stored in the "Research Notes" field for each EndNote citation and directly exported when formatting your annotated bibliography. You may use an alternative bibliographic software program that provides the same level of functionality as EndNote as long as you document use of a bibliographic program for your capstone paper.

Draft of introduction and first half of paper – 5 points (Due by October 29, 2025)

A draft of the introduction and first half of the paper is due by week 10 of the semester. Your first draft should reflect your developing skill in the use of writing techniques discussed in the *They Say/I Say* text.

Draft of second half of paper – 5 points (Due by November 19, 2025)

A draft of the second half of the paper is due by week 13 of the semester. Your second draft should reflect your deepening knowledge of the source material you will incorporate into your research paper, continued development of the writing techniques we have reviewed throughout the semester, and a more developed synthesis of your research thesis or creative product.

Final draft of paper - 10 points (due by December 10, 2025)

A full draft of your capstone research paper is due at the beginning of finals week. This draft will form the basis for further development of your capstone paper in advance of the final capstone paper deadline at

the end of the academic year (in April of 2026).

Course presentation – 5 points (scheduled during weeks 11-13 of the semester)
You will provide an approximately 15-minute presentation of your capstone project during one of our class meetings. This presentation will aid in the organization of the content and creation of presentation visuals for the more comprehensive presentation you will provide at the Honors Conference next May.

Final Capstone Research Paper - 25 points (due mid-April, 2026 – earlier submission welcome and recommended):
- Knowledge: the demonstration of familiarity with the appropriate conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the Honors capstone as well as with theoretical understanding and application of interdisciplinarity.
- Analysis: the understanding of the historical context of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of your Honors capstone project and the application of those frameworks to contemporary concerns in an insightful, critical, and logical manner.
- Expression: the ability to write in accordance with acceptable grammatical standards, and a demonstrated familiarity with the vocabulary of the disciplines at play in the Honors capstone project. It also represents the ability to orally present your interdisciplinary research project in the semester-long conversation.
- Interdisciplinarity: the integration of multiple disciplinary insights and/or methods.

Length: 5,000 – 7,500 words (~20-30 pages)
Citation style: Please use the citation style that is most common to the primary disciplinary perspective

Conference Presentation = 25 points
- The conference presentation will be graded for the delivery and effectiveness of your communication, your response to the audience's questions, the clarity of your research question and/or thesis, the organization of your argument, and your supporting evidence.
- This presentation is on Saturday, May 2, 2026.

Honors 498 grading basis of 100 points:

Attendance & participation	10 points
Outline & presentation of required reading	10 points
Outline of capstone project paper (due 10/1)	1 points
Annotated bibliography (due 10/15)	4 points
Draft of intro and first half of paper (due 10/29)	5 points
Draft of second half of paper (due 11/19)	5 points
Full draft of paper (due 12/10)	10 points
Course presentation (scheduled weeks 11-13)	5 points
Honors Conference Presentation (5/2/26)	25 points
Capstone Project Paper (4/18/26)	25 points

Note: A grade of "satisfactory progress (SP)" will be assigned for those taking Honors 498 in the Fall Semester given the Spring 2026 due dates for the Honors Conference Presentation and final Capstone Project Paper. Students who are graduating at the end of the Fall 2025 Semester need to confer with the Honors Director and Honors 498 Capstone Instructor for an alternative timeline of completion of course activities and assignment of the final Honors 498 grade.

Projected Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of Semester	Session Topics, Activities, & Assignments
Mon., Aug. 25th	General introduction to the course *Class members introduce themselves *Review syllabus: objectives/expectations of the course
Wed., Aug. 27th	Open workshop *Read: They Say/I Say Introduction (p. 1-18) *Work on capstone research project topic
Mon., Sept. 1st	University holiday - no class
Wed., Sept. 3rd	Discussion of capstone topics and mentors *Read They Say/I Say, select chapters from part 4 (p. 188-306) *Research: How are ideas disseminated in your discipline(s)? *Proposed capstone topic due in Canvas by Friday, Sept. 5th
Mon., Sept. 8th	What Others are Saying & the Art of Summarizing *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 1 & 2 (p. 19-46) *Presentations on Chapters 1 & 2
Wed., Sept. 10th	Open workshop [modified time 4:30-5:15] *Identify and contact potential mentor
Mon., Sept. 15th	Strategies in Quoting & Responding *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 3 & 4 (p. 47-73) *Presentations on Chapters 3 & 4
Wed., Sept. 17th	Open workshop *Signed mentor form due 9/18/25 via online Honors Capstone Initiation Form *Digital copy of your picture for the Honors Conference booklet is due
Mon., Sept. 22nd	Taking Intellectual Positions & Situating Skeptics *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 5 & 6 (p. 74-96) *Presentations on Chapters 5 & 6
Wed., Sept. 24th	Open workshop *Work on capstone project outline and annotated bibliography
Mon., Sept. 29th	Speaking from Experience & Saying What Matters *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 7 & 8 (p. 97-122) *Presentations on Chapters 7 & 8
Wed., Oct 1st	Open workshop *Outline due
Mon., Oct. 6th	Synthesizing & Writing in Your Own Voice *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 9 & 10 (p. 123-153) *Presentations on Chapters 9 & 10
Wed., Oct. 8th	Open workshop *Work on annotated bibliography
Mon., Oct. 13th	Metacommentary & Revising *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapters 11 & 12 (p. 154-187) *Presentations on Chapters 11 & 12
Wed., Oct. 15th	Open workshop *Annotated bibliography due

Mon., Oct. 20th	When "They" are Bots *Read: They Say/I Say, Chapter 19 (p. 290-306) *Presentation on Chapter 19
Wed., Oct. 22nd	Open workshop *Work on draft of intro and first third/half of paper
Mon., Oct. 27th	Compelling presentations
Wed., Oct. 29th	Open workshop *Draft of intro and first half of paper due
Mon., Nov. 3rd	Open workshop *Work on capstone project presentation
Wed, Nov. 5th	Presentations
Mon., Nov. 10th	Presentations
Wed., Nov. 12th	Presentations
Mon., Nov. 17th	Presentations
Wed., Nov. 19th	Presentations *Draft of second half of paper due
Mon., Nov. 24th	Fall Break
Wed., Nov. 26th	Fall Break
Mon., Dec. 1st	Compelling conclusions
Wed., Dec. 3rd	Open workshop
Wed., Dec. 10th	Final Draft *Final draft of capstone project paper due 12/10 by 5PM

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please review the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity.

Chatbots or generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be helpful tools in exploring course material and in supporting your research efforts. However, users must remember that AI tools may provide inaccurate, biased, or untrue information, including fictitious citations of research studies. Users are SOLELY RESPONSIBLE for verifying the accuracy and authenticity of any AI-produced material. Students must also use AI-provided information in ethical ways that avoid academic integrity issues, including proper attribution and citation of AI-generated information. Students must remain compliant with university policies on academic integrity, including the proper documentation and referencing of the use of AI tools and AI-generated information (see an example of a citation for a ChatGPT entry here).

*The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) **is permitted** in this course for the following activities:*

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Finding general information and suggested sources to learn more about a topic
- Checking grammar, writing conventions, and/or style (for text that you created)

*The use of generative AI tools **is not permitted** in this course for the following activities:*

- Developing your capstone project outline
- Creating your annotated bibliography
- Writing drafts of your capstone paper or a section of your paper
- Creating your capstone presentation materials

If you have questions about whether a specific AI tool is permitted, please ask me for clarification prior to the use of the tool in the development of a course assignment or your final capstone paper or presentation. Should I suspect that an assignment has used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways, especially if suggested by AI detector platforms, I will connect with you regarding my concerns and it may lead to a referral to the Chapman University Academic Integrity Committee.

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy

Students who seek an accommodation of a disability or medication condition to participate in the class must contact the Office of Disability Services and follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s) of any granted accommodations. This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or DS@chapman.edu if you have questions regarding this process, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive.
https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/policy.aspx

A Statement on Chapman University's Values

At Chapman University, we strive to make meaningful and lasting connections – with one another and with our broader community and world. We aim to cultivate a welcoming environment, helping every person feel valued and empowered to engage and contribute. Our community members are part of the Chapman Family, where relationships matter – and so do ideas. We strive for a vibrant intellectual community where different perspectives are sought and encouraged freely – to enable new thinking to emerge and interdisciplinary dots to be connected. Through these connections, we advance as individuals, as a campus, and as a society.

Chapman University's Anti-Discrimination Policy

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity, including of backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please review the full description of the Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

Diversity of Viewpoints

Students will be introduced to a diversity of viewpoints, philosophies, methods, or other variables, as applicable, consistent with Chapman's Commitment to Free Speech and Academic Freedom. Students are encouraged and required to engage with each other appropriately and respectfully in exchanging and discussing ideas and viewpoints and otherwise learning and working together.

Student Support at Chapman University

Over the course of the semester, you may experience a range of challenges that interfere with your learning, such as problems with friend, family, and or significant other relationships; substance use; concerns about personal adequacy; feeling overwhelmed; or feeling sad or anxious without knowing why. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. You can learn more about the resources available through Chapman University's Student Psychological Counseling Services here: https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/psychological-counseling/.

Fostering a community of care that supports the success of students is essential to the values of Chapman University. Occasionally, you may come across a student whose personal behavior concerns or worries you, either for the student's well-being or yours. In these instances, you are encouraged to contact the Chapman University Student Concern Intervention Team who can respond to these concerns and offer assistance: https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/student-concern/index.aspx. While it is preferred that you include your contact information so this team can follow up with you, you can submit a report anonymously. 24-hour emergency help is also available through Public Safety at 714-997-6763.

Religious Accommodations at Chapman University

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of all backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members

of the university community to fulfill their obligations to the university without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their sincerely held religious obligations. Please review the syllabus early in the semester and consult with your faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with major religious holidays, being as specific as possible regarding when those holidays are scheduled in advance and where those holidays constitute the fulfillment of your sincerely held religious beliefs.

For more information, please see the [Fish Interfaith Center website](#).