

General Requirements for Narrative Studies Capstone Project

University of Southern California

Your capstone project will be something only you could have done. It will emerge out of your individual interests and be shaped by your unique path through the Narrative Studies major. Your project will be a substantial accomplishment that synthesizes what you have learned in your NARS courses and specifically addresses the topic of Narrative Studies.

NARS capstone projects can be **critical** (a research paper) or **creative** (an original creative work accompanied by a shorter critical component relating to and elaborating on your creative work). Your workshop will almost certainly include students working on both kinds of projects, and you will workshop together.

Below are some *general* expectations of the projects. However, there is a huge variety of NARS capstone projects, each of which has different needs. You can always discuss specific exceptions or variations with your instructor during the semester.

Page Count and Sources

Both types of project will be roughly 20-40 pages long double-spaced. Critical projects will usually be at the shorter end of this range. Creative projects will usually be at the longer end.

All projects, critical or creative, involve research and must engage substantively with outside sources. The exact number greatly depending on project topic and source type. A general guideline is *roughly* at least 15 sources (primary or secondary), but you should discuss this individually with your instructor as your project progresses.

Additional Notes for Creative Projects Only

- Aim for a project breakdown of roughly 2/3 creative component and 1/3 critical component.
- You must have taken at least two creative courses in your chosen medium. Students wanting to write multi-media projects need experience in all media they plan to create.
- Students wanting to write screenplays must understand this course is for Narrative Studies credit in Dornsife and the expectations may differ from the Cinema School.
- The critical component of a creative project can take many forms. All creative production involves work behind the scenes, which could include researching a story's setting; close-reading books with similar themes; researching the history of the genre; and much more. What behind-the-scenes work do you need to do to write what you want to write? The critical element should convey that work, tie your project back to Narrative Studies, and demonstrate awareness of your creative choices.

Capstone Presentation

Your final capstone presentation is intended as an opportunity to celebrate your hard work and to share your unique project with an audience of your peers, your family and friends, students and faculty. Presentations will usually be around 20 minutes with 5 minutes for questions. They should be well-organized and engaging, explain the main ideas or components of your project, and demonstrate the project's relevance to narrative studies.