

Department of Communication & Theatre Arts
Senior Experience & Internship
Application for Independent Study Equivalency of Capstone Project

Student Name: Dominick DelValle

Student ID: 01192637

Major: Strategic Communication

Proposed Semester for Independent Study: Spring 2025

Faculty Advisor/Supervisor: Brendan O'Hallarn

Rationale for Independent Study Equivalency

The Capstone Course is designed to allow students to synthesize their academic knowledge and skills into a culminating project, addressing advanced-level communication problems and demonstrating career readiness. A proposed independent study aligns with the course's structure, learning objectives, and expectations while allowing flexibility to focus on a unique project tailored to professional goals and interests.

This independent study will adhere to and demonstrate the [NACE Career-Ready Competencies](#), ensuring the same rigor and depth as the Capstone Course. It will allow a student to independently design, research, and execute a project that fulfills all course requirements and deliverables, under the guidance of an approved faculty supervisor.

Proposed Project

Title: Strategic Communication Research and Collateral for Curriculum Redesign

Project Description: As a strategic communication student, Dominick was seeking a project which aligns with his career goals and academic interests, while being able to complete the work remotely, and while working a full-time job. The program where he is matriculating, Strategic Communication, is undergoing a significant overhaul this year, with the major merging with Journalism. This significant change in our programming will require significant marketing and communication support. Under Program Director Brendan O'Hallarn (his adviser for the Independent Study) Dominick will conduct market research about equivalent degree programs in Virginia, and design promotional materials to be distributed to current and future students, as well as on the Department media channels (website, social media). In addition inquiry to current SC majors (a peer roundtable or two, held virtually as the student might be working remotely), and research on employer opinions/needs for new graduates of a Strat Comm program. (Perhaps that research is already available in another manner for this curriculum overhaul. The presentation should be held in a hybrid or virtual manner.

NACE Career-Ready Competencies to be Addressed:

1. Competency 1. Critical Thinking: Dominick will assess degree offerings at peer Virginia institutions, suggesting ways the program could be differentiated to aid in marketing efforts

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2. Competency 2: Teamwork: Dominick will work with Brendan on determining promotional needs for the program, creating a workflow for producing these materials as well as having peer round tables and researching employers.
3. Competency 3: Technology: Dominick will produce strategic communication tactics in different media forms (graphics, social, etc.) to aid in promoting the new, combined major

Proposed Deliverables:

1. Independent Project: The project consists of two distinct sections: 1. A research folio of peer programs in journalism and public relations – particularly the nexus of these two, related disciplines; and 2. A series of strategic communication tactics which will be used by the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts to promote the new major. 3. inquiry to current SC majors (a peer roundtable or two, held virtually as the student might be working remotely) 4. research on employer opinions/needs for new graduates of a Strat Comm program.(NOTE: The research folio will take the place of the annotated bibliography ... source material will be collected and organized in a similar format)
2. **Project Reflection Blog Post:** Published on ePortfolio (WIX or Adobe), reflecting on how my coursework and this project have prepared me for my future career.
3. Presentation: At the conclusion of the semester, Dominick will deliver a presentation on his work, The presentation should be held in a hybrid or virtual manner suggesting how he will help his career aspirations, as well as advance the goals of the new, combined major

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this independent study, I will demonstrate:

- **Identify** relevant theories, methodologies, and current scholarship within the field of my MAJOR to ground my project in disciplinary knowledge.
- **Apply** MAJOR concepts and techniques to design, develop, and execute a research-based project that addresses a specific issue or problem.
- **Evaluate** peer or instructor feedback and incorporate it constructively to refine my project and enhance its quality.
- **Compile and Present** my research and findings in a professional, media-ready format that demonstrates mastery of MAJOR skills and NACE Career-Ready Competencies.

Proposed Schedule to be finalized with Faculty Supervisor

Week	Activity	Deliverable
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1-2	Research and refine project idea	Project pitch
3-4	Research folio of peer institutions	Research folio
5-6	Plan for development of Strategic Communication tactics	Progress update
7-10	Creation of Strategic Communication tactics	As-we-go feedback from instructor to refine materials as needed
11-12	Presentation	Final Capstone Project
13	Write and publish reflection blog	Blog post

Assessment Criteria

The project will be assessed based on the Capstone Course rubric, with emphasis on:

- Depth and quality of content.
- Professional aesthetics and adherence to design best practices.
- Accessibility standards.
- Logical organization and coherence.
- Skillful integration of research and creativity.
- Reflective insight and connection to career goals.

Justification for Equivalency

This independent study mirrors the rigor and deliverables of the Capstone Course, while providing the opportunity to customize the experience to my professional and personal interests. I am confident that this structure will allow me to achieve the expected outcomes, culminating in a project that demonstrates mastery of communication skills and NACE Career-Ready Competencies.

At the conclusion of my Independent Study, the Faculty Supervisor will provide the Senior Experience & Internship Coordinator with my ePortfolio link, project, and brief review of the experience for future applications or alternative assignment applications.

Approval

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Student Signature: _____ *Dominick Del Valle* _____ Date: 01/12/2025

Faculty Advisor Signature: _____ *BRENDAN O'HALLARIN* _____ Date: 01/13/2025

Senior Experience &
Internship Coordinator Signature: _____ Date: _____