MLA CAPSTONE GUIDELINES

Updated | September 2020

PURPOSE OF THE CAPSTONE

Completing an MLA capstone represents the culmination of your graduate program with the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington. It is designed to be a project and process that builds your confidence and sense of competence in the field of Landscape Architecture, particularly in developing your ability to connect theory and practice and to broadly reflect on those connections.

The faculty is committed to helping each of you complete your capstone. Faculty will work with you to frame, shape, and develop it, sharing their experience and expertise.

OVERVIEW: THREE CAPSTONE OPTIONS

There are three capstone options for Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) students. Whichever option you pursue, your work should exemplify the highest standards of professional education representing the conclusion of the MLA education.

NOTE: Students in the MLA/MArch or MLA/MUP concurrent degree program are required to select the Thesis option.

Option 1: Thesis

The **Thesis** option offers the opportunity to pursue design research in the format of a traditional thesis over two quarters with guidance from a faculty Thesis Committee. This option is done individually. The student proposes a topic of inquiry which explores research related to design methodology, process, practice, critique, pedagogical approaches, theory, and/or scholarship. The student may explore the research through application of the inquiry on a specific project or site, project type or urban condition.

Option 2: Group Project

The **Group Project** option is for small groups of students (2 – 5 students) wishing to engage a collaborative research agenda related to landscape architectural scholarship and inquiry. This option offers the opportunity for small teams of students to work over the course of two quarters on an advanced design or research problem with the guidance of a Faculty Supervisor, culminating with an integrated project and documentation. The specific form or type of documentation will be determined in collaboration with the student group and Faculty Supervisor.

Option 3: Capstone Studio

The **Capstone Studio** option offers the opportunity for students to work with a Studio Instructor over 2-3 quarters. There may be a preparation or research seminar in the fall quarter as an introduction to the research studio that takes place during winter and spring quarters. The project or theme of the Capstone Studio is determined by the Studio Instructor. Generally, the instructor selects a broad topic and students determine their focus within that topic. Students work on a project at an advanced level over multiple quarters, culminating in rigorous output and deliverables.

CAPSTONE SCHEDULE, COURSES + CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Preparing for the Capstone Project – Year 1 (and 2)

Program Introduction
In their first autumn quarter of the program, all MLA students take LARCH 570 Theory and Scholarship as a foundation for landscape architectural scholarship and inquiry. In their first spring quarter, all MLA students take LARCH 598 Introduction to Faculty Research to become familiar with the faculty's areas of interest and the available resources and expertise in the department in consideration for your capstone options and topic.

Developing Skills
Advanced Studios and courses can provide the intellectual foundation for students to consider their capstone options and topics. Courses in research methods will provide necessary skills to carry out research activities in relation to the capstone project. Students should take their research methods selective BEFORE their final year. The department offers LARCH 571 Research Methods in Landscape Architecture in the spring quarter or students may select another approved alternative course.

Considering Topics
Capstone topics might arise from a theory course or an advanced studio. The advanced studios often have projects that can turn into an excellent, well-supported capstone project. Additionally, it is wise to begin refining your capstone ideas and options by the spring of the year in consultation with potential faculty advisors.

An early attempt to focus your ideas and identify potential faculty members to work with makes it more likely that you will finish on time and allows you to strategically select open elective courses in your final year. It may also be helpful to begin data collection or visit a site over the summer before you last year, if you decide on a topic and method that requires such an approach.

	Autumn	Winter	Spring
MLA I			
Year 1:	LARCH 570 Theory + Scholarship* (3 cr)		LARCH 598 Intro to Fac. Research* (1 cr)
Year 2:			LARCH 571 Research Methods** (3 cr)
MLA II			
Year 1:	LARCH 570 Theory + Scholarship* (3 cr)		LARCH 598 Intro to Fac. Research* (1 cr) LARCH 571 Research Methods** (3 cr)

*Required Course | ** Required Selective: LARCH 571 recommended see *MLA Curriculum Course Guidelines* for approved alternatives.

Doing the Capstone Project – Final Year of MLA Program

Autumn Quarter
Step 1: Capstone Survey
At the beginning of their final year, all MLA students are required to respond to a capstone survey indicating their preferred capstone option. In the case of the Thesis and Group Project options, students also include a topic and a brief statement of what they intend to work on, if and with which students they would like to collaborate, and with which faculty they would like to work.

Step 2: Prep Seminars
In the autumn quarter, students take a preparation seminar course for their capstone.

- Thesis and Group Project students take LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar.
- Capstone Studio students take LARCH 702 Capstone Studio Preparation Seminar, if offered. Faculty teaching the Capstone Studio may elect to offer a preparation seminar in autumn or only offer courses in winter and spring.

Step 3: Faculty Committees Assigned – Week 5
During autumn quarter, the faculty will meet to determine These Committees and Group Project Supervisors based on the student preferences for committee members and research topics from the Capstone Survey. Committees are

typically announced by Week 5 of autumn quarter.

Step 4: Determine Capstone Credit Distribution – Week 6-7
Students should meet with their Committee Members/Faculty Supervisor/Studio Instructor to discuss credit distribution over the two quarters of capstone.

Capstone Credits (required)

All students, regardless of the capstone option selected, are required to fulfill (12) Capstone credits. The preparation seminar credits count toward the required (12) Capstone credits. Students fulfill the remaining credits over their final two quarters (typically winter and spring quarters). Courses and distribution of credits varies depending on the Capstone option selected. See the chart below for specific courses and credits for each option.

Typical Credit Distribution.

- Thesis | LARCH 700   3 cr autumn + 9 credits split between Committee members distributed over winter and spring quarters
- Group Project | LARCH 703   3 cr autumn + 9 cr distributed over winter and spring quarters
- Capstone Studio | LARCH 702   12 credits distributed over autumn, winter and spring quarters

Open Elective Credits to support capstone (optional)

Additionally, as part of their degree requirements, students fulfill (12) Open Elective (400+ level courses) credits. Open Elective courses may be strategically selected to support capstone work. Open Elective courses may be taken any quarter; however, for Thesis and Group Project students, LARCH 701 Thesis Studio is offered as an open elective for during winter (1-6 cr) and spring (1 cr) quarters to support students' capstone work through a structured independent-study studio setting.

	Autumn	Winter	Spring
Thesis			
Capstone Credits (required)	LARCH 590 Thesis Prep. Seminar (3 credits)	LARCH 700 Thesis** (2-7 credits split between Committee Chair and member(s)) Typically: 3 cr Chair/ 3 cr Member	LARCH 700 Thesis** (2-7 credits split between Committee Chair and member(s)) Typically: 2 cr Chair / 1 cr Member
Open Electives (optional)		LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (optional, 1- 6 credits)	LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (optional, 1 credit)

Group Project			
Capstone Credits (required)	LARCH 590 Thesis Prep. Seminar (3 credits)	LARCH 703 Group Project** (6 credits)	LARCH 703 Group Project** (3 credits)
Open Electives (optional)		LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (optional, 1- 6 credits)	LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (optional, 1 credit)

Capstone Studio			
Capstone Credits (required)	LARCH 702 Capstone Studio Prep. Seminar* (1 credit, if course offered)	LARCH 702 Capstone Studio** (6 credits)	LARCH 702 Capstone Studio** (6 credits or 5 credits if Prep Seminar offered in autumn)
Open Electives (optional)		Open Elective (credits vary)	Open Elective (credits vary)

Step 5: Submit Credit Agreement Forms – Week 7
Once the student has determined how they will distribute their capstone credits over the two quarters (typically winter and spring), student should complete a Credit Agreement Form, have it signed by all committee members and submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator. All forms are due by Week 7 of the quarter when you take your prep seminar (typically autumn quarter).
- Thesis   LARCH 700 / Thesis Credit Agreement
- Group Project   LARCH 703 / Group Project Agreement
- Capstone Studio   no agreement form required

Step 6:   Register for Capstone Credits – Week 9-10
After student's form has been approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator, student will receive add code to register for their capstone credits.

Winter Quarter
Students will work on their capstone project and meet regularly with their Committee (Thesis), Faculty Supervisor (Group Project) or Faculty Instructor (Capstone Studio). Students will present their project toward the end of the quarter, typically Week 7, 8 or 9, as determined by the faculty member teaching LARCH 701.

Finishing the Capstone Project and Applying to Graduate

Final Quarter (Spring Quarter)
Step 1:   Register for at least 2 credits – Week 1
Students must register for at least 2 credits in the quarter you will graduate.

Step 2:   Apply to Graduate / Submit Master's Degree Request – Week 1-2 recommended; Week 10 required
All students must apply to graduate by submitting a Master's Degree Request through MyGrad Program - submit a Master's Degree Request.

- You can apply to graduate from the 1st day of the quarter until the last day of the quarter.

- This request should be done during the **first two weeks of the quarter** you plan to graduate, especially Spring Quarter, if you would like to have your name to appear in the UW Graduation Program.

- Use the correct code when applying to graduate:

   o   MLA I (3-year track):   0 L ARCH-00-27
   o   MLA II (2-year track):   0 L ARCH-02-27

- Dual degree students must apply to graduate twice: once for each degree/department. Be sure and select the correct codes. MLA/MArch Dual degree students should NOT select the L ARCH/Arch Concurrent code 0 L A ARC-00-27, because the code is not currently active.

- Be sure and check the most current Master's Degree Request due dates. The master's request system is closed between the 10th week and the end of the quarter and will re-open the first day of the next quarter.

Step 3:   Review Graduate School website – Week 1-2
The Graduate School website provides instructions and checklists for what you will need to do to graduate. Please spend some time reviewing all requirements to graduate and the Graduation Checklist– Grad School - Preparing to Graduate

Step 4:   Review ISS Final Quarter Registration Information and Checklist (For International Students only) – Week 1-2
ISS - Graduation: Final Year Checklist
Note: For STEM designation for OPT, the MLA degree is coded as "Sustainability Studies", not "Landscape Architecture". This does not change that your degree is a Master of Landscape Architecture. This coding is only so the program is STEM designated for OPT purposes.

Step 5:   Review your DARS Report (single degree) / Degree Checklist (multiple degrees) – Week 3-5
Students should review their degree audit or degree checklist to confirm all grade changes have been made and all degree requirements are properly assigned. Report any issues to the Department.

You will need to submit all requests by the last day of the quarter you intend to graduate but it is useful to review for potential errors earlier in the quarter.

FOR MLA (SINGLE DEGREE) STUDENTS (+ NON-GRADUATE CERTFICATES)

- Submitting a request to graduate will generate a digital degree audit through the Degree Audit Report System (DARS).

- Your audit should indicate you will fulfill all requirements and credit count upon completing the current quarter.

- Confirm all grade changes have been made.

- Report any issues/errors to the Department.

The Report only includes courses that are required to meet your degree requirements. Additional courses will be on your transcript but are not on the Degree Audit Report.

Students earning a certificate that is NOT a certificate run through the Graduate School are considered single degree students. Non-Graduate School certificates do not show up on your transcript.

FOR STUDENTS EARNING MLA + GRADUATE CERTFICATE

- Review your Degree Checklist, to ensure you have no outstanding credits, courses or grades. Due to enrollment in multiple programs, you must complete a manual degree audit. You can request a copy of your Degree Checklist from the Department, if needed.

- Report any issues/errors to the Department.

- Follow the instructions by the Graduate School [Grad School: Concurrent Degree Graduation Requirements](#)

- Save a copy of your transcript through the MyGrad Program. Either by hand or digitally, color code all courses in 1 of 3 categories:

    o   1 – courses/credits for your MLA degree
    o   2 – courses/credits for your Graduate Certificate
    o   3 – courses/credits that are shared for the MLA degree and Graduate Certificate

- Make a pdf of the color-coded transcript.

- Fill out the UW Concurrent Form and attach your color-coded transcript and submit.

Students earning a certificate that is NOT a certificate run through the Graduate School are considered single degree students. Non-Graduate School certificates do not show up on your transcript.

FOR CONCURRENT DEGREE STUDENTS

- Review your Degree Checklist, to ensure you have no outstanding credits, courses or grades. Due to enrollment in multiple programs, you must complete a manual degree audit. You can request a copy of your Degree Checklist from the Department, if needed.

- Report any issues/errors to the Department.

- Follow the instructions by the Graduate School [Grad School: Concurrent Degree Graduation Requirements](#)

- Save a copy of your transcript through the MyGrad Program. Either by hand or digitally, color code all courses in 1 of 3 categories:

    o   1 – courses/credits for your MLA degree
    o   2 – courses/credits for your 2nd degree
    o   3 – courses/credits that are shared for the MLA degree and 2nd degree

- Make a pdf of the color-coded transcript.

- Fill out the UW Concurrent Form and attach your color-coded transcript and submit.

Step 6:   Confirm the schedule/deadlines to complete your capstone – Week 3

Confirm with your committee/faculty supervisor/faculty instructor when you will need to submit a draft, how long your committee needs for reviewing and providing edits and how long you need to edit and format the final version.

Step 7: Activate your ETD (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation) account (Thesis Students Only) – Week 3
FOR STUDENTS IN THE THESIS CAPSTONE OPTION ONLY. Activating your account early will give you time to become familiar with the system and troubleshoot any technical issues. You will submit your final thesis and signed Supervisory Committee Approval Form here.

Step 8: Review ETD Formatting Requirements (Thesis Students Only) – Week 4-5
FOR STUDENTS IN THE THESIS CAPSTONE OPTION ONLY. There are specific formatting requirements for theses. You will find it helpful to review and be familiar with the guidelines BEFORE it is time to submit your thesis.
Grad School ETD Formatting Guidelines

Step 9: Submit Signed Warrant – Week 9-10
The request to graduate generates a Warrant which is sent to the Department. You will be emailed a pdf of your warrant. After you have completed your capstone, have your Warrant signed by your Thesis Committee (Thesis option), your Faculty Supervisor (Group Project option) or your Faculty Instructor (Capstone Studio option). Faculty can either sign the Warrant or provide an email indicating their approval. The Warrant indicates that the department has determined the student has met all degree requirements including completion of your capstone and is eligible to graduate.

Submit your signed Warrant (and any faculty emails) to the Department by the end of the quarter you will graduate. After receiving the Warrant, confirming that you have submitted your capstone, and reviewing your DARS report (MLA only students or Degree Checklist (concurrent degree students) to confirm all other degree requirements are completed, the department will convey approval for you to graduate to the Graduate School through the MyGrad Program (MGP).

Step 10: Submit your ETD + Masters Supervisory Committee Approval Form (Thesis students only) – Week 9-10
Thesis students must also submit the Masters Supervisory Committee Approval form. This form must be signed by ALL members of your committee. The form is submitted digitally when you upload your thesis (ETD).

- Concurrent degree students submit a single MSCA form with both degrees listed. Example: Name of Degree: Master of Landscape Architecture / Master of XXX

- **If you miss the ETD deadline refer to the Registration Waiver Fee**. If you miss the deadline (and have completed all other degree requirements), you can submit your ETD within 14 calendar days, pay the Registration Waiver Fee and graduate the quarter immediately after you should have submitted your ETD. There are several requirements, including re-applying to graduate, see https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/general-graduate-student-policies/graduate-registration-waiver-fee/. If you do not submit your ETD within the 14 day window, you must enroll in (2) credits of coursework in the quarter in which you will graduate (students who miss the deadline and 14 day window in Spring Quarter, must enroll in Autumn Quarter as faculty do not work during the Summer Quarter).

- **No edits after your submit your ETD**. You will not be able to make any edits to your thesis after you submit your ETD.

- **Review ETD FAQs** - Grad School - ETD FAQs

Step 11: Send Abstract to Department
Send a digital copy of your abstract to the Department for our records.

Capstone Surveys + Forms Summary Chart

	Capstone Survey	Credit Agreement	Masters Degree Request	Warrant	Masters Supervisory Committee Approval	Thesis ETD Account	Abstract to Dept.
Thesis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Group Project	X	X	X	X			
Capstone Studio	X		X	X			

SELECTING A TOPIC
(for Thesis and Group Project options)

There are many ways to identify a topic. The most obvious is to ask yourself what kind of work you want to do after you graduate and design a capstone that lets you develop and showcase your skills in that specific area of work. Another approach is to ask yourself what topic, project type or research question you are sufficiently interested in that you would like to work on it for 6-9 months. Both of those questions can help you identify what is interesting and important enough for you to commit to as a capstone topic.

Another important question to ask is —who is going to be on my committee/faculty supervisor, and what are those faculty interested in studying with me? If you identify a topic that is closely related to the research interests of faculty members, it is much more likely that you will get to work with those individuals! To learn more about faculty interests, review their bio on the [faculty page](#) of the department website, review their CV to find out what they write about, or make an appointment during their office hours to discuss options with them.

WORKING WITH A THESIS COMMITTEE OR FACULTY SUPERVISOR
(for Thesis and Group Project options)

Upholding Department Standards
The Committee Chair (for **Thesis** option) or Faculty Supervisor (for **Group Project** option) sets the standard for how the student(s) and advisors will operate (when and how often they will meet, etc.), and negotiates with the other committee members on any disagreements about the scope or method of the project. Each student should negotiate these issues with their Committee Chair or Faculty Supervisor first, letting them know what you would like to do, but the advisor has the authority of final acceptance. Your Committee Chair/Faculty Supervisor holds the responsibility for upholding the Department's standards for the capstone and communicating these standards with regard to scope, methods, and products.

Initiate Regular Meetings
It is essential that you seek a regular appointment time with your committee members/supervisor; they will not be able to keep track of you and will expect that you will come to them to meet when you need direction or have something to show them.

Arrive On-time and Prepared
Show up for your committee meetings on time with the expected work completed. Your committee/supervisor may request that you submit work prior to the meeting for their review to have a productive meeting. Be ready with your questions about your work to-date and about next steps and deadlines.

Maintain an Updated Schedule
Maintain and review an updated schedule to complete your capstone project each time you meet with your committee/supervisor. Confirm critical deadlines, paying particular attention to how long before a deadline your committee/supervisor needs to review your work and provide comments. I.e., emailing your work on Thursday for a meeting on Friday is not sufficient time.

Provide Meeting Notes
It is essential that you manage your process by emailing your committee/supervisor after meetings. This email should summarize your discussion, agreement, and deadlines.

Respect Your Committee/Supervisor's Time
In general, remember that thesis/group project advising is only one responsibility of the faculty and you are only one of their students. Make the most of each meeting and follow through with your agreements.

THESIS OPTION DESCRIPTION

The **Thesis** option is primarily self-initiated; thus, work throughout the final year should be planned, scheduled, and completed by the student in close collaboration with their Thesis Committee. The student will select the thesis topic and outline a research question(s) to be addressed through the thesis process and determine the parameters of the inquiry with their Thesis Committee.

The **Thesis** option adheres to the requirements of the Graduate School for a graduate thesis. The Graduate School has requirements for required courses, committee members, and products that must be followed by the department and the student.

The **Thesis** option is done individually. In order to work with another student(s), students must petition the Graduate School for special permission. The Graduate School will review if the character of the work will provide sufficient opportunity for all students to contribute and be responsible to the study as a whole. See below.

Students selecting the Thesis option engage in an agenda of design research to explore emerging issues and discourses in landscape architecture and the built environment. Students may pursue a theoretical and/or speculative inquiry or may conduct a professional project working with an actual client. All theses will employ an in depth literature review, critical stance, and reflection documented in a final written report.

You will work with your committee to develop a detailed outline, and perhaps modify the suggested chapters and their order depending on the details of the project and thesis type selected. In general, however, the inclusion of all the suggested chapters represents a level of scholarly and professional rigor that we consider necessary to the completion of a Master's thesis in Landscape Architecture.

Learning Objectives
- Engage in rigorous design research
- Learn to work effectively on an independent design research project
- Learn to develop a thesis proposal
- Learn to develop a clear research and/or design philosophy and critical stance
- Learn to define and develop a landscape architectural question, to address a range of scales appropriate to the question and to competently propose a resolution of the problem as defined
- Learn to effectively communicate key ideas, theories, or design principles that address the topic
- Refine presentation skills in multiple modes (written, visual, verbal)

Products
- **Thesis Proposal**: Topic proposal, research overview, literature review, precedent studies, and timeline for completion of project (completed as part of LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar in Fall Quarter).

- **Thesis Presentations:** (3 - proposal, mid-review, and final): present visual and written products as scoped through your related course(s) and with your Thesis Committee. Professional practitioners, scholars, and faculty in related departments will be invited to review and critique presentations for theses at appropriate times. Presentation dates and times will be organized by the faculty member teaching LARCH 701.

- **Thesis**: a final report that includes the standard sections of a thesis or other professional report and reflects the rigor of methods and depth of evaluation explored over the course of the capstone. See Appendix A for sample outlines.

Advisers: Thesis Committee

Thesis Committee: Committee Chair and at least 1 Committee Member

- Committee Chair: LA Dept. Graduate School faculty member (core faculty only)
- Committee Member: UW Graduate School faculty member (typically LA Dept, core or adjunct) For MLA/MArch, member is Co-Chair Architecture Graduate School faculty member. For MLA/MUP, member is Co-Chair UDP Graduate School faculty member.
- Two additional committee members (including non-UW Graduate School faculty) may be added, however, the student is responsible for acquiring additional members. If you add members, keep in mind that the Graduate School requires that at least half of your committee be UW Graduate School faculty.

Students may also work with readers and informal advisers. Readers provide advice and agree to read and review your thesis but are not on your official Thesis Committee. Students should remember that they must abide by decisions made by their Thesis Committee.

Courses

Required:

- LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar (3)   Autumn

- LARCH 700 Thesis (3)* Committee Chair   Winter
- LARCH 700 Thesis (3)* Committee Member   Winter

- LARCH 700 Thesis (2)* Committee Chair   Spring
- LARCH 700 Thesis (1)* Committee Member   Spring

* Students must take a total of (9) credits over winter and spring quarters split between their committee members.

Optional Courses: (fulfill Open Elective credits)

- Winter: LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (1-6)
- Spring: LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (1-3)

Course Registration Request Form

By end of Autumn Quarter, you should have:

- selected a topic;
- outlined a research question;
- communicated with your thesis committee;
- and, developed a proposal

Before registering for your winter capstone courses, you must complete and submit the MLA LARCH 700 Thesis Credit Agreement Form (available on the department website) signed by all of your committee members. The form outlines who is serving on your committee and in what capacity, and how your (9) credits will be distributed among your committee members and across the two quarters of your thesis.

Submitting Your Thesis to the Graduate School

The Graduate School has specific requirements for formatting and submitting your thesis. For details, please see Thesis/Dissertation section on the Graduate School website.

GROUP PROJECT OPTION DESCRIPTION

The **Group Project** option may be self-initiated by the students or a potential research opportunity suggested by a faculty member. Work for the Group Project should be shared by all team members equally. The group should outline a research question(s) to be addressed through the project and determine the parameters of the inquiry in consultation with their Faculty Supervisor.

Students will work in a team of 2-5 members for the **Group Project** option. Students selecting the **Group Project** option engage in an agenda of design research to explore emerging issues and discourses in landscape architecture and the built environment. Students may pursue a theoretical and/or speculative inquiry or may conduct a professional project working with an actual client. All Group Projects will employ an in depth literature review, critical stance, and reflection documented in a final project document.

Learning Objectives
- Engage in rigorous design research
- Learn to work effectively in small teams on a design research project
- Learn to develop a group design research proposal
- Learn to define and develop a landscape architectural problem, to address a range of scales appropriate to the project and to competently propose a resolution for the problem as defined
- Learn to effectively communicate key ideas, theories, or design principles, and a design process
- Develop a clear research and/or design philosophy and critical stance
- Refine presentation skills in multiple modes (written, visual, verbal)

Products
- **Group Project Proposal**: Topic proposal, research overview, literature review, precedent studies, and timeline for completion of project as well as expected contributions of each of the students engaged in the project (completed as part of LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar in Fall Quarter).

- **Group Project Presentation** (3 - proposal, mid-review, and final): present visual and written products as scoped through your related course(s) and with your Faculty Supervisor. Professional practitioners, scholars, and faculty in related departments will be invited to review these presentations at appropriate times. Each student must take an active role in developing the narrative and drawings and presenting. Presentation dates and times will be organized by the faculty member teaching LARCH 701.

- **Project document**: students will work with their Faculty Supervisor to determine how the project will be documented in a way that reflects the rigor of approach and depth of inquiry into the project. Examples of project documentation include a project report, film, installation, or exhibition. Each student must contribute significant sections to the document as well as contribute to team-authored sections as deemed appropriate in consultation with the Faculty Supervisor. See Appendix B for a sample outline for a written report.

Adviser
- Faculty Supervisor: LA Dept. Graduate School faculty member (core)

There is no requirement for a second faculty member although project teams are encouraged to draw on the expertise and knowledge of Department and University faculty as they address their research/project area of inquiry.

Courses

Required:

- LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar (3)   Autumn
- LARCH 703 Group Project (6)*   Winter
- LARCH 703 Group Project (3)*   Spring

* Students must take a total of (9) credits split over winter and spring quarters.

Optional Courses: fulfill Open Elective credits

- Winter: LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (1-6)
- Spring: LARCH 701 Thesis Studio (1-3)

Course Registration Request Form

By end of Autumn Quarter, you should have:

- selected a topic;
- outlined a research question;
- and have your faculty supervisor.

Before registering for your winter capstone courses, you must complete and submit the MLA LARCH 703 Group Project Credits Agreement Form (available on the department website) signed by your faculty supervisor. The form outlines how your (9) credits will be distributed across the two quarters of your capstone.

CAPSTONE STUDIO OPTION DESCRIPTION

The **Capstone Studio** option is intended for students to further their design skills in a two-quarter design research studio under the guidance of a Faculty Instructor who will determine the topic and scope of the studio project. Typically, the topic is broad and allows the students to determine their specific focus. The goal of the studio is to examine a contemporary or emerging topic in the field and undergo a rigorous research and design process to culminate in a highly developed and innovative solution as well as crafted deliverables.

Learning Objectives
- Develop a critical stance to a defined studio project.
- Undertake rigorous design research for a defined studio project.
- Learn to work effectively in small teams on a team design research project.
- Undergo design iterations and examine multiple approaches and solutions.
- Articulate research findings, design process, and design solutions through effective and highly crafted visual representations.
- Refine presentation skills in multiple modes (written, verbal, visual)
- Additional learning objective may be defined by the Instructor.

Products
- **Capstone Studio Presentations**: (mid review, final review and other reviews as determined by the studio instructor) specific format and deliverables will be determined by the instructor.

- **Capstone Studio Portfolio**: at the end of the studio, students are required to produce a portfolio of studio work that includes results from both research and design phases of the project.

- **Additional products** may be required by the studio instructor.

Adviser
- Capstone Studio Instructor: LA Dept. faculty member

Courses
Required:

- LARCH 702 Capstone Studio Preparation Seminar (1)*   Autumn
- LARCH 702 Capstone Studio (6)   Winter
- LARCH 702 Capstone Studio (5)   Spring

*Capstone Studio Prep Seminar is required if offered. If not offered students take Capstone Studio for (6) credits in spring.

APPENDIX A: THESIS OPTION – SAMPLE OUTLINE

Design Research and Professional Project Thesis Sample Outline

1. Introduction

    What is the issue you will explore, and why is it important? Introduce the case or cases that will be the focus of this thesis. Introduce the methods that will be used to establish a critical position and to evaluate the work presented in the thesis.

2. Literature and Precedent Reviews

    What has been written about this subject? Is it typical or unusual for this issue to arise in design practice? What methods/design strategies have been used to answer questions like yours in the past? How can you group these methods, in terms of their assumptions about the subject area? Who else has written about this subject, and in what fields? What patterns can you detect in the way others have addressed this question, or similar questions? What do you think has not been done by others, either in research, theoretical work or design work, that needs to be done for you to answer your questions/address the issues you feel are significant in your work?

3. Development of Critical Position / Framework for Design

    How will you use your literature and precedents to define a "good" design research outcome, in relation to the issues you addressed in chapter 2 (such as existing theories of aesthetics, landscape/site functions, and cultural/social meaning)? Are there new theories or organizations of theories that you need to propose in order to pursue your questions and frame your work?

4. Methods and Study Area / Study Participants

    What ontological or epistemological frame will you use to approach your topic, and why? What kind of data will you need, and why? Specifically, how will you collect your data (details of mapping techniques, or interview protocols, or field and lab work of other kinds)? How will you analyze your data, and why?

5. Results / Site Analysis and Design Studies

    What did your analyses/resolution show? (include figures and tables that summarize your results or visuals that clearly represent your design process and outcomes.)

    Did your analyses of the data allow you to answer your questions? Were you surprised by any of the results? How do your results compare to the findings of others cited in your literature review? How did your actual use of the methods you selected contribute to answering your questions? Were there any results that led you to believe that you and /or others have framed the questions inappropriately, and led you to any insights about how this subject might be approached in the future?

6. Reflections on Your Approach and Implications for Design

    This section should "close the circle" of your thesis by referring back to all 5 previous chapters. This is where you honestly and explicitly compare your outcomes to your intentions and compare your work to your critical position/framework and to the work of others. How did your actual use of the methods you selected contribute to you resolution of your question? Were there any results that led you to believe that you and/or others have framed the questions inappropriately, and led you to any insights about how this subject might be approached in the future? How might your results be useful to practitioners?

7. References

APPENDIX B. SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE GROUP PROJECT REPORT

1. Introduction

   Significance of the issues/questions/prototypes the student team will explore (personal, theoretical, professional, and social). Introduce the case or cases that will be the focus of this project. Introduce the methods that will be used to establish a critical position and to determine the success of the design studies presented in the project. Why is a team approach appropriate? What will be gained by working as part of a collaborative team?

2. Literature and Precedent reviews

   What has been written about this subject? Who else has tried to design something like this, and how did they do it? What related prototypes exist that could be useful to your design studies? What do you think has not been done by others, either in theoretical work or design work, that needs to be done for you to answer your questions/address the issues you feel are significant in your design?

3. Development of a Critical Position(s) for Design

   How will you use your literature and precedents to define a "good" design outcome, in terms of the existing relevant theories and practice? What framework might you develop to guide your design? Are there new theories or organizations of theories that you need to propose in order to pursue your questions? How will the position or positions framed by the group be tested?

4. Design Studies / Research Results

   This section needs to represent the design work as clearly as possible for each individual student as well as the team design work, including relevant analyses. If it is a research project, then this section should address what your analyses showed. (Typically, this section contains figures and tables that summarize your results.) How do you judge the significance, accuracy, internal consistency, and repeatability of the methods that produced these results?

5. Reflections and Conclusions of individual research and investigation

   This section should "close the circle", by referring back to all 4 previous sections. This is where each student explicitly compares his/her outcomes to intentions and compares the work to the work of others.

6. Reflections on Conclusions of team research and investigation

   This section should "close the circle" of the larger Group Project, by referring back to all previous sections through the lens of the team. This is where the team honestly and explicitly compares outcomes to intentions and argues for how the project contributes to the building of knowledge in landscape architecture.

7. References