

# MLA CAPSTONE GUIDELINES

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[Purpose of the Capstone](#)

[Overview: Four Capstone Options](#)

[Typical Capstone Schedule: Courses + Credit](#)

[Requirements](#)

[Selecting A Topic](#)

[Working with a Thesis Committee or Faculty Supervisor](#)

[Thesis Option Description + Resources](#)

[Group Project Option Description + Resources](#)

[Capstone Studio Option Description](#)

[ARC Fellowship Option Description](#)

## 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: FOUR CAPSTONE OPTIONS

There are four 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.

NOTES: Students in the MLA/MArch or MLA/MUP concurrent degree program are required to select the Thesis option. The ARC Fellowship option is limited to students who are nominated by CBE faculty and matched to an applied research project by the Dean and ARC Committee.

### 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.

### Option 4: ARC Fellowship

The **ARC Fellowship** option is limited to students nominated for and matched to an applied research project through the [Applied Research Consortium](#) (ARC) program. This option offers the opportunity to lead applied design research with guidance from ARC faculty and firm advisors (and LA faculty advisor if the ARC advisor is not LA core faculty) over 3-4 quarters. This option is done individually. Through the ARC program, the student is matched to a research topic that addresses current topics in the built environment and that align the student's academic and professional goals.

CAPSTONE SCHEDULE, COURSES + CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

**Preparing for the Capstone Project – Year 1 and Year 2 (MLA I) | Year 1 (MLA II)**

**Program Introduction**

Students take three specific theory and research focused courses in preparation for the capstone project. 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 571 Introduction to Faculty Research to become familiar with individual 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 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 572 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 your last year, if you decide on a topic and method that requires such an approach.

**Course Sequence for all MLA students + all Capstone Options prior to Final Year**

	Autumn	Winter	Spring
<b>MLA I</b>			
<b>Year 1:</b>	LARCH 570 Theory + Scholarship* (3 cr)		LARCH 571 Intro to Fac. Research* (1 cr)
<b>Year 2:</b>			LARCH 572 Research Methods** (3 cr)
<b>MLA II</b>			
<b>Year 1:</b>	LARCH 570 Theory + Scholarship* (3 cr)		LARCH 571 Intro to Fac. Research* (1 cr)
			LARCH 572 Research Methods** (3 cr)

\*Required Course

\*\* Research Methods Selective: LARCH 572 recommended, see *MLA Curriculum Course Guidelines* for approved alternatives.

**Doing the Capstone Project – Final Year of MLA Program**

**Capstone Survey + Forms Summary Chart**

	Aut Qtr		Spr Qtr				
	Capstone Survey	Credit Agreement	Masters Degree Request	Committee Signature Form (Warrant)	Upload Final Document (Dept)	Masters Supervisory Committee Approval	Upload Thesis + MSCA form to ETD Account
<b>Thesis</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Group Project</b>	X	X	X	X	X		
<b>Capstone Studio</b>	X		X	X	X		
<b>ARC Fellowship</b>	X	X	X	X	X		

**Autumn Quarter (Capstone Prep Quarter)**

**Step 1: Capstone Survey**

In September 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, Group Project and ARC options, students also include a topic and a brief statement of what they intend to work on and with which faculty they would like to work. Students also indicate who they plan to work with, if they plan to do a Group Project.

**Step 2: Prep Seminars**

In the autumn quarter, students take a preparation seminar course for their capstone.

- Thesis, Group Project and ARC students take LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar.
- Capstone Studio students take LARCH 702 Capstone Studio Preparation Seminar (1 cr), if offered. Faculty teaching the Capstone Studio may elect to offer a preparation seminar in autumn in addition to the studio course in winter and spring.

**Step 3: Faculty Committees Assigned – Week 5**

During autumn quarter, the faculty will meet to determine MLA Capstone Committees and Advisors for Thesis, Group Project, and ARC students based on the student preferences for committee members and research topics from the Capstone Survey. Committees and advisors 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 (12 required credits)

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.

Open Elective Credits to support capstone (optional)

Additionally, as part of their degree requirements, students fulfill (12) Open Elective (400+ level courses) credits over the 2-3 years of their degree. Open Elective courses may be strategically selected to support capstone work. Open Elective courses may be taken any quarter; however, for Thesis, Group Project, and ARC 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.

Capstone Courses

- LARCH 590 – Prep Seminar for Thesis, Group Project + ARC Fellowship
- LARCH 700 – Thesis
- LARCH 703 – Group Project
- LARCH 702 – Capstone Studio
- BE 600 – ARC Fellowship
- LARCH 701 – Thesis Studio – optional support course for Thesis, Group Project + ARC Fellowship

	Autumn	Winter	Spring
<b>Thesis</b>			
Capstone Credits (required)	<b>LARCH 590 Thesis Prep. Seminar</b> (3 credits)	<b>LARCH 700 Thesis</b> (2-7 credits split between Committee Chair and member(s)) Typically: 3 cr Chair/ 3 cr Member	<b>LARCH 700 Thesis</b> (2-7 credits split between Committee Chair and member(s)) Typically: 2 cr Chair / 1 cr Member
Open Electives (optional)		<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1- 6 credits)	<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1 credit)
<b>Group Project</b>			
Capstone Credits (required)	<b>LARCH 590 Thesis Prep. Seminar</b> (3 credits)	<b>LARCH 703 Group Project</b> (3-6 credits)	<b>LARCH 703 Group Project</b> (3-6 credits)
Open Electives (optional)		<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1- 6 credits)	<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1 credit)
<b>Capstone Studio</b>			
Capstone Credits (required)	<b>LARCH 702 Capstone Studio Prep. Seminar</b> (1 credit, if course offered)	<b>LARCH 702 Capstone Studio</b> (6 credits)	<b>LARCH 702 Capstone Studio</b> (6 credits, or 5 credits if Prep Seminar offered in autumn)
<b>ARC Fellowship</b>			
Capstone Credits (required)	<b>LARCH 590 Thesis Prep. Seminar</b> (3 credits) <b>BE 600 ARC Independent Study</b> (3 credits)	<b>BE 600 ARC Independent Study</b> (3 credits)	<b>BE 600 ARC Independent Study</b> (3 credits)
Open Electives (optional)		<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1- 6 credits)	<b>LARCH 701 Thesis Studio</b> (optional, 1 credit)

**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
- ARC Fellowship    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 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of Capstone)**

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. By the end of the first quarter, students should aim to complete their capstone to 65%.

## Finishing the Capstone Project and Applying to Graduate

### Spring Quarter (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of Capstone)

Over the second quarter, students will focus on completing their capstone including a final presentation and final documentation.

Additionally, over the quarter, students need to submit their Master's degree request and other steps in preparation of graduating. Full details for the required steps and schedule for the final quarter is included in the Graduation and Final Quarter Checklist for MLA Students

[Overview for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter](#)

**Step 1: Register for at least 2 credits – Week 1**

**Step 2: Apply to Graduate / Submit Master's Degree Request – Week 1-2 recommended; Week 7 required**

**Step 3: Review Graduate School website – Week 1-2**

**Step 4: Review ISS Final Quarter Registration Information and Checklist (For International Students only) – Week 1-2**

**Step 5: Confirm the schedule/deadlines to complete your capstone – Week 3**

**Step 6: Activate your ETD (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation) account (Thesis Students Only) – Week 3**

**Step 7: Review your DARS Report (single degree) / Degree Checklist (multiple degrees) – Week 3-5**

**Step 8: Review ETD Formatting Requirements (Thesis Students Only) – Week 4-5**

**Step 9: Submit Signed Committee Signature Form (formerly Warrant) – Week 9-10**

**Step 10: Upload your final Capstone Document – Week 9-10**

**Step 11: Submit your ETD + Masters Supervisory Committee Approval Form (Thesis students only) – Week 9-10**

## 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 regarding 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.

### Managing Up

See [10 Steps for "Managing Up"](#) for useful suggestions managing your committee and advisors.

## 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 – MLA LARCH 700 Thesis Credit Agreement 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.



## 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

## GROUP PROJECT OPTION DESCRIPTION

The **Group Project** option may be self-initiated by the students or could be 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 – MLA LARCH 703 Group Project Credits Agreement 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.

## 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

## 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 C. SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE CAPSTONE STUDIO PORTFOLIO

### 1. Capstone Studio Introduction (for capstone studio)

Overview of the capstone studio premise, approach, and structure including determination of site(s), client(s), advisors and consultants. Significance of the issues/questions/approach the studio will explore (theoretical, professional, social). Introduce the methods that will be used to establish a critical position and to determine the success of the studio work. Include site research and analysis, literature and precedents used by the whole capstone studio.

The next sections for are individuals or individual teams work.

### 2. Project Topic + Question of Inquiry

Introduce the project focus/topic of inquiry for the individual project. Define what you have studied through the capstone studio. The question of inquiry should pose a question or point of view.

### 3. Critical Position

Explain how your focus/topic is situated within the larger terrain of landscape architecture and why you are interested in the focus/topic/type of work. How is your work situated within and engaging with (and potentially pushing) contemporary or emerging topics in landscape architecture? Explain the main points of the research you have done (theory, proposed projects, built precedents) and using a critical lens, articulate your opinions about the research. What are your thoughts about the inherent assumptions, limitations or potentials of the ideas and work you researched? Why do you agree or disagree? How will you use this research to help define your stance or view? Why are you interested in this focus or type of work? Why is it relevant to landscape architecture? Why is it relevant to you? How will you use your literature review 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 be tested?

### 4. Precedent Studies

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?

### 5. Design Studies / Research Results / Project Work

This section needs to represent the design work as clearly as possible for each individual student/team, including relevant analyses. As a design research project, this section should address what you proposed as well as what your analyses showed.

### 6. Reflections on Conclusions of individual project research and investigation

This section should "close the circle", by referring back to previous sections. This is where each student/team explicitly compares their outcomes to intentions and compares the work to the work of others. You should honestly and explicitly compare outcomes to intentions and argue for how the project contributes to the building of knowledge in landscape architecture.

### 7. Reflections on Conclusions of Capstone Studio research and investigation

This section should "close the circle" by referring back to the first section in particular through the lens of the whole studio.

### 8. References

### 9. Image Credits (or indicated throughout the document)

## ARC FELLOWSHIP OPTION DESCRIPTION

The **ARC Fellowship** option is only available to students who have been selected by the Applied Research Consortium (ARC) program as an ARC Fellow. ARC is an interdisciplinary group of built environment firms working together with CBE students to identify topics and co-create student-led applied research. ARC cultivates collaboration among industry leaders, graduate students, and university faculty to shape the future of the built environment.

ARC Fellows are nominated by CBE faculty or department chairs. The ARC program conducts a student-driven process to match the ARC Fellow to a research topic at an ARC member firm that addresses current topics in the built environment and that aligns with the student's academic and professional goals. The ARC Fellow conducts the research individually with guidance from an ARC Faculty Advisor and Firm Advisor. See the [ARC website](#) for additional information about ARC Fellowships including the nomination process, course requirements, product requirements, and funding.

To be eligible to be the student's capstone project, the ARC Fellowships must be 3-4 consecutive quarters and begin in the autumn quarter. All students selecting the ARC Fellowship option will develop an in-depth research project related to landscape architecture that is documented in a final written report submitted to the Department, the industry partner, and ARC. If the ARC Faculty Advisor is not LA core faculty, a LA Faculty Advisor for the purposes of the capstone will be assigned. The role and responsibilities of the LA Faculty Advisor in relation to the ARC Firm Advisor and ARC Faculty Advisor will be negotiated to ensure that the research project and written report represent a level of scholarly and professional rigor that the Department considers necessary for 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 research 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

- **Research 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).
- **Department Presentations:** (3 - proposal, mid-review, and final): present visual and written products as scoped through your related course(s) and with your Advisors. Professional practitioners, scholars, and faculty in related departments will be invited to review and critique presentations at appropriate times. Presentation dates and times will be organized by the faculty member teaching LARCH 701.
- **Written Document:** a final report that includes the standard sections of a research report or other professional report and reflects the rigor of methods and depth of evaluation explored over the course of the capstone.

### Advisers: ARC Committee

ARC Committee: ARC Firm Advisor, ARC Faculty Advisor, LA Faculty Advisor

- ARC Firm Advisor: determined by the ARC program.
- ARC Faculty Advisor: determined by the ARC program.
- LA Faculty Advisor: LA Dept. Graduate School faculty member (core faculty only). The ARC Faculty Advisor and LA Faculty Advisor can be the same person if ARC Faculty Advisor is a LA Dept. Graduate School faculty member (core faculty) member.

Students should remember that they must abide by decisions made by their ARC Committee.

**Courses**

**Required:**

- LARCH 590 Thesis Preparation Seminar (3) Autumn
- BE 600 ARC Independent Study (3) Autumn
- BE 600 ARC Independent Study (3) Winter
- BE 600 ARC Independent Study (3) Spring

**Optional Courses:** (fulfill Open Elective credits)

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

**Autumn Quarter**

By end of Autumn Quarter, you should have:

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