

Senior Seminar Project: Some Big Questions to Consider
Instructor: Dr. Paul Cook
ENG-L 495: Fall 2018

As you begin to think even more deeply about your Senior Seminar Final Projects, consider several different angles:

I. **First, what should you be looking for in your past assignments/student work?**
Generally, you can look for a variety of things, but keep your eye out for the following:

A. Do particular topics/subjects stand out in your work across classes or disciplines?
(One of my past students was very interested in the benefits of breastfeeding—she did a psychology research project on it and a PR proposal...in her portfolio, she could have organized her classroom work samples around this topic, or drawn particular attention to it.)

B. Have you worked on particular themes or seen threads develop throughout your coursework?
(For example, have you studied the marginalization of women in contemporary society across classes or disciplines? Has your work focused on a particular theme such as the impact of technology on culture?)

C. Have you developed skills in particular work areas that you can document across assignments or classes?
(For example, have you learned how to be a better, more efficient researcher—or incorporate research into papers, or have you learned how to develop a better thesis or adapt your work to a particular audience?)

D. Has your work focused on a particular style or approach across classes or assignments?
(For example, have you consistently explored Romanticism, or mostly American authors, or have you completed a number of interviewing projects?)

E. Have you learned content or processes which surprise you, interest you, or suggest particular strengths, weaknesses, or even gaps in your education?
(For example, looking back, have you learned more about one subject area than you expected? Are there any gaps in your education that you would like to repair? Any “dream courses” you regret not taking?)

II. **How do you plan to organize your work?**

A. Chronologically—courses taken (by year, semester?)

B. Chronologically--skill development (Will you identify a few key skills and show growth in those areas?)

- C. Topically-- according to preparation for your chosen field or discipline (will you talk about key preparation completed)
- D. Topically—according to curriculum, extra-curricular, experiential (according to the big three: class content, student experiences, work experience)
- E. Spatially—in terms of how content relates to other content (according to how subjects worked together to create a particularly skilled individual)
- F. Visually?
- G. In terms of strengths? Think about reader interest, how you'll make content stand out and how to connect your experiences and preparation in a logical and coherent way.

III. For whom are you developing this Project? Why?

Think carefully about audience and purpose.

IV. How can your Senior Seminar project help you beyond a mere class grade? What kinds of “work” can the project do for you and your future plans?

How can you develop or “spin” a project in such a way that it can do some work for you beyond Senior Seminar and a course grade?

V. What connections can you make between your burgeoning Senior Seminar project and what we’ve been reading this term?