

## Capstone I AY16 Program Review: Program Outcomes and Capstone Assignment Alignment

### PSYCHOLOGY

#### Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

##### **Psychology Program and the University Mission**

The degree program in psychology supports the university mission by providing specialized study in psychology within the context of the broader goals of a liberal arts education. Psychology program graduates go on to a variety of graduate programs, including Ph.D. programs in various fields of experimental and clinical psychology, and Masters programs in a variety of specialties, such as school psychology or social work. Others go on to medical training such as physician assistant and nurse practitioner programs. Locally, graduates have obtained various positions in social services in La Grande and other towns, working, for example, with children and families, the elderly, substance abusers, and the developmentally disabled.

Students receiving a B.S. or B.A. in Psychology will have the following:

- **Content Knowledge:** The ability to demonstrate knowledge of content within the discipline.
- **Communication:** The ability to read and discuss primary research in psychology.
- **Inquiry:** The ability to design and carry out a research project.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to describe evidence, draw conclusions, and write in a scientific style.

#### Capstone Assignment

##### **Program Capstone/Senior Project Analysis**

Majors take this two-term sequence with a progressive assignment in which students search and summarize the professional literature (reflects content knowledge, communication, and critical thinking), propose and design an experimental study (reflects content knowledge, inquiry, and critical thinking) conduct the study (reflects inquiry and critical thinking), analyze the collected data (reflects content knowledge, inquiry, and critical thinking), and create and defend a poster which displays the project in the professional format of the discipline (reflects content knowledge, communication, inquiry, and critical thinking). Honors students have the option of electing to do a thesis rather than a poster.

##### **Brief Outline of Course and Course Objectives:**

The purpose of this capstone course is to provide students the opportunity to engage in an experimental research project. Students will implement the individually created research proposals designed in Psy 460. Students will revise the research proposals if necessary, collect and analyze data, write an APA-style research paper based on their findings, and create a poster presentation (using MSOffice

Powerpoint software) of their research for review and comment by course participants and EOU psychology faculty.

Course objectives are to create a research hypothesis based on an investigation of relevant primary sources, to understand the process in gaining IRB approval and informed consent, to engage in the experimental research process, to analyze data using appropriate statistical methods, and to write and present research findings in a professional manner.

### **Closing the Loop Statement**

The Psychology faculty specifically designed the capstone experience to bring together all of the Program Outcomes, and we revisit this annually to ensure coordination between the capstone goals, the Program Outcomes, and the American Psychological Association standards for undergraduate psychology degrees. As a result of the Program Review Workshop, the psychology faculty reviewed the program project analysis and explicitly stated the links between the capstone and the program outcomes.

**Action Plan:** Revise PLOs to more specifically define discipline-based expectations, while remaining aligned with General Education Outcomes.