Hellenic College Religious Studies Program

Capstone Project

PROTOCOL

As easy as 1, 2, 3!

1) Complete the Capstone Project Application
2) Prepare your Capstone Project Narrative & Attach Tentative Bibliography
3) Submit the Application, the Narrative and the Bibliography to Religious Studies Program Director

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
First Friday of October (if completing during the Fall semester)
First Friday of March (if completing during the Spring semester)
Capstone Project Application

The Capstone Project is a comprehensive senior research paper which summarizes a student’s general knowledge of religion, while delving into a particular expression of it from an Orthodox Christian perspective. In this project, the student will demonstrate academic comprehensiveness, as well as synthetic and analytic skills in a measurable way.

Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

Intended Graduation (Fall or Spring) ______________________ GPA: ______________________

Religious Studies Major (A or B) __________________________ Minor (if any) ____________________________

Capstone Project Title: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Project presented part of course: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Faculty supervising the project: _________________________________________________________________________________________________

In a chronological order, list all religious studies courses you have completed, or are in process of completion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Year/Semester</th>
<th>Faculty’s Last Name</th>
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Student’s Signature & Date: _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Superfising Faculty’s Signature & Date: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Program Director’s Signature & Date: ______________________________________________________________________________________

(Attach Proposal Narrative & Tentative Bibliography)
Capstone Proposal

Narrative

The Capstone Proposal Narrative is a one page document addressing the general argument, the research question(s), and the methodology.

This document shall include the following:

**Project Title & Author**

**First Paragraph:**

*General Argument*

In the first paragraph, please define what you intend to investigate and/or demonstrate. Is it the Bible’s impact upon Orthodox Christianity? Is it a general theory of religion vis-à-vis Orthodox Christianity? Is it the historical development of a particular doctrine, ethical norm, or ritual of the Orthodox Christian tradition? Are you investigating a creative way in making relevant the connection between religion and your minor concentration?

**Second Paragraph:**

*Research Question(s) to be addressed*

In the second paragraph, please state your research question(s), and explain why you wish to investigate it/them within the framework of the general study of religion, and what you hope to learn through this particular research project.

**Third Paragraph:**

*Data Gathering, Analysis & Sharing*

In the third paragraph, please explain how you intend to gather the resources which will answer your research question(s). Will you perform document analysis; that is write your capstone project similarly to a typical final class paper? Will you perform your own field research; that is interview people? Will you do both? Defend your scope in choosing a particular methodology and explain how you will analyze and use this data. (Note: if conducting interviews, the general social science standards for research on human subjects may apply both in the U.S. and abroad.)

**Tentative Bibliography:**

*(please attach)*
Hellenic College Religious Studies Program

Capstone Paper

Structure

The Capstone Paper is a comprehensive senior research project which summarizes a student’s general knowledge of religion, while delving into a particular expression of it from an Orthodox Christian perspective. In this project, the student will demonstrate academic comprehensiveness, as well as synthetic and analytic skills in a measurable way. The Capstone Paper is presented in the context of any Religious Studies course. The following structure is a recommended guideline.

A) Introduction
(One to two pages)
First, the capstone paper shall begin with an introduction which will serve as a bridge between the proposal narrative and the capstone paper itself. Second, the student shall outline the standard general approach to the study of religion; that is the study of religious ideas versus ideas about religion. Third, the student shall define the link between the standard general approach to the study of religion and the student’s topic of analysis.

B) Contents/Topic of Analysis
(Seven to twelve pages)
In this section the student will explore and contextualize the topic(s) of analysis in such a way as to demonstrate a general comprehension of the four areas of religious studies—biblical, theoretical, historical theology and practical theology—while expanding one particular area in line with the requirements of the course in which the capstone paper is presented.

1) Biblical Area
In the biblical area, the student may distinguish between different approaches to the Scripture; the interpretation of sacred texts in various cultural, historical and literary contexts; evaluate the impact of sacred texts upon the formation of theological doctrines, ethical norms, and forms of worship.

2) Theoretical Area
In the theoretical area, the student may engage a general theory of religion from an Orthodox Christian perspective, as applicable to the topic. The academic approach to religion focuses on a number of central questions about religious phenomena, attempting to answer—in a scientific fashion—what religion is and does. These central questions are based on observations, comparisons, and generalizations, and have been developed by thinkers such as Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer (animism & magic), Sigmund Freud (personality), David Émile Durkheim (society), Karl Marx (alienation), Max Weber (social action), Mircea Eliade (sacred), Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (ritual), Clifford Geertz (cultural system), René Girard (mimesis and violence), and others.
3) Historical Theology Area
In the area of historical theology, the student will contextualize the topic within the historical framework of Christian theology in general and of Orthodox Christianity in particular. The topic should display familiarity with the evolution of doctrines; it should identify major theological thinkers; it should demonstrate solid engagement of contentious theological topics within Christianity at large; and it should demonstrate the contemporary relevance of various historical events.

4) Practical Theology Area
In the practical theology area, the student should demonstrate the relevance of religion in one’s life. As such, the student can either demonstrate theological preparedness to assist in spreading the Gospel in a way that maintains fidelity to the Orthodox Christian tradition, while displaying respect for other faiths and religions; or should demonstrate theological preparedness to promote the value of religion and theology to a broader audience beyond the confines of a religious organization; or should make relevant the critical connection between religion—as an applicable system of meaning in one’s professional life—and the student’s minor concentration.

C) Conclusion
(one page)
In the conclusion, the student will summarize the key findings of the research project, and articulate their relevance to the study of religion.

D) Bibliography/Referencing/Research on Human Subjects
(two to three pages)
Original research is anchored into solid referencing, which demonstrates where and how the student found that fact or piece of information that the student is writing about. References include sources of data such as bibliography, databases and human subjects, and they ought to be listed by primary, secondary, and tertiary relevance to the project. Primary references include standard disciplinary concepts and doctrines (e.g., dogmas, Symbol of Faith, Canons, biblical texts, etc.), events (e.g., Fall of Constantinople, War of Independence, etc.), and empirical research derived from first hand or contemporary accounts of events, results of empirical observations (e.g., surveys, church membership, etc.) Secondary references analyze, review, or summarize information in primary references. Tertiary references provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources, such as book reviews, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. If conducting interviews, the general social science standards for research on human subjects may apply both in the U.S. and abroad. Please meet with the Religious Studies Program Director before you begin your research. For citation style and referencing, please use any recent printed edition, or on-line version of The Chicago Manual of Style.
Capstone Project
Mapping

Step 1) DEFINITION OF RELIGION:
Insert a comprehensive definition of religion (theism vs. non-theism, sacred vs. profane, solidarity, religion as antidote to fear, etc.)

Step 2) THE STUDY OF RELIGION:
Explain the structure of the academic study of religion by focusing on:
a) ideas about religion classified from the perspective of cultural and historic periods about which various theories had been formulated by social scientists. Focus on phenomena such as animism, magic, fetishism, taboo, totemism, ancestors worship, tribal gods and divine kings, nature spirits, fertility cults, social action), and
b) religious ideas promoted by organized religions:
  • theistic (monotheism, dualism, henotheism, polytheism);
  • non-theistic and semi-theistic (Buddhism, deism, pantheism);
  • institutional structure: doctrine, ethics, ritual, sacred texts.

Step 3) STEERING TO TOPIC
Survey the four areas of religious studies (biblical, theoretical, historical theology, and practical theology), then introduce the area(s) of your choice.

Step 4) MAPPING:
Based on your focus, proceed to the general mapping of the organized religion(s) you are focusing on. Contextualize your topic by presenting:
  • general outlook (Catechism, generalities about the faith),
  • historical development, demographics and world distribution,
  • sacred texts,
  • doctrines,
  • ethical norms,
  • ritual complexities.

Step 5) CAPSTONE PAPER
Once the topic had been introduced by following the four steps (definition of religion, the study of religion, steering to topic, and the mapping of the organized religion), you may proceed to the topic of analysis in conjunction with the requirements of the course which the paper is presented.
01 Definition

02 Study

03 Steering to Topic

04 Mapping

CRASTONE PAPER

Once the topic has been introduced by following the logical steps of definition, the study of religion, the study of organized religion, the religious and philosophical, and the religious ideas associated with religion. Following on themes by including references to themes, non-religious ideas, and the structure of the academic program, the student is introduced to the study of organized religion in conjunction with the requirements of the course and in accordance with the regulations of the university. You may proceed to the topic of organized religion, ensuring to your and the mapping of the presentation.

Mapping

Steering to Topic

03 or your choice

Introduction to the study of organized religion by focusing on themes, addressing the structure of the academic program, the student is introduced to the study of organized religion in conjunction with the requirements of the course and in accordance with the regulations of the university. You may proceed to the topic of organized religion, ensuring to your and the mapping of the presentation.
Capstone Project Areas

DOCTRINE (dogmatic theology)

Generalities

Divine Revelation
- Natural vs. Supra-Natural; Scripture; Tradition

God: One in Being
- Knowledge of God (Natural vs. Supra-Natural; Apophatic vs. Kataphatic)
- God’s Attributes (Natural, Supra-Natural)
- Dogma of Holy Trinity

Divine Providence

God the Creator (God the Father)
- Creation of the Invisible World
- Creation of the Visible World
- Man’s Creation: Soul, Sin, Original Sin

God the Savior (God the Son)
- General Christology (preparation of humanity, prophecies, incarnation, hypostatic union, kenosis, heresies)
- Christ’s Three Offices: Prophet, Priest, and King
- Salvation of Humanity

God the Sanctifier (God the Holy Spirit)
- The Holy Spirit and human salvation,
- Divine Grace: Freedom, Predestination
- Salvation: Subjective, Objective
- Veneration of saints, relics, icons, cross
- The Church (ecclesiology, members, hierarchy)
- The Holy Sacraments and Sacramentals

God the Judge (Eschatology)
- Death: Individual Judgment vs. Collective Judgment
- Roman-Catholic teachings on Purgatory
- Jesus Christ’s Second Coming, Millenarianism
ETHICS (moral theology)
A) General Theological Ethics

Moral Law
- Moral Order
- Christian Moral Order

Divine Law
- Eternity, Natural Moral Law
- Positive Law (Old Testament vs. New Testament)

Human Law
- Human laws and rules
- Church commandments
- Civil Law (Interpretation, change, enforcement)
- Moral duty
- Human Rights

Moral Consciousness
- Notion, reality, proofs, essence, origins,

Freedom of Will
- Christianity and Freedom of Will
- Moral Responsibility
- Moral person and personality
- The Ideal of Morality

Human Acts
- Morality of human acts
- Scope, criteria, motivation, acts: good, bad, apathy

Virtue
- Sin: nature, origins, causes, process, gravity, types of sins, vices, habits

Holy Sacraments
- Means for spiritual healing
- Sacraments and Sacramentals

Punishment
B) Individual and Social Ethics

Individual Ethics

Duties toward God
- Inner Worship
- Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love

Outer Worship
- Prayer and Fasting
- Public Worship
- Oath, Swearing, Religiosity

Duties towards the Self
- General duties: self-respect, humbleness, self-love
- Special duties toward the soul: intellect, emotions, will, education, honor
- Duties towards the body: moral value, entertainment, physical education, defense of life, sacrifice, suicide, mutilation, euthanasia, etc.,
- Labor, Profession, and Retribution for work

Duties toward the Neighbor
- Love, Justice, socializing, altruism, and friendship

Duties toward the Neighbor’s Spiritual Goods
- Honor, Trust, Truth, Loyalty

Duties toward the Neighbor’s Material Goods and Public Goods

Man, Nature and Environment

Social Ethics

Christian Family

State

Church
General Notions about Worship
- Origins and History, Old Testament and New Testament
- Essence of worship
- Scope of worship: terminology (adoration, veneration)

Worship Leader
- Clergy Ranking and Role in Worship
- Role of Laity in the Church

Worship Calendar and Time
- Church Calendar and Ecclesiastic Year
- Sunday Worship and Feast-Days
- Worship of Angels, Holy Cross, Holy Relics
- Fasting
- Remembrance of the Dead

Sacred Space, Sacred Objects and Sacred Places
- Church Buildings, Chapels, Cemetery, Holy Land
- Icons, Liturgical Objects, Clergy Vestments
- Service Books for Clergy and Laity

Forms of Worship
- Readings, Chanting and Hymnography
- Structure of Collective Prayer and Service
- Divine Liturgy (types, structures, times)
- Seven Sacraments
- Sacramentals and Special Prayers
CATECHISM

General Notions
• Salvation as the Primary Duty of the Faithful
• Divine Revelation
• Scripture and Tradition

Faith
• The Creed
• On God’s Existence
• Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
• Divine Sacraments
• On the Everlasting Life

Hope
• Prayer in General
• Lord’s Prayer
• Collective Prayer in the Church
• Divine Public Worship
• On the Service of the Divine Liturgy
• On the Service of the Holy Sacraments (Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Confession, Holy Orders, Marriage, and Unction)
• On the Service of the Sacramentals
• On Feast Days, and Fasting

Love
• Christian Love
• Moral Law
• Church Commandments
• Moral Consciousness
• Moral Virtues
• Sin(s) (Ancestral, Deadly Sins)
• The Ten Commandments
• Duties of the Christian (God, Self, Neighbor)
• Family, State, Church, and the World
• The Beatitudes
HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Beginnings
• New Testament, Early Christianity, Roman persecutions, and heresies

History and Historical Theology
• The Seven Ecumenical Councils
• The Rise of Monasticism
• Art, Liturgy and Hymnography
• The Byzantine Commonwealth 1000–1500
• The Crusades: Byzantium and the West 1204–1453
• The Rise of Hesychasm
• Mount Athos and the Ottomans
• The Great Church in Captivity
• Orthodoxy and the West: Reformation to Enlightenment
• Orthodoxy and Nationalism

The Russian Church
• The Russian Church: the first centuries 1000–1400
• Russian piety and Orthodox culture 1380–1589
• Art and liturgy in Russia: Rublev and his successors
• Eastern Orthodoxy in Russia and Ukraine in the age of counter-Reformation
• The Russian Orthodox Church in Imperial Russia 1721–1917
• Russian piety and culture from Peter the Great to 1917

Oriental Christianity
• Oriental Christianity: Armenians, Copts, Melkites, Nestorians and Jacobites
• Church and Diaspora
• The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahedo Church
• Coptic Christianity in modern Egypt
• Syriac Christianity in the modern Middle East

The Modern World
• Emigration and Diaspora: Russian, Greek, Antiochian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian
• The Orthodox Church and Communism
• Modern Spirituality and the Orthodox Church
• Bioethics, Science and Religions
• Political Theology
On the Religious Reverberations of the Peloponnesian War

By Nikolai Berdyaev

Hellenic College, Spring 2025

Capstone Project

Submitted to the Religious Studies Program of Hellenic College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

Supervising Faculty

Religious Studies Program, Chair
ABSTRACT

This paper will seek to answer the question if......

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION:

Practical Theology & Theory of Religion

METHODOLOGY

In this capstone paper I will first survey the main literature on the topic, and then compare it with public opinion about religion and the Peloponnesian War among recent college graduates. In order to test their understanding of the Peloponnesian War against the historical record an on-line survey will be conducted to gather primary source data from recent college graduates of classical studies. The survey will collect quantitative data on the range of opinions, and systematic yet random sample of colleges accredited by NEASC.

CLASS CONTEXT

This capstone paper was presented as final paper in RELG-9999 Religion and History taught by Dr. Digenes Akritas at Hellenic College during Spring semester 2025
Hellenic College Religious Studies Program

Capstone Project Bibliography

(This is a recommended bibliography compiled based on texts used in religious studies core and elective courses as well as courses relevant to religious studies.)


Karanos, Grammenos. (Καράνου Γραμμένου) Τὸ Καλοφωνικὸν Εἱρμολόγιον, Διδακτορικὴ Δι ατριβῆ κατατεθεῖσα στὸ Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνῶν: Αθῆναι, 2011.


Nicozisin, George. The Road to Orthodox Phronema: Christian Education in the Greek
Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. Brookline, MA: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Department of Religious Education, 1977.


Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide

The Chicago Manual of Style presents two basic documentation systems: (1) notes and bibliography and (2) author-date. Choosing between the two often depends on subject matter and the nature of sources cited, as each system is favored by different groups of scholars.

The notes and bibliography style is preferred by many in the humanities, including those in literature, history, and the arts. This style presents bibliographic information in notes and, often, a bibliography. It accommodates a variety of sources, including esoteric ones less appropriate to the author-date system.

The author-date system has long been used by those in the physical, natural, and social sciences. In this system, sources are briefly cited in the text, usually in parentheses, by author’s last name and date of publication. The short citations are amplified in a list of references, where full bibliographic information is provided.

Aside from the use of notes versus parenthetical references in the text, the two systems share a similar style. Click on the tabs below to see some common examples of materials cited in each style, including examples of common electronic sources. For numerous specific examples, see chapters 14 and 15 of the 16th edition of The Chicago Manual of Style.

Notes and Bibliography: Sample Citations

The following examples illustrate citations using the notes and bibliography system. Examples of notes are followed by shortened versions of citations to the same source. For more details and many more examples, see chapter 14 of The Chicago Manual of Style. For examples of the same citations using the author-date system, click on the Author-Date tab above.

Book

One author


Two or more authors


For four or more authors, list all of the authors in the bibliography; in the note, list only the first author, followed by et al. (“and others”):

1. Dana Barnes et al., *Plastics: Essays on American Corporate Ascendance in the 1960s* . . .
2. Barnes et al., *Plastics* . . .

Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author


Editor, translator, or compiler in addition to author


Chapter or other part of a book


Chapter of an edited volume originally published elsewhere (as in primary sources)


Preface, foreword, introduction, or similar part of a book

2. Rieger, introduction, xxxiii.


Book published electronically

If a book is available in more than one format, cite the version you consulted. For books consulted online, list a URL; include an access date only if one is required by your publisher or discipline. If no fixed page numbers are available, you can include a section title or a chapter or other number.

3. Austen, Pride and Prejudice.


Journal article

Article in a print journal

In a note, list the specific page numbers consulted, if any. In the bibliography, list the page range for the whole article.


Article in an online journal

Include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) if the journal lists one. A DOI is a permanent ID that, when appended to http://dx.doi.org/ in the address bar of an Internet browser, will lead to the source. If no DOI is available, list a URL. Include an access date only if one is required by your publisher or discipline.


Article in a newspaper or popular magazine

Newspaper and magazine articles may be cited in running text (“As Sheryl Stolberg and Robert Pear noted in a New York Times article on February 27, 2010, . . .”) instead of in a note, and they are commonly omitted from a bibliography. The following examples show the more formal versions of the citations. If you consulted the article online, include a URL; include an access date only if your publisher or discipline
requires one. If no author is identified, begin the citation with the article title.


**Book review**


**Thesis or dissertation**

2. Choi, “Contesting Imaginaires.”


**Paper presented at a meeting or conference**


**Website**

A citation to website content can often be limited to a mention in the text or in a note (“As of July 19, 2008, the McDonald’s Corporation listed on its website . . .”). If a more formal citation is desired, it may be styled as in the examples below. Because such content is subject to change, include an access date or, if available, a date that the site was last modified.

3. “Google Privacy Policy.”


**Blog entry or comment**

Blog entries or comments may be cited in running text (“In a comment posted to *The Becker-Posner Blog* on February 23, 2010, . . .”) instead of in a note, and they are commonly omitted from a bibliography. The following examples show the more formal versions of the citations. There is no need to add pseud. after an apparently fictitious or informal name. (If an access date is required, add it before the URL; see examples elsewhere in this guide.)


E-mail or text message

E-mail and text messages may be cited in running text (“In a text message to the author on March 1, 2010, John Doe revealed . . .”) instead of in a note, and they are rarely listed in a bibliography. The following example shows the more formal version of a note.


Item in a commercial database

For items retrieved from a commercial database, add the name of the database and an accession number following the facts of publication. In this example, the dissertation cited above is shown as it would be cited if it were retrieved from ProQuest’s database for dissertations and theses.
