

CHL MA Capstone Project: CREATIVE PROJECT AND RATIONALE

This document is intended to be a brief guide to the steps involved in writing and completing a creative project and rationale.

A. Before you start your creative project and rationale:

1. Come up with a topic, and do a little preliminary research to see what information is available. You'll be spending a lot of time and thought on your project, so you want to make sure that your topic is something that truly interests you.
2. Approach a faculty member to talk over your project idea, and to ask them to be your advisor. Note that before they accept or refuse, the faculty member may ask you to do more preliminary research, or to write a short document outlining your ideas and area of research.
3. In consultation with your advisor, compose a summary (a paragraph or two) of the research you will do as part of your project, as well as a list of primary and secondary sources. Your advisor will help you to combine these elements with an independent study form, and submit them to the Graduate Director.
4. Once the Graduate Director accepts the independent study, you'll be given a CRN to enroll in the 3-credit independent study course
5. In consultation with your advisor, write a proposal. This document will likely be 8-10 pages in length, and must be approved by your advisor and the Children's Literature Committee before you begin work on your rationale. You do not need to have the proposal written before you enroll in the independent study.

B. Writing your creative project and rationale:

Although you'll be working with an advisor, a creative project and rationale is a very independent project. Thus, it is helpful to establish project-writing parameters with your advisor before you start. These parameters may include:

- a) Establishing deadlines
- b) Meeting schedule (how often will you meet?)

- c) Writing expectations (should you be producing a minimum page count or number of revisions for each meeting?)
- d) Preliminary writing (will your advisor ask for annotated bibliographies or summaries of theories/historical periods/genres, etc. before you start writing the project itself?)

Length: although there is no predetermined length, your rationale should be roughly 20-30 pages long, and formatted using the latest version of MLA style. There is no predetermined format to the creative project, but please note that faculty will not be able to read the entirety of novel-length documents, and the project should be either electronic or physically transportable within a car.

C. After you've finished writing your project:

1. Submit your edited, completed creative project and rationale to your advisor.
2. Once your advisor has accepted your creative project and rationale, they will submit it to the Children's Literature Committee for review.

You should give your advisor no less than **two weeks** to read the final, polished creative project and rationale.

3. If either your advisor or the CHL Committee suggests revisions, you'll need to factor in time to make these revisions.
4. Once the CHL Committee accepts your creative project and rationale, they will notify the Program Coordinator that you have completed your capstone requirement. You will need to complete an updated Program of Study.

D. Timing:

Typically, it takes a semester to complete a creative project and rationale, plus advanced preparation before the independent study, and revision afterward. Most students entering their degree in September typically work in the following order (but can also choose their own order):

Fall Year 1	Winter Year 1	Summer	Fall Year 2	Winter Year 2
Course 1 Course 2*	Course 3 Course 4 Course 5 (Research/formulate creative project topics** Write proposal**)	(OR Research/formulate creative project topics** Write proposal**)	Course 6 Course 7 Independent Study credits*** (OR Course 8)	Course 8 Course 9 (OR Independent Study credits***) Submit project to committee

*Students with First-Year-Writing GAships typically take their GA course as a second or third course in the first semester.

**Whether you do preliminary work on your creative project during the Winter or Summer will depend on the availability of faculty during the Summer. Some faculty do not work on creative projects during the Summer months.

***Creative project independent study credits count as an elective course within your Program of Study, which means you'll need to plan accordingly to make sure you are taking all required courses.

Note that students can only use three hours of creative project independent study credits regardless of how long they actually take to write the creative project and rationale.