1. Before final exams week of the semester before a student is registered for the capstone (either in a course or as an independent study), a mentor and a topic must be approved. The student should do preliminary reading over the summer or over winter break, with the result that s/he returns to campus at the beginning of the semester with some research questions and a bibliography ready for discussion with the mentor. Papers must be based heavily on original ancient sources (in the original language or in English translation) or on evidence from material culture. The bibliography should focus on contemporary scholarship and be reviewed by the student's mentor. The student should plan to write a paper approximately 25-30 pages in length.

2. The student should plan to meet weekly with the mentor if the capstone is an independent study. It may also be useful for the student in a course to meet separately with the mentor on a regular basis.

3. By the third week of class, a tentative outline with research question(s) is due. By the fifth or sixth week of class, a proposal with a thesis, clearly defined research question(s), and annotated bibliography is due. A second reader should be chosen in time to provide advice at a relatively early stage in the process.

4. A due date for the first draft in the tenth or eleventh week of classes should be set already at the beginning of the semester. This gives the student a month or so to actually carry out more research and to put the paper together; it is important that the student continue to meet at least briefly with the mentor during this time and to provide evidence of progress, discuss ideas and interpretive problems, and seek guidance.

5. The first draft should be carefully thought-out and composed, and self-edited by the student prior to submission. It needs a clear thesis; the student’s arrangement of information, his/her arguments, and reasoned conclusions based on facts are important. Complete footnotes and a full bibliography are essential at this stage. Submission of the first draft with three or four weeks left in the semester allows the readers to examine the paper carefully and provide detailed comments and suggestions. (There may be differences of opinion whether the readers should edit for grammar and syntax or comment on style at this stage.)

6. Return of the draft by the readers no later than the beginning of the 12th week of classes gives the student time to do whatever the readers suggest, i.e., additional research, re-organization of the material, re-writing, etc. The mentor and student may choose to agree that a second draft, full or partial, will be submitted early in the final week of classes for additional comments.

7. The final draft of the paper is due no later than the first day or second day of finals week. The expectation is that it will be written in standard formal English and will be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, and syntax; it will a clearly defined thesis statement, a body with well-organized evidence and arguments, a conclusion based on and logically following the material presented, adequate footnotes, and a complete bibliography of all sources used.

8. Students should familiarize themselves with the Department's Capstone Rubric at the beginning of their project.