2021-2022
SENIOR PROJECT HANDBOOK
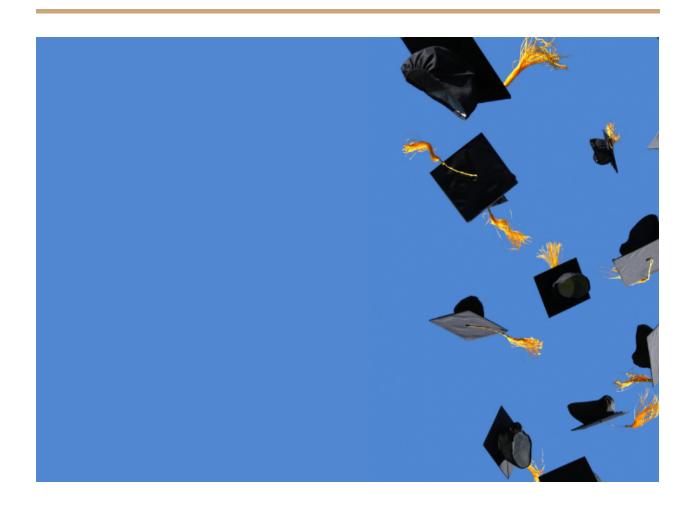
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CLASS OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Senior Project is to fulfill the WLC Vision of the Graduate -- an effective communicator, a strong collaborator, a creative problem solver, a self-directed learner, and a responsible citizen -- by applying all of the skills you have developed during your high school career towards a project of your own choosing.

Completing the Senior Project

- To complete the Senior Project, you will need to choose a topic of interest to you, research it thoroughly while collaborating with your Mentor and Outside Expert, develop and execute an Applied Piece that builds upon the knowledge you have gained, and finally present your findings in a 20-25 minute presentation to a panel of WLC teachers and staff.
- You will have weekly tasks to complete and checkpoints to reach, all of which are outlined in this document. Additional resources can also be found in your Google Classroom.
- You will track your progress in your Senior Project Journal.

"Open Campus" Concept

- Students who are on track are only required to come to class once a week on their scheduled day (but can, of course, come any time they want for help!), and are encouraged to use the time to complete their project.
- Students who are behind schedule are required to come to class every day until they catch up.
- We will only meet occasionally as a group. You will receive advanced notice of these dates.

DUE DATES & GRADING

Checkpoint:	Due Date:	Points:
(1) Mentor Selection & Meeting Plan (GF)	Tuesday, 9/7	10
(2) Topic Selection (GF)	Tuesday, 9/7	10
(3) Essential Question & Sub-EQs (3-4) (GF)	Monday, 9/13	10
(4) Applied Piece Brainstorm (2-3 Ideas) (GF)	Monday, 9/20	10
(5) Outside Expert & Interview Plan (GF)	Monday, 9/27	10
(6) Applied Piece Plan Draft	Monday, 10/4	10
(7) Applied Piece Plan	Tuesday, 10/12	10
(8) Completed Research	Monday, 10/25	40
(9) Presentation Outline (Research Portion)	Monday, 11/1	10
(10) Completed Applied Piece	Monday, 11/22	40
(11) Presentation Outline	Monday, 11/29	10
(12) Completed Presentation	12/6 - 1/7*	100
(13) Reflection Essay	Sunday, 1/3	30

*You may complete the checkpoints as early as you like. We will begin scheduling presentations as early as the week of 12/6 for those who are finished early.

GF = there is a Google Form to submit for this assignment

Grading Notes:

- *All checkpoints must be completed* in order to complete your Senior Project!
- 10-point assignments are all considered *Formative* and will be marked complete/incomplete.
- Completed Research, Completed Applied Piece, Completed Presentation, and Reflection Essay are *Summative* and will be graded according to the rubrics on the following pages.

RESEARCH RUBRIC

Research Grading Rubric			
Minimum Requirements:			
12+ Pages		☐	5 points
10+ Sources		☐	5 points
Overall Quality:			
Quality of Sources:	All strong sources	☐	10 points
	Predominantly strong sources	☐	7 points
	Predominantly weak sources	☐	3 points
Variety of Sources:	Good variety of sources (print, digital, video, audio) sources	☐	10 points
	Minimal variety of sources (mostly one type, particuarly digital)	☐	5 points
	No variety of sources (all one type, particularly digital)	☐	1 point
Quality of Research:	Thoroughly researched EQ and ALL Sub-EQs	☐	10 points
	Thoroughly researched EQ and SOME Sub-EQs	☐	7 points
	Research overall superficial and/or incomplete	☐	3 points
		Points Earned (out of 40):	

APPLIED PIECE RUBRIC

Applied Piece Grading Rubric				
Minimum Requirements:				
Completed on Time			☐	5 points
Overall Quality:				
Documentation of Process:	Thorough documentation of process provided (including photos, videos, notes against plan, communications with mentor/OE, etc.)		☐	5 points
	Some documentation of process provided		☐	3 points
	Little to no documentation of process provided		☐	1 point
Synthesis with Research:	Demonstrates a substantial application of research		☐	10 points
	Demonstrates some application of research		☐	7 points
	Demonstrates minimal application of research		☐	3 points
Helps Answer Essential Question:	Provides substantial insight regarding EQ		☐	10 points
	Provides some insight regarding EQ		☐	7 points
	Provides little to no insight into EQ		☐	3 points
Original Thinking and New Learning:	Demonstrates significant original thinking and new learning		☐	10 points
	Demonstrates some original thinking and new learning		☐	7 points
	Demonstrates little to no original thinking and new learning		☐	3 points
		Points Earned (out of 40):		

PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Presentation Grading Rubric			
Minimum Requirements:			
Completed on time		☐	5 points
Presentation Length: 20 - 25 Minutes (excl. Q&A)		☐	5 points
Audio/Video Clips: 1 - 3 Minutes		☐	5 points
Professional Attire		☐	5 points
Complete Works Cited Slide		☐	5 points
Overall Quality:			
Organization:	Organization is logical and effective	☐	10 points
	Organization is somewhat haphazard	☐	7 points
	Organization is random and/or confusing	☐	3 points
Supporting Media:	Supporting media is highly impactful	☐	10 points
	Supporting media is somewhat impactful	☐	7 points
	Supporting media lacks impact	☐	3 points
Research:	Research is thoroughly explained and relevant to EQ	☐	10 points
	Research is somewhat explained and/or not always relevant to EQ	☐	7 points
	Research is minimally explained and/or largely irrelevant to EQ	☐	3 points
Applied Piece:	Process/results thoroughly explained and synthesis with research is strong	☐	10 points
	Process/results thoroughly explained but could have completed without research	☐	7 points
	Process/results incompletely explained and connection to research is minimal	☐	3 points
Answers Essential Question:	Thoroughly answers EQ	☐	10 points
	Somewhat answers EQ	☐	7 points
	Minimally answers EQ	☐	3 points
Reflects on Learning Process:	Thoroughly reflects on learning process and highlights significant new learning	☐	10 points
	Somewhat reflects on learning process and highlights some new learning	☐	7 points
	Minimally reflects on learning process and highlights little to no new learning	☐	3 points
Overall Presence:	Strong engagement with audience and speaks with appropriate pace, volume and tone	☐	10 points
	Minimal engagement with audience and/or speaks too quickly/slowly/quietly	☐	7 points
	Does not look at audience and/or only reads off notes/slides	☐	3 points
Q & A:	Audience questions expertly answered	☐	5 points
	Audience questions satisfactorily answered	☐	3 points
	Audience questions minimally answered	☐	1 points
		Points Earned (out of 100):	

REFLECTION ESSAY RUBRIC

Reflection Essay Grading Rubric				
Minimum Requirements:				
Completed on time			☐	5 points
Written in Essay Format			☐	5 points
Overall Quality:				
Writing Quality	Excellent		☐	5 points
	Good		☐	3 points
	Poor		☐	1 point
Analysis of Growth Towards WLC Vision of the Graduate	Provides thorough and insightful analysis into growth as a student during time at WLC		☐	15 points
	Provides adequate analysis into growth as a student during time at WLC		☐	10 points
	Provides minimal analysis into growth as a student during time at WLC		☐	5 points
		Points Earned (out of 30):		

MENTOR SELECTION & MEETING PLAN

Mentor Selection

- Your mentor will be your guide through the Senior Project process, so it is important to select someone you trust and work well with. It may also be worth considering if your mentor has any experience/expertise in your topic.

- Your mentor must be a WLC staff member.

- Please note: though mentors can accept a maximum of 3 mentees, most will accept no more than 2 to ensure that they have enough time to dedicate to each. So act fast -- lest they're already taken!

Meeting Plan

- It is important for you to meet at least once a week with your mentor, even if for a few minutes. This will give them an opportunity to check in on your progress, answer any questions you have, and offer any advice. You should decide on a weekly meeting plan as soon as your mentor agrees to work with you.

Assignments:

- [Mentor Selection & Meeting Plan](#) (due 9/7)

PROJECT TOPIC & ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Project Topic & Essential Question

- Your Essential Question is the BIG question that will set the course for your entire project and all of your research. A good Essential Question:
  - Is INTERESTING and NEW to you
  - Requires SIGNIFICANT THINKING and RESEARCH to answer (i.e. it doesn't have a simple yes/no answer)
  - Is NOT A THESIS. The best essential questions are ones that you explore with an open and curious mind -- not ones that you take a side to argue

Sub-Essential Questions

- Sub-essential questions should support and add depth to your Essential Question
- Your Sub-EQs may change as you conduct your research, but it is important to have a direction in mind when you start
- 3-4 Sub-EQs are required

Examples

- EQ: How are astronomical images produced?
  - How is magnification used in astronomical photography?
  - What equipment is readily available to an amateur night photographer?
  - When are different objects visible for photographing in the night sky?

- EQ: What is life like through the eyes of a child with autism?
  - What is autism?
  - What causes autism?
  - What does a child with autism's day look like?
  - How does a child with autism communicate his experience?

Assignments:

- [Essential Question & Sub-EQs](#) (due 9/13)

OUTSIDE EXPERT

Finding an outside expert serves three purposes: First, it gives you an opportunity to practice asking someone you don't know for something, which is a critical life skill (think applying for a new job). Second, getting feedback from someone who has more experience and expertise on a topic than you do is often the fastest way to learn, particularly about more obscure topics. Third, it embodies the Strong-Collaborator element of the WLC Vision of the Graduate.

Who Qualifies As An Outside Expert?

- Your Outside Expert:
    - Cannot be a relative or a WLC Staff Member
    - Must be an *expert with credentials* in the area that you are researching
    - Must be available and willing to answer your questions as needed *for the duration of your project*
    - Does not need to be local -- you may communicate via phone or internet

Tracking Your Correspondence With Your Outside Expert

- You are expected to correspond with your Outside Expert on a regular basis for the duration of your project.
- You will track your correspondence in your Senior Project Journal.

Assignments

- **Outside Expert & Interview Plan** (due 9/20)

RESEARCH & EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

The Senior Project is, first and foremost, a research project. The quality of your research will have a direct impact not only on your Applied Piece and Final Presentation, but maybe more importantly, on how much you take away from the experience.

Research Requirements

- **12+ pages** of notes excluding images and diagrams (copied or highlighted text is not sufficient)
- **10 strong sources** (a blend of print and digital/audio sources is required):
  - Printed sources include: books, technical literature, articles from reputable and relevant magazines, etc.
  - Digital and audio sources include: current information from reputable and relevant websites and blogs, TED Talks, digital book extracts, podcasts, etc.
- Relevant supporting media include photos, videos, charts, diagrams, etc.
- A complete Works Cited
- All of the above recorded in your Senior Project Journal

Experience Requirements

- In addition to the above media-based research requirements, you must log **15 hours** of experiential research (interviews, internships, apprenticeships, site visits, observations, experiments, etc.)
- Includes your time communicating with your Outside Expert
- Does NOT include your time working on your Applied Piece
- Must be logged in your Senior Project Journal

Assignments

- [Completed Research](#) (due 10/25)

APPLIED PIECE

You will have a lot of flexibility in determining what to do for your Applied Piece, but it must meet the following requirements:

- It must **APPLY** your new learning to an **ORIGINAL CREATION**
- It must **SYNTHESIZE** with your new learning (i.e. You should conduct your research, and design your Applied Piece together. Each should inform the other. Your Applied Piece should not be something that you could have completed without your research.)

Examples

- Having researched the styles of several famous poets, you might write and publish new poems reflecting those styles.
- Having researched different kayak designs for a variety of uses, you might create an original design for a specific use and build it.
- Having researched principles and techniques of forensic science, you might write a story in which a crime was investigated using those techniques and publish the story to share with a wide audience.

The Following Are NOT Acceptable:

- Testing on humans or animals
- Putting a person's well-being at risk
- Brochures or letters to the editor
- Being paid, earning school credit, or earning community service hours for the work you put into your Applied Piece
- Using school facilities without first meeting with Linda Draper

Assignments:

- [Applied Piece Plan DRAFT](#) (due 10/4)
- [Applied Piece Plan](#) (due 10/12)
- [Completed Applied Piece](#) (due 11/22)

PRESENTATION

The presentation is the culmination of all of the work you will put in over the course of your Senior Project: the research, meetings, Applied Piece, and so on. It is your opportunity to share what you've learned with your community and peers, and to demonstrate that you are an Effective Communicator -- one of the pillars of the WLC Vision of the Graduate.

Presentation Requirements:

- Must answer your Essential Question and Sub-Essential Questions through evidence of research
- Must have effective supporting materials
- Must describe your learning process
- Must explain your Applied Piece plan and outcome in detail
- Must be well organized (most students use Google Slides or PowerPoint to organize their presentation)
- Must include a complete Works Cited slide
- Must be between 20 - 25 minutes in length
  - Audio/video clips must be between 1 - 3 minutes in total
  - Q&A does not count towards 20 - 25 minutes
- Must successfully address audience questions

Other Presentation Considerations:

- You should practice your presentation with your mentor at least once prior to your presentation date
- You should dress professionally for your presentation

Assignments:

- [Presentation Outline (Research Portion Only)](#) (due 11/1)
- [Presentation Outline (Complete)](#) (due 11/29)

REFLECTION ESSAY

The Reflection Essay is the final task to complete your Senior Project. The purpose of this assignment is to think back on your experiences over the course of the semester and how they have exemplified your growth in each of the areas of the WLC Vision of the Graduate.

Essay Structure:

- Your essay should be 7 paragraphs long
- Paragraph 1: Introduction
    - Provide a brief overview of your project (including your Essential Question)
    - Explain why you chose your project and how it fulfilled the WLC Vision of the Graduate
- Paragraphs 2 - 6: Your Growth
    - For each of the 5 pillars of the WLC Vision of the Graduate (Effective Communicator, Strong Collaborator, Creative Problem Solver, Self-Directed Learner, Responsible Citizen):
        - Explain which part of your project best demonstrates your progress in this area
        - Discuss your growth in each area by comparing your work during this project to a past example from your time at WLC when you were not as successful
        - Detail any key insights or experiences during your time at WLC that led to this growth
- Paragraph 7: Conclusion
    - What are the key takeaways/insights/lessons that you will remember from this experience and apply in college and beyond?
    - Overall, are you satisfied with your project and the growth that it showed in the five areas outlined in the WLC Vision of the graduate?
    - Are there any areas that you feel you still need to work on and why? Are there any areas of your project that you would do differently a second time around and why?

Assignments:

- Reflection Essay (due 1/3)