

Soka University of America

Capstone Policy and Concentration Guidebook

*Join the growing stream of global citizens
committed to living a contributive life.*



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Capstone Policy and Concentration Guidebook



Version 1.0, April 17, 2019

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Overview of the SUA Curriculum

The SUA Curriculum occupies a truly unique place in liberal arts and higher education. Designed to fully develop students for global citizenship, the SUA Curriculum draws upon the cultures and experiences of peoples from across the globe, emphasizing both commonalities and differences. At the heart of the undergraduate program are interdisciplinary concentrations (the Humanities, International Studies, Environmental Studies and Social and Behavioral Sciences) with courses that challenge conventional disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. SUA students are trained to deeply engage with complex interdisciplinary problems without any disciplinary barriers, and to take courses that intentionally interconnect cultures from East and West - as well as those of the global North and South.

SUA has a uniquely international student body with over 40% of its students from outside the United States. Within each graduating class, and in every classroom is a cross-section of the world, with over 32 countries represented among our students. This cultural diversity provides unique opportunities for dialog on issues in the humanities, social sciences, international affairs and the natural sciences. The interdisciplinary undergraduate program at SUA, with its concentrations and innovative General Education and Core curriculum is an outgrowth of the intense dedication and commitment of the faculty; a small community of scholars, who deeply challenge and engage with our students in small seminar discussions and in collaborations in the laboratory, studio, and field settings.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the SUA education comes from this small and intense academic community - where faculty get to know their students well, and work individually with them in their classes, in research, and as part of a residential community. Across the space of four years, faculty can help students develop in ways that are impossible in a larger campus - making the education more effective and individualized. This awareness provides a breadth of study and wisdom to equip students to make lasting contributions to the world of the twenty-first century.

The SUA Liberal Arts Degree – A Summary

The initial degree offered at SUA is a B.A. in Liberal Arts, with concentrations in Environmental Studies, Humanities, International Studies, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Each of these concentrations supports the Pacific Basin focus of SUA, as well as its emphasis on leadership and contributive citizenship. Concentrations will increase in number and range consistent with enrollment increases and student interests. Programs and courses have been designed to provide students with the following:

1. Multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural perspectives in every class where appropriate, demonstrating the diversity of cultures and viewpoints between East-West and North-South;
2. A General Education program that introduces students to interdisciplinary knowledge and perspectives, as well as the critical and creative thinking and communication skills necessary for life-long learning;
3. Four semesters of language and culture training, allowing students access to the literature and speech of one of four languages (Chinese, Japanese, Spanish or French).

Students are also required to have a study abroad or internship experience for half their junior year so as to refine their acquired language skills and to deepen their awareness of the associated culture;

4. A capstone experience in the senior year, drawing upon the skills and expertise that students have developed during their career at SUA. The capstone experience emphasizes acquisition of the critical tools of investigation and analysis, the integration of knowledge, and the application of creativity toward the solution of local and world problems.

Graduation Requirements

To receive a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from SUA, a student must successfully complete a minimum total of 120 units. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 is required for graduation. Following is a list of the courses required for graduation. Please refer to section VI for details and program area information. All students must fulfill the following course requirements.

General Education (19 credit-bearing courses)

Communication skills	2
Modes of Inquiry	1
Science & Mathematics	
The Mathematical World	1
The Natural World	1
The Physical World	1
Creative Arts + Creativity Forum	2
Pacific Basin	1
American Experience	1
Language and Culture	4
Health and Wellness	1
Enduring Questions of Humanity (Core)	2
Learning Clusters: (2 required, and 1 optional)	2

Liberal Arts Majors: (11 +1 courses, which 3 must be upper division courses in the student's declared concentration)

Selected concentration	2
Other concentrations: 1 course each @ two of the concentrations not declared	1
Free choice among concentrations	2
Capstone Experience	2+1(390)

Internship/Study Abroad: (12-16 transferable credit units)

Other Electives: (to fill to 120 units)

Students will earn between 104 and 114 credit units (depending on options selected) completing required coursework. They may select from among any course in the SUA undergraduate curriculum to complete the 120 units needed for graduation.

General Education Timeline

First Year: Core I – required in the fall block

Language – required both in the fall and spring semester

Learning Cluster 1 – required in the winter block

Communication Skills 101 – required, either semester

Pacific Basin –recommended, either semester

Science and Mathematics 1 – recommended, either semester

Creative Arts and Creative Arts Forum – recommended, either semester

Health and Wellness – recommended, either semester

Second Year: Language – required both in the fall and spring semester

Modes -- required in the fall semester

Learning Cluster 2 – required in the winter block

Core II – required in the spring semester

American Experience: strongly recommended, either semester

Science and Mathematics 2 – recommended, either semester

Junior Year: Study Abroad – required, either semester

Communication Skills 301/305 – required, either semester

Learning Cluster 3 – optional in the winter block

Senior Year: Capstone 390 -- required in the fall semester

Capstone 400 – required in the winter block

Capstone 450 – required in the spring semester

Overview of SUA Capstone Policy

The goal of the SUA Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts program is “to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to leading a contributive life”, with the following learning outcomes:

To foster an awareness of the needs of our changing world thorough developing a sense of history and an understanding of the nature of reality

To think and investigate critically and creatively

To be effective at various modes of expression and communication

To acquire knowledge and appreciation of multiple cultures and traditions

To become, through integrative learning, active and informed global citizens.

Capstone Policy Mission Statement

In the context of the liberal arts undergraduate program at Soka University of America, the purpose and mission of the Capstone Experience are for students to acquire in-depth knowledge about a topic within their field of concentration by drawing upon the skills and knowledge acquired from the liberal arts education they have received at SUA.

Statement of Goals/Objectives

The learning goals of the Capstone Project are:

1. To further develop habits of independent inquiry and study.
2. To acquire close, focused knowledge of a topic.
3. To further develop and refine research, writing, and analytical skills congruent with the educational mission of Soka University of America.
4. To enhance students’ ability to formulate and research a question or set of questions and from this to produce a coherent and substantial treatment of the chosen topic.

Capstone Policies

1. The Capstone Project itself is a requirement for graduation. It also counts as 9 units toward the fulfillment of the 120-unit graduation requirement.
2. To earn these units, seniors enroll in Capstone 390 (1-unit) in the fall term, Capstone 400 (4-units) in the winter block, and Capstone 450 (4-units) in the spring semester. In the fall and spring semesters, Capstone work is done concurrently with other course work.
3. A capstone project must be related to one's concentration. However, a student may choose to work with a faculty mentor whose primary home is outside the concentration with the approval of the Concentration Director.
4. The Capstone project must be written in English.
5. Capstone 390 is graded on a P/NP basis. A student who fails to pass Capstone 390 or who receives an incomplete will be required to meet with the Dean of Faculty to discuss his or her options for retaking the course or completing the course. Students must pass Capstone 390 in order to enroll in Capstone 400.
6. Capstone 400 and 450 receive a letter grade. The final letter grade assigned to the final project at the end of the spring semester for Capstone 450 will also be assigned retroactively to their work done in the winter block for Capstone 400.
7. The amount of work expended on the final project will be commensurate with the 9 units awarded respective to each concentration. The exact nature of the project will depend on the agreement reached between the student and his/her mentor. Capstone projects must be a minimum of 30 pages, double spaced. There is no maximum number of pages though generally overall length ranges between 30 and 50 pages depending on the type of methodology used and the discipline(s).
8. Extensions beyond the final deadline in late April for submitting the final version of the Capstone Project can only be granted by the Dean of Faculty in consultation with the faculty mentor and the concentration director.
9. Plagiarism is not tolerated. All cases of plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty will be handled based on the Academic Honesty policy as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalogue.

10. Each student is allocated a \$250 budget that can be used toward research related expenses with the pre-approval of the faculty mentor.
11. Faculty members can supervise up to 4 Capstone projects. Additional students can be accepted by a faculty member with the consent of both the Concentration Director and Dean of Faculty.
12. Released Capstones from prior years are available at the Ikeda Library. Additional information is available at: http://libguides.soka.edu/capstone_thesis.

Capstone Timeline

Fall Semester– Capstone 390

- **First Friday in October:** Deadline for students to select a mentor and decide on a topic for their Capstone project. The signed *Capstone Mentor Identification Form* must be submitted to your Concentration Director by 5:00 pm.
- **First Friday in November:** The first draft of the Capstone proposal and a bibliography must be submitted to your faculty mentor. Each concentration has a Capstone proposal format that must be adhered to. Proposal guides or forms are available in your concentration's folder in the Capstone Group on Brightspace to help you adhere to the correct proposal format.
- **First Friday in December:** The Capstone proposal must be approved by the faculty mentor and the concentration director. Please submit (1) your completed Capstone proposal, using the appropriate form for your concentration if necessary, and (2) a completed and signed *Capstone Project Approval Form* to your Concentration Director by 5:00 PM. Students who wish to change mentors must do so by this time using the *Capstone Mentor Change Request Form*.
- **Spring Session – Capstone 400 and Capstone 450:** All seniors who have passed Capstone 390 must take Capstone 400 during the winter block and Capstone 450 during the spring semester.
-
- **Winter Block:** Students are expected to work on their Capstone Project as they would on any other 4-unit winter block course, approximately 3-6 hours per day. Students should be in regular contact with their mentor during this time to get feedback on their progress.

- Students are required to be in-residence at the SUA campus for the entire block. Students who need to be away from the campus during the winter block in order to conduct research must complete the *Capstone 400 Absence Request Form* and this form must be approved and signed by the student's mentor, the Concentration Director, and the Dean of Faculty prior to leaving the campus.
- **Spring semester:** Students are enrolled in capstone 450 and work on their capstone project as they would any other 4-unit course. Students should keep their mentor apprised of any absences from campus during this period.
- **Second Friday in February:** The first draft of the Capstone Project is due to the faculty mentor. Students should schedule regular meetings with their Capstone mentor to ensure that their research is conducted in a timely manner. Students are encouraged to develop and track their own Capstone research progress checklist in consultation with their mentor.
- **Second Friday in March:** A revised draft of the Capstone Project is due to the faculty mentor.
- **Last Friday in April:** Students must submit a copy of the final version of the Capstone Project to the faculty mentor and also to the designated Brightspace dropbox by 5:00 pm. Final drafts must use a completed *Capstone Cover Page* at the front of the paper. When submitting the capstone to the designated Brightspace dropbox, students will be asked to choose whether or not they would like to release their capstone project to be used as a guide for future capstone students. Additional instructions on how to submit the final draft of the capstone project will be made available on Brightspace before the due date.
- **Early May:** Concentration Directors will inform the faculty mentors when the final grades for the Capstone are due so that final grades may be entered at the Registrar's Office in a timely manner.
- **First Monday in May:** Last day for students to submit requests for reimbursement for Capstone-related expenses to the Dean of Faculty. Students must submit a completed "Capstone Research Funds Approval" form signed by their mentor, the "SUA Travel and Other Reimbursement" form and receipts to the Office of the Dean of Faculty by 5:00pm.
- **Mid May:** The final evaluation and approval of the completed Capstone project will be done by each faculty mentor using the appropriate Capstone assessment guidelines for the student's concentration (available in the Capstone group on Brightspace). Faculty mentors

submit the final grades to the Concentration Director using the correct capstone assessment profile form for the student's concentration no later than the assigned deadline (also available on Brightspace). Once the final grades have been entered with the registrar and approved, students will have formal access to them.

Capstone Calendar 2018-2019*

Fall Semester– Capstone 390

- **October 5, 2018, 5:00 PM:** Deadline for students to select a mentor and decide on a topic for their Capstone project and submit a signed *Capstone Mentor Identification Form* to their Concentration Director's office.
- **November 2, 2018** Check-in date where students should submit a first draft of the Capstone proposal and a bibliography to their faculty mentors.
- **December 7, 2018, 5:00 PM:** Deadline to submit a final Capstone proposal and a completed *Capstone Project Approval Form* to the concentration director using the appropriate form.

Winter Block – Capstone 400

- Students are expected to work on their Capstone Project as they would on any other 4-unit winter block course, or approximately 3-6 hours per day. Students should be in regular contact with their mentor and they should check with their Concentration Directors for any additional obligations and deadlines.

Spring Session – Capstone 450

- **February 8, 2019:** The first draft of the Capstone Project is due to the faculty mentor.
- **March 8, 2019:** A revised draft of the Capstone Project is due to the faculty mentor.
- **April 26, 2019, 5:00 PM:** Students must submit a copy of the final version of the Capstone Project to the faculty mentor and also to the designated Brightspace drop box.
- **May 6, 2019:** Last day for students to submit requests for reimbursement for Capstone-related expenses to the Dean of Faculty. Students must submit a completed “Capstone Research Funds Approval” form signed by their mentor, the “SUA Travel and Other Reimbursement” form and receipts to the Office of the Dean of Faculty by 5:00pm.

Environmental Studies Capstone Courses

Introduction

The Environmental Studies (ENVSTD) Concentration fulfills one of Soka University of America's founding principles: to "foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity." The complex problem of how humans can sustainably live on the planet requires a broad, multidisciplinary approach, one that a liberal arts background is well suited to deliver. Our Concentration provides students with a foundation in the scientific understanding of the environment, as well as the social, cultural, economic, and technological forces that shape human relations with the environment.

Students concentrating in Environmental Studies will be prepared to address the full range of environmental issues through a coherent study of environmental problems and solutions. To fulfill the Concentration requirements, students must take five concentration courses, three of which must be at the 300 or 400 level, and complete a capstone project. Students are able to fulfill their concentration requirements in either a focused or broad fashion from course offerings within the fields of earth and ocean sciences, ecology, environmental management and policy, environmental planning and practice, geography, and through courses cross-listed from other Concentrations.

Our goal is to present students with a positive learning environment that encourages the creative, responsible, interdisciplinary, and independent thinking necessary for understanding and effectively responding to local, regional, and global environmental challenges. The Environmental Studies Concentration at SUA can be an effective preparation for graduate school and environmental careers in government, consulting, advocacy organizations, and business. Students may progress to careers in environmental law, public health, medicine, economics, environmental research, urban and regional planning, geospatial analysis, sustainability management, renewable energy, environmental management, and resource management.

When Environmental Studies students graduate, they are able to:

1. Demonstrate and communicate an understanding of environmental studies,
2. Demonstrate the ability to research topics in environmental studies,
3. Apply their understanding of environmental studies in their professional and personal futures.

Faculty Research Interests

Dr. George Busenberg, Associate Professor of Environmental Management and Policy

Professor Busenberg's research examines the processes and consequences of policy change, with a focus on major environmental issues such as marine oil pollution, nature conservation, and wildland fires.

Dr. Monika P. Calef, Associate Professor of Physical Geography

Professor Calef's research interest is focused on the boreal forest of Alaska and how it has changed over time due to human activity, fire, climate change, and natural cycles. Her research combines spatial analysis and modeling using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to better understand spatial patterns of human-fire interactions, in particular how humans are affecting fire frequency and extent.

Dr. M. Robert Hamersley, Associate Professor of Microbiology

Professor Hamersley's research includes the study of the cycles of the major elements of life in aquatic environments which are receiving pollutants. He also supports student research into sustainability of water, energy, and waste systems on campus.

Dr. Anthony Inder Mazeroll, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies

Professor Mazeroll is a fish conservation ecologist with a variety of research interests. The bulk of his work is on the impact of exotic species in the aquatic ecosystem, specifically, in the Peruvian Amazon and Cambodia. He is also interested in dispersal patterns of fishes.

Dr. Deike Peters, Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Practice

Professor Peters work is permeated by the question "How can we create cities that are both socially just and environmentally sustainable?" Her recent research has focused on controversial urban megaprojects and high-speed rail.

What are Environmental Studies capstones?

An Environmental Studies capstone should consist of a suitable independent research project focused on some aspect of environmental science, environmental studies, environmental management and policy, or environmental planning and practice. The capstone must include an appropriate and clearly stated research question or questions, a clearly stated methodology for answering the research

question or questions, and data sources. The capstone project is developed and conducted in close collaboration with the faculty mentor. Some capstone projects require field research or laboratory experiments while others might be more focused on a literature analysis. Laboratory capstones require specific coursework and substantial preparation in the summer prior to the senior year.

Recent Capstone Titles

Dr. George Busenberg Dr. George Busenberg

- Japanese energy policy after the Fukushima Disaster
- Renewable energy in California, Germany, and Japan
- Analysis of the 2015 climate change conference
- Corporate sustainability: a review of varying initiatives

Dr. Monika P. Calef

- Air and water pollution in Taiwan
- The impact of climatic parameters on the wildland fires in San Diego County
- The effect of climate change on the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Ocean
- Farmers markets and local food access in Orange County, California

Dr. M. Robert Hamersley

- Inhibition of methanogenesis by nitrate and denitrification intermediates in wetland sediments
- Water audit of Soka University of America
- Methanogenesis and denitrification in wetland sediments
- Genetic diversity of methanogens in a Southern California freshwater wetland impacted by urban runoff

Dr. Anthony Inder Mazeroll

- Aquaponics: opportunities for sustainable food production
- River ecology and ecological restoration: a case study of the Los Angeles River
- *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd) infection in captive Anurans: a disease survey
- The effect of incubation and water temperature on the embryonic development and hatching rates of the African killifish *Fundulopanchax gardneri*

Dr. Deike Peters

- The intersection of urban agriculture, food justice, and urban planning in South Los Angeles
- Climate change and informal urban settlements: building resilience for the urban poor in Nairobi, Kenya
- Ecological sustainability planning in Hawai'i: a critique of the Hawai'i 2050 Plan and the proposal of the indigenous 'Aha Moku natural resource management system
- Local-international interfaces in sustainable urban development in Latin America: complexity and discursive hegemony

Capstones mentored by faculty from other concentrations

- Approaching the nonhuman: navigating art, abjection, and ambiguity for a post-natural ecology – Dr. Oleg Gelikman (Humanities)
- Mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia: solidifying our place culture and ecology and performing our histories in cultural expression – Dr. Michael Golden (Creative Arts Program)
- In search of the Los Angeles public: the L.A. River as a site for cosmopolitanism – Dr. Edward D. Lowe (Social & Behavioral Sciences)

For a complete list of Environmental Studies capstones, please go to

<http://sites.soka.edu/ENV/opportunities/previous-capstone-students/>

Recent Student Capstone Conference Presentations

Soka Environmental Studies students are marked with *:

Bhusal, S.* and D. Peters. 2019. Sustainable transportation planning in Hyderabad, India. *Women in Transportation annual conference*. Boston, MA.

Chin, F. H.* and D. Peters. 2017. From master-planned suburb to Asian ethnoburb: The impact of Asian immigration on the built environment of Irvine, California. *California Geographical Society annual meeting*, El Cajon, CA.

Horibe, S.* and M.R. Hamersley. 2016. Water Audit of Soka University of America. *International Conference of the Society for Human Ecology*, Santa Ana, CA.

James, J.* and M.P. Calef. 2017. Changes in migratory pattern and bird population of the Swallow Tailed Kite. *California Geographical Society annual meeting*, El Cajon, CA.

Kanaoka, K.* and M.R. Hamersley. 2016. Inhibition of methanogenesis by nitrate and denitrification intermediates in fresh- and saltwater urban wetland sediments. *Society of Wetland Scientists Conference*. Corpus Christi, TX.

Loh, W.H.* and M.P. Calef. 2017. Solar energy potential in Malaysia. *California Geographical Society annual meeting*, El Cajon, CA.

Mazeroll, A.I. and N. Maynard.* 2015. The ecological impacts of blue gourami (*Trichogaster trichopterus*) in the Peruvian Amazon. *Ecological and Evolutionary Ethology Conference*, Corvallis, OR.

Peters, D. and T. Nguyen.* 2018. Investigating the Applicability of the 'Sharing Cities' Discourse and Approach to Urban Contexts in the Global South: A Preliminary Case Study of Hanoi, Vietnam. *Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies*, Aliso Viejo, CA.

Tran, Q.V.*, M. Takeuchi*, C. Mouginot, and M.R. Hamersley. 2016. Methanogenic diversity and methane efflux across two vegetation zones of an urban freshwater wetland. *Annual Southern California Geobiology Symposium*, Pasadena, CA.

Trinidad, E.*, D. Peters. 2018. The sonic Red Line: deciphering the phonic identity of the Los Angeles Metro Red Line through sonic mapping. *California Geographical Society annual meeting*, Sacramento, CA.

Humanities Capstone Experience

Introduction

1. Humanities Capstone presents a version of the Capstone Experience that directly responds to the Soka University of America institutional mandate to "develop and refine research, writing, and analytical skills congruent with the educational mission of SUA," to "enhance students' ability to formulate and research a question or set of questions and from this to produce a coherent and substantial treatment of the chosen topic," and to "successfully apply the relevant theoretical and other literature in the field pertaining to the project." For the full statement of the SUA definition of Capstone experience, please see the SUA Capstone Mission Below.

2. How does Humanities scholarship work?

In the Humanities Concentration, we focus on the study of how people process, record, and document the human experience. Specifically, the disciplines that make up the Humanities aim at developing, enlarging, and refining historical, artistic, philosophic and cultural understanding. Humanistic critical education demands in-depth reading, analytical comprehension, and the articulate probing of themes, genres, traditions, media, ideologies and other imaginative, representational and material structures.

3. What is research in Humanities?

The hallmark of research in Humanities is the choice of a thesis that possesses intellectual significance and a demonstration of this thesis through clear writing and rigorous thought. This is why the Humanities students are asked to choose a Capstone topic that will enable them to state a clear-cut thesis and investigate a variety of scholarly sources in the attempt to support or amend it. Ideally, the successful Capstone would create a persuasive argument that stands upon the writer's critical reflection, documentary evidence, and intellectual synthesis.

4. What is the nature of a Humanities Capstone Project?

The exact nature of the Humanities Capstone project will depend on the agreement reached between the student and the mentor. To comply with accreditation requirements and the SUA course credit expectations and policies, Humanities Capstone projects normally are 30 pages (MLA format or Chicago Manual, double-spaced) and include a significant bibliography that includes milestone works of scholarship in the relevant field. The selection of milestone works, scholarship review, and preparation of the bibliography are three essential tasks that are normally to be accomplished during CAP390 (1 credit, fall) and CAP400-01 (3 credits, Winter Block). These two courses amount to four credits (1 and 3) and will carry a work load commensurate with it. Students are expected to utilize the Winter Block to complete all or most of the research for the Capstone and to make considerable progress in the writing phase of the project.

5. How are Humanities Capstones Evaluated, and What is the Narrative Review?

The Humanities Concentration requires that, in addition to the letter grade, Humanities Capstone mentors submit a 4-5 paragraph Narrative Review elucidating the substance of the Capstone project, the pertinent criteria of evaluation and the outcomes. The Capstone Narrative Review would be appended to the existing Humanities Capstone Grade Submission Form. It is not featured on the student's official transcript.

Frequently Asked Questions about Humanities Capstones

a. May I choose a mentor outside of the Humanities Concentration?

Yes, whenever appropriate.

b. May I use diverse media?

Students may create final projects that are either interdisciplinary in scope and include diverse media, but all projects must include a significant written component in which the student demonstrates a critical grasp of the material.

c. May I write a first-person narrative in relation to the Humanities?

In the time-honored tradition of the Humanities, cultural values and critical reading are closely coupled with imagination. Therefore, students who wish to engage in such narrative or creative writing must harness personal elements with rigor and imagination grounded in examples (e.g., study of memoirs, autobiographies, letters, or personal essays) and substantial scholarship, including the use of notes (as appropriate) and a bibliography.

SUA Capstone Mission Statement

In the context of the liberal arts undergraduate program at Soka University of America, the purpose and mission of the Capstone Experience are for students to acquire in-depth knowledge about a topic within their field of concentration by drawing upon the skills and knowledge acquired from the liberal arts education they have received at SUA.

Statement of Goals/Objectives of SUA Capstones

The learning goals of the Capstone Project are:

1. To further develop habits of independent inquiry and study.
2. To acquire close, focused knowledge of a topic.
3. To further develop and refine research, writing, and analytical skills congruent with the educational mission of Soka University of America.
4. To enhance students' ability to formulate and research a question or set of questions and from this to produce a coherent and substantial treatment of the chosen topic.

Humanities Faculty: Areas of Interest

Dr. Oleg Gelikman (Associate Professor of Comparative Literature). The projects I supervised in the past stress examination of the conceptual foundations of a given problem, usually leading from a declaration of a broad interest in the topic to the formulation of a specific position. A typical capstone would engage with conceptual history of a term such as “sustainability” or “magic realism,” and by a rigorous exploration of the term’s presuppositions, arrive at a compelling and well-documented critical argument. My interests split into two areas, Humanities and Environmental Studies:

Humanities Topics

- European literature and Culture from Enlightenment to Modernism
- French, German and Russian Literature
- The Eastern Block and the Soviet Union
- The Novel
- Narrative Analysis
- Critical Theory
- Theory of Comedy

- History and Theory of the Media (Photography, Print, etc.)
- Documentary Studies
-

Environmental Studies

- The idea of Nature in ideology, political theory, literature and the arts
- Organism, mechanism, replication
- Beautiful, Sublime, Picturesque, Ambient as ecological constructs
- Parks, gardens, grottoes, earth art, zoos, atlases, museums as sites of phantasy
- Anti-Nature, Post-Nature, Other Nature
- Political Ecology

Capstone Timeline

Fall Semester– Capstone 390

- First Friday in October: Students announce mentor.
- First Friday in November: First draft of proposal submitted to faculty mentor
- First Friday in December: Final draft of proposal submitted to faculty mentor and Concentration Director

Winter Block – Capstone 400

- Winter Block (January): Students work on campus 3-6 hours per day

Spring Semester – Capstone 450

- Second Friday in February: The first draft of the Capstone Project submitted to faculty mentor
- Second Friday in March: Second draft of Capstone Project submitted to faculty mentor.
- Last Friday in April: Final draft of Capstone Project submitted to faculty mentor and Concentration Director.

Humanities Capstone Calendar- Online Version, currently posted here:

<https://soka.brightspace.com/d2l/le/content/13840/viewContent/511775/View>

2017 Humanities Capstones

A dialogue on dance: funding, advocacy, and participation
Skip this rock for me
Cotton mouth
The obituary of me
White Rabbit Knows Everything - A Short Novella
What a time to be alive: an exploration of all things millennial: an audio podcast
The Intersections of Poverty, Race, Public Opinion, Media, Political Discourse, and Health
E-books versus Print Books: Reading in a Modern Age
A well as a gateway to another world while in a dream
The relief of existential tensions in propaganda
Walt Whitman the humanist: my personal, original interpretation and reflections of Whitman's
Jazz improvisation: against Japanese suicidal culture
Montaigne and me, intimate but not sexual
An Analysis of Cinderella Across Time
Reconstructing subjectivity through deconstructive comedy: reborn as enlightened fool
Aristocratic theognis: an interpretation of the poet's socio-political thought
The metaphysical encounter of Soseki and Hesse: an inquiry into individualism through religion,
Isolation to reconnection: an inquiry into contemporary Japanese self and aesthetics
Beyond the headlines: an evolutionary study of political correctness
Sigmund Freud's unconscious and the collective pursuit of hysteria
Cinema study of Godzilla series: the difference between Japanese and American views on social
Asian American representation through media
The power of uncanny women: analysis of Japanese horror film and Argentine fantastic literature

themes (international economics, trade and development; international relations, peace and conflict resolution).

- Following graduation, alumni have reported their IS Capstone helped prepare them for the best graduate schools and the analytical demands of meaningful careers.

SUA Capstone Mission Statement:

In the context of the liberal arts undergraduate program at Soka University of America, the purpose and mission of the Capstone Experience are for students to acquire in-depth knowledge about a topic within their field of concentration by drawing upon the skills and knowledge acquired from the liberal arts education they have received at SUA.

Statement of Goals/Objectives of SUA Capstones

The learning goals of the Capstone Project are:

5. To further develop habits of independent inquiry and study.
6. To acquire close, focused knowledge of a topic.
7. To further develop and refine research, writing, and analytical skills congruent with the educational mission of Soka University of America.
8. To enhance students' ability to formulate and research a question or set of questions and from this to produce a coherent and substantial treatment of the chosen topic.

INTS Faculty Mentors

Dr. Shane J. Barter. Associate Professor of Comparative Politics and Director of the Pacific Basin Research Center. Selected Areas for Capstone Mentoring: Southeast Asia, Comparative Politics, Democracy, Elections, Religious Politics, Armed Conflict, Federalism and Autonomy.

[Website](#); [Soka Profile](#); [Google Scholar](#)

Dr. Sarah England (INTS Affiliate). Associate Professor of Anthropology. Areas: Central America, Race and Racism, Gender and Sexuality, Gender Violence, Immigration and Deportation, Afro-Latinos, Violence in Latin America. [Soka Profile](#)

Dr. Dongyoun Hwang. Professor of Asian Studies. East Asia---China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (history, society, culture, politics, etc.). American-East Asian relations (US diplomatic

history). Southeast Asia (esp. Overseas Chinese and ethnic conflicts/identity formation) Nationalism, colonialism, Marxism and communism, radicalism, radical politics, indigenism, women's studies, transnationalism and transnational issues, human migrations across oceans and boundaries, Asian-Americans, and issues in globalization. [Soka Profile](#)

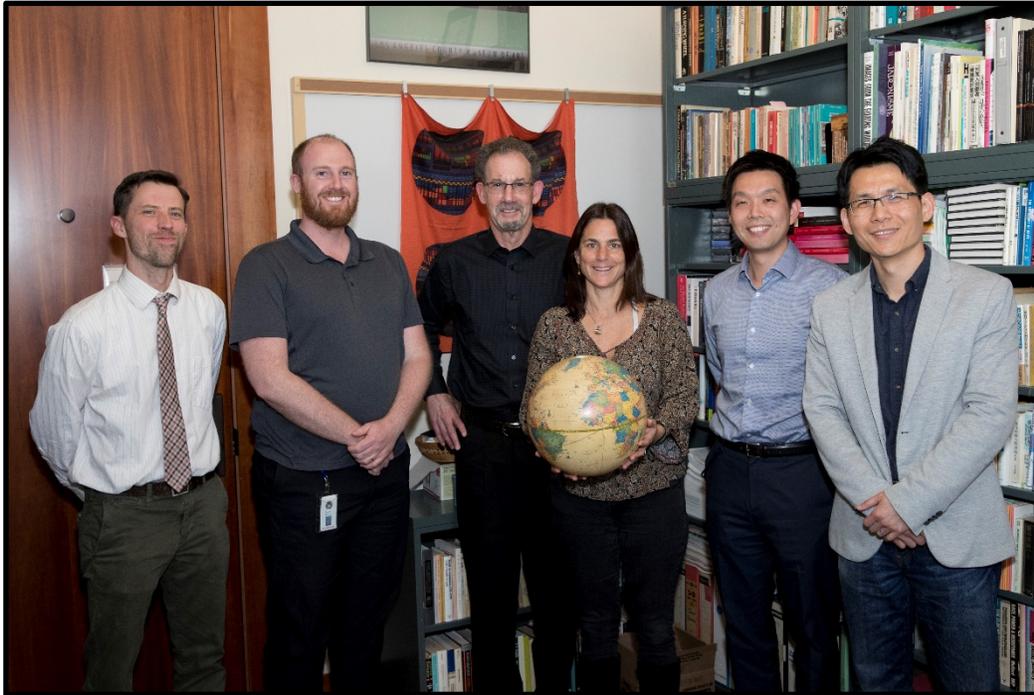
Dr. Junyi Liu (INTS Affiliate). Assistant Professor of Economics. Areas: International Economics and Development Economics; Public Health and Political Economy; Asian Economy.

Dr. Lisa MacLeod. Associate Professor of International Studies. She is prepared to supervise Capstone projects that build on concepts and themes discussed in Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to Human Rights, Peace and Conflict Resolution, The UN & World Politics and/or International Law. Her current research examines Security Council politics and changes in UN peacekeeping mandates since the end of the Cold War. [Soka Profile](#)

Dr. Tetsushi Ogata, Visiting Assistant Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies. Areas: Genocide and mass atrocities, mass political violence, identity conflict, conflict resolution, peace studies, human rights, atrocity prevention, post-conflict memories and narratives. [Soka Profile](#)

Dr. Ian Read. Associate Professor of Latin American Studies and Director of International Studies. Areas: Latin America and Atlantic World, history, slavery, medicine and disease, race, development. [Soka Profile](#); [Publications](#);

Dr, Michael Weiner. Professor of East Asian History, Associate Dean of Faculty, Director Faculty Research and Development. Although trained as an economic and social historian of modern Japan, my research (comparative colonialism, human rights, national and racial minorities, historical memory, and the history of disease and disease control) and teaching interests are extremely broad. [Website](#); [Soka Profile](#)



Capstone Timeline

Fall Semester– Capstone 390

- First Friday in October: Students announce mentor.
- First Friday in November: First draft of a proposal submitted to a faculty mentor
- First Friday in December: Final draft of a proposal submitted to a faculty mentor and Concentration Director

Winter Block – Capstone 400

- Winter Block (January): Students research and begin writing.

Spring Semester – Capstone 450

- Initial drafts due in February and March
- Last Friday in April: Final draft of Capstone Project submitted to a faculty mentor and Concentration Director.

Selected INTS Capstones

Fiscal Centralization in the European Union and Fiscal Decentralization in China ~ The Causes of the Thai Sex Industry and its Effects on Thai Women ~ Undocumented Immigrants in the Higher Education: The DREAM Act ~ Different Attitudes toward Narrowing Development Gaps, ASEAN and Mercosur ~ Brazil: A Regional or Global Power? An Analysis of the Influence of Foreign Policy Making on Brazil's Recent Development ~ Violent Insurgent Group: Defining the Relationship between the State, the Insurgency, and the Population ~ Ethnic Conflict in China: A Comparison of Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia ~ Moderating or Radicalizing: Inclusion and Moderation in Turkey, Tunisia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Palestine ~ Pariah's Path to Change: Motivations, Conditions, and Strategies for Reform in Myanmar ~ Intra-faith Conflict and Tension with Minority Groups: Relations within the Islamic Community ~ Unapproved Stem Cell Treatment in India: The Case Study of Nu Tech Mediworld ~ Multicultural Hawaii: Seeking Autonomy ~ Failures of Drug War Policy in Latin America ~ Missing Girls: A Cultural and Legal Analysis of Female Infanticide and Feticide in India ~ When States Take Immigration Law into their own Hands: New Latino Immigration and the Legal and Media Backlash ~ The Philosophy of Nonviolence in Guatemala: Withdrawing from *La Violencia* through Hip Hop ~ A Cross Cultural Comparison between US and Japanese Trends in Emerging Adults' Lives as Portrayed through Film ~ Eugenics and Population Control Policies in the People's Republic of China ~ An Analysis of Human Rights Education in Nepal ~ Shokuiku Kihonhō: A Challenge for Municipalities in Implementing the Basic Law on Food Education ~ Sex Trafficking in Japan: a Historical and Contemporary Analysis ~ Education for Third Generation Nikkeijin in Japan ~ The Spiritual Basis of Natsumi Soseki's Idea of Individualism ~ The Legacy of America's Super Citizens: What Comic Book Superheroes Reveal about American National Identity ~ Women's Health and Human Rights in Nepal ~ The New Face of Minnesota: Mapping the Somali Community in the Twin Cities ~ Confucianism and Governance: The Evolution of Confucianism and its impact on the Development of China since 1949 ~ An Evaluation of the Construction and Reproduction of Historical Narratives about the War of the Pacific in Peruvian Textbooks ~ The Comfort System: Confucian Gender Relations, Colonialist Ideologies, and International Culpability ~ The Roma Plight in Central and Eastern Europe: Addressing Roma Poverty and Social Exclusion ~ Ant-Semitism, Holocaust Denial and Historical Revisionism in Contemporary Japan ~ Japanese Military Legislation: Domestic and International Factors in Reinterpretation of Article 9 ~ Post-war History of Okinawa and Its Struggles for Identity: From a "Victim of War" to an "Advocate of Peace ~ Soft Power: Transcultural Media in East Asia

Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) Concentration Capstone Policy

An Overview

The Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) strive to understand human lives, behaviors, and institutions in their social, historical, and cultural environments.

The concentration consists of 13 faculty members from five different subdisciplines: anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. SBS concentration courses provide students with theoretical and methodological tools to examine and address social issues and concerns from multiple comparative perspectives. Overall, our goal is to empower students to become actively engaged and knowledgeable participants in their local and global communities.

SBS students are expected to complete a capstone research project during their fourth year. This research project is intended to be a culminating experience, drawing upon the skills and expertise they have developed during their career at SUA. Each student works with a faculty mentor to propose, develop, and carry out a research project. Students meet regularly with their capstone mentor for support and feedback.

SBS Capstone Mission Statement and Learning Objectives

The Students in SBS are encouraged to achieve the following specific learning outcomes given the purpose, mission, and the objectives of the Capstone:

1. Demonstrate one's ability to formulate and defend a thesis.
2. Demonstrate one's ability to use relevant sources and materials to support his/her arguments
3. Demonstrates one's understanding of, justification for, and use of appropriate, valid, and reliable research methods to answer the research question posed.
4. Demonstrate one's ability to thoroughly analyze relevant data, interpret the results critically without generalizing beyond the strength of the findings and convey fully the significance of the results to the field.
5. Demonstrate one's ability to develop and structure his/her thoughts, ideas, and arguments in a coherent manner

6. Demonstrate one's ability to write English correctly and effectively
7. Demonstrate one's ability to make systematic and consistent progress on a research project throughout the year

SBS Faculty and Research Interests

Anthropology

Sarah England, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology

- Race/Ethnicity
- Multiracial, transracial families
- Gender and Sexuality
- Gender Violence
- Immigration, Deportation, Asylum
- Human Rights Issues regarding the above
- Central America
- Latin America and the Caribbean

Edward Lowe, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology

- The critical anthropology of mental health epidemiology
- Processes of family and kinship
- Culture theory
- Urban poverty
- Ethnographic & comparative methods
- Pacific Islands studies

- Community building in urban green spaces & gardening

Economics

Edward Feasel, Ph.D., Professor of Economics

- Government policy and economic outcomes (on the national and international level).
- Economic growth; forces behind and policies affecting growth.
- Culture, values (e.g. religion, traditions, attitudes, etc.) and economic outcomes.
- Labor issues; understanding unemployment, income distribution, and inequality.
- Financial markets; importance of financial markets in growth and development.
- Regional economies; forces behind regional (e.g. city, state, province) growth and development and understanding inequalities across regions.

Junyi Liu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Economics

- International Economics.
- Economic Growth and Development, and Political Economy.
- Taxation and Business Economics.
- Health Economics and Public health.

Diya Mazumder, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics

- Environmental policies in the private automobile sector
- Poverty, the environment, urban sprawl and land-use policies.
- Energy efficiency policies
- Free lunch?
- Taxes versus subsidies to solve environmental issues
- Estimating environmental values for developing countries

- Congestion pricing
- Policies to improve access to education
- How to make health care more affordable;
- Effects of public transport on housing values
- Tax swaps

Political Science

Peter Burns, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science

- Urban Politics
- Public Policy
- State and Local Government
- American Politics

Psychology

Esther S. Chang, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

- Adolescent development (high school and college students)
- Political socialization
- Body and weight management
- Mother-daughter relationship
- Educational and occupational goal setting and pursuit
- Academic socialization (i.e., parenting, teaching, and mentoring processes)
- Cross-cultural comparisons
- Non experimental research methods

- Survey research methods

Jennifer Lee, Ph.D., Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology

- Mindfulness and mindfulness-based therapies
- Adolescent psychopathology
- Ethnic minority issues
- Family issues and therapy
- Group dynamics and process

Seiji Takaku, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

- Cross-cultural examinations of people's apology-giving behavior
- Interpersonal and inter-group forgiveness
- Psychology of confessions & lying/deceptions
- Motivation theories and attributional analyses of social emotions and motivation.
- Eastern philosophical approach in interpersonal and inter-group conflict resolution.
- Legal psychology
- Sport psychology

Sociology

Ryan Ashley Caldwell, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Sociology

- Theoretical and conceptual issues surrounding gender and sexuality
- Analysis of power
- Transgender studies (historical and also queer)
- Performance art and identity (the art of drag and marking the body)

- The philosophy of aesthetics
- The body and embodiment (how individual bodies exist and interact within cultural structures and institutions)
- Feminist theory, queer theory, queer identities
- Postmodern culture and theory (from consumption to the construction of "reality")
- Symbols and the social construction of reality
- War crimes and torture/terror studies
- Applied ethics

Danielle Denardo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology

- Health/medicine (national, transnational, global)
- Gender
- Race
- Intersections of health, gender, and race
- HIV (particularly in the context of sub-Saharan Africa)
- Sexualities and sexual behaviors
- Couples and families
- Fertility
- Aging and the life course
- Population changes

Affiliate SBS Faculty

Shane Barter, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Comparative Politics

- State-society relations

- Voting, democracy, and democratization
- Civil wars and armed conflicts
- Politics in the developing world, specifically Southeast Asia
- Religious politics
- Ethnic conflict and minority rights, multiculturalism

James Spady, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History

- US History and Culture
- Colonial and Postcolonial Studies.
- Race & Class.
- African American Studies.
- Native American Studies.
- Early North American History.
- Social Movements & Praxis.
- History & Culture of Learning and Education.
- Theory & Method in the Analytics of Power."

Sample Capstone Titles from Previous Years

- *The Commercialization of Hip Hop: When Keeping it Real Goes Wrong*
- *Semper Fidelis: The Construction of Gender in Military Wives,*
- *Gender Equality in Vietnam: Promises and Reality*
- *Myanmar's Ethnic Problem: History, Conditions and Solutions*

- *Parental and Peer Contexts of Hookup Culture and its Potential Influences on Sexual Behaviors and Marital Attitudes*
- *An Investigation into the Meaning and Implementation of “Inclusive Education”*