



# Syllabus - Educ 399 Independent Study: Capstone in Education

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## Welcome

Welcome to *Educ 399 Independent Study: Capstone in Education*. In this course we'll explore your past, present, and future. During your undergraduate studies, you've developed many knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In this course, you'll apply what you've learned as you enter the next phase of your career and your life.

## Course Description

A capstone experience is either a single seminar or a broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of your program of study. It is meant to provide you the opportunity to make connections between the key learning objectives in your major, the General Education Program outcomes and to consider how your education has prepared you for the world beyond the university.

The Capstone Experience in the Major requirement may vary substantially between different UW-Stevens Point majors and cannot transfer between majors. Thus, the only way to satisfy this requirement is to complete the specific requirements embedded in each major.

Upon completing this requirement you will be able to:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experience related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, process, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

[*General Education Program, 2016-17* (PDF, p. 29)]

## Instructor: Kym Buchanan

- Email: kbuchana AT uwsp.edu
- Office phone: (715) 346-2906 [email is usually faster]
- Office: CPS 470

- Office hours: Wed, 2-2:50 pm (Fall & Spring), and by appointment

## Intended Learning Outcomes

If you bring sufficient ability and apply reasonable effort to this course, you will improve your demonstrable knowledge, skills, and dispositions in how you:

1. Understand and appreciate how certain significant experiences shaped who you are today
2. Understand, appreciate, and apply your strengths
3. Prepare to apply your strengths, to be successful in your career and your personal life

This is the central enduring understanding I want you to develop:

I am most likely to lead a happy, productive life by understanding and appreciating where I come from, who I am, and where I want to go. Past experiences shaped me, including nurturing my distinct strengths as an individual. Moving forward, I should apply my strengths mindfully and strategically in my career and personal life.

This course focuses on these [InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#):

1. Learning Differences
10. Leadership and Collaboration

## Content & Activities

The [Checklist](#) shows the major content and activities for this course.

## Kat & Other Technology

Kat is an experimental learning management system, like D2L. I built Kat myself. [Kat can do many unusual things](#) to support teaching and learning, and it allows me to keep my course content open access (which is important to me). Kat is named in honor of Julia Stiles' character in the movie *10 Things I Hate About You* (and her Shakespearean inspiration).

We use e-reserve for some readings. We use the D2L Dropbox and Discussions tools.

## Twitter

I have a Twitter feed that sometimes includes issues related to this course. I have two main goals for using Twitter: use a new technology in my teaching and build connections with students. If you're already savvy with Twitter, I'm [@reach2grow](#).

My feed will also appear on my homepage ([KymBuchanan.org](#)), and it's archived here: <http://twitter.com/#!/reach2grow>

I never post essential information only on Twitter. I use email and in-class announcements to keep you informed. If you follow my Twitter feed, I hope you find it interesting. But if you don't follow it, it won't interfere with your success in this course in any way.

## Independent Study

Most of this course is online. We'll meet face-to-face at least twice: to discuss your choice of inspirational experiences, and to discuss your compiled essays. However, this is an independent study, which puts a great burden on you as a student to co-own the experience and be responsible for your learning. With that in mind, here is the advice I provide in a 100% online course.

## Learning Online

This course is entirely online. While there are many advantages to this approach, there are some significant challenges. Unfortunately, online courses often have a higher drop or failure rate than face-to-face courses. There are some simple steps we can take to ensure you have a successful experience.

Since I won't be lecturing or facilitating other face-to-face activities, it's very important that you complete all the readings carefully. By "carefully," I mean taking enough time to process the ideas and check your understanding. For some readings, I provide study questions or other tools to help you check your understanding.

Since we don't meet as a class, it's very important that you communicate with me as needed. Email is an excellent way to reach me. I'm also happy to make an appointment to meet by phone or in person. Please don't hesitate to contact me, with questions about the course or assignments, questions about the reading or other content, problems in your life, etc. Don't worry about looking foolish or wasting my time. **I care about your success. I'd rather clear up your confusion today than deduct points on an assignment tomorrow.**

Please read the directions for each assignment carefully. Depending on the assignment, you will email me, submit in Kat, post to D2L under Discussions, or submit to the D2L Dropbox. If you are emailing me, please send one assignment per email, and use the correct subject. You can lose points by not submitting an assignment correctly.

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## Course Requirements & Grading

### About Assignments

All the assignments are listed in the [Assignments](#) page in Kat. Directions and rubrics for all the assignments are in Kat. I'm always happy to answer questions on an assignment, so please don't hesitate to ask. **I care about your success.** I'd rather clear up your confusion today than deduct points on an assignment tomorrow.

Please read the directions and rubric for each assignment carefully. Depending on the assignment, you will email me, post to D2L, or submit to D2L. If you are emailing me, please send one assignment per email and use the correct subject. You can lose points by not submitting an assignment correctly.

For some assignments there may be different rubrics for undergraduate and graduate students. Be sure you refer to the correct rubric.

**Please save all email and assignments** for this course until you see a final grade on your transcript or Degree Progress Report and you are satisfied with your grade. This includes email from me and email from D2L. Please don't tell me "I did that but I deleted it."

I often give reminders about due dates via email and in class. However, these reminders are only a courtesy, and I may forget. You are ultimately responsible for submitting your assignments on time.

[Frequently Asked Questions \(Courses\)](#)

### About Scores & Your Final Grade

For an independent study, I handle assessment differently. The Assignments page has "Target Due Dates." I recommend trying to complete assignments at least as quickly as this pace. However, there is no penalty for submitting an assignment after a target due date.

Each assignment is Pass/Fail. You should use the rubric and directions to submit your best quality of work, the first time. However, if I assess your work to be unacceptable, I will give you the opportunity to make changes and resubmit it.

In the D2L Gradebook, every assignment is worth 1 point. You must complete every assignment at an acceptable level of quality to pass this course.

## Attendance

Except for rare cases of serious illness or family emergencies, a teacher shows up at school every day, on time, fully prepared, with a strong sense of personal responsibility. When a teacher can't meet his responsibilities due to unusual circumstances, he communicates with his colleagues and principal as soon as possible.

I expect you to honor your responsibilities. If this were a face-to-face course, I would expect you to attend every class meeting. This course is fully online, but I expect the equivalent level of communication and reliability. However, I understand that you have a life beyond this course. In general, the best way to avoid losing points is to contact me before an absence. After an unexpected absence, I'd like to see a physician's note. When you contact me about an absence, please specifically suggest how you think we should handle the absence (e.g., turning in an assignment late without a penalty).

## Dispositions & Conduct

I view my students as pre-professionals or current professionals. Your conduct in this course should demonstrate your qualifications for professional responsibilities (e.g., teaching and guiding young people). I will treat you as a professional, and I expect you to demonstrate your qualifications in many ways.

I especially encourage you to consider your professional presence and tone. This includes both face-to-face and online interactions with me and with your peers. For example, if you're teaching or presenting in a face-to-face class, I encourage you to have a professional appearance (e.g., business casual clothing). As another example, when composing an email, I encourage you to include a salutation (e.g., "Dear Dr. Buchanan"), complete sentences with correct conventions (e.g., spelling), and a signature (e.g., "Sincerely, Ima Student").

In a School of Education course, if you have concerns about the instructor you have the right to communicate with the Associate Dean. I'm the Associate Dean, so if you have concerns about me, you have the right to communicate with the College of Professional Studies Dean, Marty Loy (mloy@uwsp.edu, 715-346-4904).

## Class Climate

I'm dedicated to creating safe, inclusive, welcoming classes in which all students can succeed. This course is a Safe Zone for LGBTQ issues and more. I won't condone disrespectful or discriminatory language or behavior. I extend an open door invitation to all my students. If you feel unwelcome or unsafe in this course, or you have any concerns about your ability to succeed, please let me know. We can address the issue together, confidentially.

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with my university's guidance, including the [UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#).

## Exceptional Needs

I'm dedicated to accommodating the needs of my students. I don't believe that equal treatment is the same as fair treatment. A course requirement like a deadline may be unfair to you, based on a life event or a disability. If I agree that the requirement is unfair, then I'm happy to make an accommodation. Here are some exceptional needs I have accommodated in the past: learning disability, physical disability, chronic illness, death in the family, car accident, sick child.

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal law that requires educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. [Here is more information about UWSP's relevant policies](#). If you have a disability and want an accommodation, please register with the [Disability Services and Assistive Technology Office](#) and then contact me. If you're unfamiliar or uneasy with this process, please contact me anyways and we'll work through it together.

When contacting me about a life event or other exceptional need, please suggest the specific accommodation(s) you want (e.g., turning in an assignment late without a penalty, taking an Incomplete in this course).

## Integrity

I expect you to come to class promptly and regularly, prepared to actively and fully participate in the activities. I expect you to treat me, your colleagues, and anyone else with respect and tolerance. I expect you to take responsibility for managing your life so that you complete all assignments on time. If you are unable to meet these expectations (e.g., attendance, assignments), I expect you to communicate with me and anyone else affected (e.g., your colleagues) as soon as possible, and to suggest a clear, fair plan to address the problem.

I expect you to complete your assignments with integrity. For most assignments, you will be free to use resources and people inside and outside of this course. Some assignments may even require this. However, I expect you to give proper credit for anything that isn't your own original work. I urge you to make intellectual integrity a central part of your professional identity. Professionals in a variety of fields routinely use other people's work (e.g., lesson plans in education). But accidentally or deliberately leaving off credit is professionally and morally wrong. I use anti-plagiarism tools. I don't expect my students to plagiarize others' work; rather, you can be confident that no one is plagiarizing your work (e.g., in a future class). If you are unclear on how to give proper credit, please ask me before turning in the assignment.

As a teacher, I align my policy on academic misconduct (e.g., cheating) with [Chapter 14 of the UWSP Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#). This is my general policy: I will allow you to redo the relevant assignment for no more than 50% possible, and you won't be eligible to earn higher than a B+ in this course (UWSP 14.04 (1) (d, e)). I will honor your right to a conference with me, to a written report from me, and to contest my decision (UWSP 14.06 (1, 3)).

I take cheating personally: it upsets and frustrates me. I care very much about your learning, not just scores. If you cheat, you hurt my feelings.

## Dispositions Model

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with my department's expectations. The School of Education has adopted [a model of the dispositions](#) we expect from our students and graduates. I don't expect you to be at the final "Mastering" level in your dispositions. Instead, I offer this model for your own self-evaluation and goal-setting.

## Textbook & Supplies

There is one required textbook for this course. You choose between one of two books.

Rath, T. (2007). *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. New York: Gallup Press.

or

Liesveld, R., & Miller, J.A., with Robison, J. (2005). *Teach With Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students*. New York: Gallup Press.

Amazon has both [StrengthsFinder 2.0](#) and [Teach with Strengths](#). You must purchase a new copy of either book. Each book comes with a unique access code for you to complete the StrengthsFinder online self-assessment. The code for a used copy probably won't work (if it has a code at all). Both books are also available on Kindle (with a code). FYI, you can read Kindle books on a computer, tablet, smartphone, etc., using the free Kindle app.

Which book should you choose?

- If you're continuing in a **career in education**, I highly recommend *Teach With Your Strength*. The first part of the book has some of the best, concise writing about teaching and learning that I've ever read. The second part of the book offers advice for understanding and applying your strengths in the special context of education.
- If you're transitioning to a **career beyond education**, I recommend *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. It offers better advice for understanding and applying your strengths in more general contexts, especially the business world.

There may be additional readings available free via links in the [Checklist](#) or on e-reserve.

Please let me know if you have difficulty getting supplies for this class, and I will discretely help you.

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## Acknowledgments

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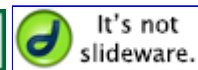
## Assignment: Respond to the Syllabus

Reading this syllabus is an assignment. When you've finished, please go to Kat and complete the Respond to the Syllabus assignment. If you're taking more than one course with me this semester, you must complete this assignment for each course/syllabus.

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Silence is an important part of communication. It is a key component to collaboration. When you practice active or empathic listening you have to become comfortable with quiet. You need silence to plan your response because you aren't planning while the other person is talking. -Angela Stahl ([more quotes](#))

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CSS: [General Presentation](#)

Some content and curriculum based on work by: Maysee Herr, Rand Spiro, Lisa Bardon, Quinn Stanley, Larry Riggs, Pat Shaw, Sue Slick, and others at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. Unattributed images are the work of the author or taken from Microsoft PowerPoint.

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