



UCLA Food Studies Minor

199 Capstone Information Guide

Food Studies 199 Capstone Expectations and Guidelines

The project for the capstone is expected to integrate and synthesize learning from earlier coursework and previous research, and can draw upon internship experiences. A well-developed project should (1) frame a significant question or set of questions, (2) focus on a specialized topic, (3) draw upon sound methodological principles, (4) provide broad context by integrating knowledge from across disciplines, and (5) reflect on how the capstone research contributes to the emerging field of Food Studies. The research capstone project for the Food Studies minor will commonly take the form of a research paper. While there is no set page minimum or maximum, students enrolled in the four-unit course are expected to write a research paper in the 15-20 page range.

A capstone project in Food Studies may also include non-written elements. For example, students may engage in a project that complements their major field of study (e.g. film, sociology, biology, geography/environmental studies, and music). In such instances, students must submit a capstone proposal to the Food Studies faculty committee for approval. Finally, at the discretion of the faculty mentor, students engaged in a non-writing capstone project may also be asked to include a write-up of the project—describing its contents, how the project came about, and the work the project entailed (recommended 10-15 pages).

Beginning the first week of the term, students are expected to attend weekly meetings with their faculty mentor and must be prepared to discuss progress on their research topic. Mentors are expected to provide feedback on students' progress, make referrals to appropriate resources, and comment frequently on students' in-progress work throughout the term. Upon completion of their capstone project, students are asked to submit a final copy to the Food Studies Academic Counselor.

Developing a Research Topic

Under the guidance of a faculty mentor, the 199 Capstone gives students the opportunity to conduct independent research or create a special project related to Food Studies. We recommend that you begin developing a research topic by brainstorming topics or areas of research that you find interesting. Some things a student might consider when developing their research topic include:

- Creating a list of topics you have found interesting in your coursework.
- Thinking about issues or questions related to Food Studies that interest you in your spare time.
- Reading academic journal articles related to Food Studies and your specific area of interest.

As part of the Library's Research Guides, a [Food Studies Research Guide](#) has been developed to assist those interested in completing research related to food. This Guide can be of great support in the development and implementation of your research project.

Doug Worsham, Lead for Teaching and Learning at the UCLA Library, has been so generous in helping to further develop the Food Studies Guide, but is also happy to meet and speak with students who would like some guidance in completing the 199 Capstone. If you are considering the 199 as your Capstone and need assistance formulating your topic and/or getting the research process started, please feel free to contact Doug by [email](#).

In addition, the Undergraduate Research Centers (URC) at UCLA provide an abundance of resources available to undergraduate students completing research. We highly recommend that students attend one of their workshops. More information about available workshops can be found on the Centers' respective websites:

- [URC Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences](#)
- [URC Sciences](#)

Resources Overview:

- [Food Studies Research Guide](#)
- [UCLA Library Guides](#)
- [WI+RE: Writing Instruction + Research Education](#)
- [Undergraduate Research Center: Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences](#)
- [Undergraduate Research Center: Sciences](#)

Identifying a Faculty Mentor

It is highly recommended that a student identify their faculty mentor before the quarter they plan to complete their 199 Capstone research. A student can identify a mentor by considering faculty with whom they may have taken a course in their area of interest. Another way to identify a mentor is by looking through individual faculty biographies on UCLA departmental websites—the biographies can be used as a means to learn more about faculty members, their areas of expertise, and how it may relate to the research in your proposed area. We recommend that a student identify several potential faculty mentors to whom they could propose their project. **Please note that the faculty mentor a student chooses to work with must be Ladder Faculty—in other words, they must be Senate faculty. To view the specific titles that qualify for Senate Membership, please visit the [Academic Senate's website](#).**

Before contacting potential faculty mentors, we recommend that students try familiarizing themselves with faculty members' most recent publications. If a potential faculty mentor has written a recent book, consider locating and reviewing their book at the library. If a potential mentor has published recent articles, try searching for them through the [UCLA Library Databases](#).

Contacting Prospective Faculty Mentors

When reaching out to a prospective faculty mentor, it is important that a student send a clear and concise email incorporating the following points:

- Name and major/minor/department affiliation
- Purpose for contacting them (i.e. research for a 199 course)
- Why their research interests you, and how your research interests relate to their work
- Contact information (email, phone)

In addition, it is recommended that students attach a **curriculum vitae (CV)** to their email correspondence. A CV is similar to a resume, but focuses on one's academic career. It is recommended that students include the following on their CV:

- Relevant coursework and skills (including language and computer skills)
- Work and leadership experience
- Honors, awards, and distinctions

A [sample cover letter and CV](#) is available via the Undergraduate Research Center - Sciences website. Additional resources for creating/developing a cover letter can be found on the [Career Center's website](#).

A student and their prospective faculty mentor may arrange a meeting to discuss the potential 199 capstone project. It is encouraged that the student prepare for the meeting by bringing their CV and possible research topics/questions—also, be sure to arrive on time.

There is a possibility that when contacting a prospective faculty mentor that they may inform you they are unable to assist you with a student's project. This may be due to a number of reasons and be unrelated to the student's background/experiences. Nonetheless, it is recommended that in such instances the student graciously thank the potential mentor for their time. In addition, a student may want to consider asking if there is a faculty member that they can recommend the student reach out to as a prospective faculty mentor.

Sample Email Template: As an additional resource, please feel free to use the sample email template below, by personalizing the items in bold.

Subject: Request for Faculty Mentor: FOOD ST 199

Dear Professor **<Last Name>**,

I am a fourth-year UCLA undergraduate student majoring in **<INSERT YOUR MAJOR>** and minoring in Food Studies. As part of the Food Studies Minor, I am required to complete a Capstone course and have chosen to complete an independent research project in a food related area of interest by enrolling in Food Studies 199. A requirement for the 199 course is that my research be completed under the guidance of a UCLA faculty mentor.

I see by your faculty page that your research and teaching interests include **<Include a few sentences about their research interests and why you feel this Faculty member will be a good fit as your mentor>**. My research interests focus on **<include a sentence describing yours>**.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the possibility of enrolling in the FOOD ST 199 course with you for the upcoming quarter. I am available on **<INSERT YOUR AVAILABILITY: i.e. Tuesdays and Fridays after 2:00 p.m.>** for a meeting or interview. Please find my CV attached for your review. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

<Your Name>

UCLA email address

Phone number

Recommendations for FOOD ST 199 Contract

When creating and developing your contract, you will be required to provide a brief description of your research project, including your approach and how you plan to proceed with completing your research. In addition, you will be required to indicate the type of work you will complete for your research project (e.g. a 10-15 page research paper). Below you will find some information that we recommend you consider when filling out your contract:

- Be specific about the purpose and goals of your project. In addition, be sure to explain what research you plan to incorporate as part of your project.
 - Be sure to mention that you will provide a bibliography (references list) as part of your research project.
- Quantify your review and provide a detailed description of your project.
 - If you plan to submit a research paper, please be specific about what you plan to submit (e.g. 15-20 pages, double-spaced, typed report)

- In addition to a written component, a student may decide to also submit a non-written element that contributes to their project.
 - For example, a student may propose to create an infographic that highlights key components from their research. This student will want to be specific about the contents of the project, in addition to their written project [e.g. “I will submit a 10-15 page paper (double-spaced, typed report) and an 8 ½ by 11 infographic that <insert information that addresses the purpose and goals of the infographic>”].
 - Students who choose to submit a non-written element as their project will require approval from the Food Studies faculty committee.

If you have questions about your proposed contract and/or what to include in your contract, please feel free to contact the Food Studies Academic Counselor.

Enrolling in FOOD ST 199

Upon securing a faculty mentor, students will need to complete the following steps to enroll in FOOD ST 199:

1. Create a FOOD ST 199 contract course under their faculty mentor via [MyUCLA](#) by going to the “Classes” tab and selecting: “Contract Courses” → “My Contract Courses” → “Submit a new contract”
 - a. Select “Directed Research (199)” → then create a contract for FOOD ST 199
2. Meet with their faculty mentor to review the contract and have it signed.
3. Submit the signed contract to the Food Studies Minor Academic Counselor by:
 - a. **Fall, Winter and Spring quarters:** Friday of Week 2 (Friday of Week 3 with fee).
 - b. **Summer Session:** Friday of Week 1 (contact the Academic Counselor if submitting after week 1)
 Signed contracts can be submitted to Window 2, A-316 Murphy Hall (hours: M-F, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM).
4. The Food Studies Academic Counselor will have the contract reviewed, and if approved, will enroll the student in FOOD ST 199.
 - a. If necessary, a student should petition with their academic counseling unit to exceed their study list units for the quarter.
5. Verify enrollment in the course by reviewing their study list.

Please note that if a student wishes to complete FOOD ST 199 as their Capstone requirement, it must be the last course taken after all other courses have been completed, or concurrently with one remaining minor course requirement.

Undergraduate Research Week

The Food Studies minor strongly supports UCLA’s Undergraduate Research Week. If you are interested in presenting a poster on your research, we highly encourage that you do so! The poster presentation for Undergraduate Research Week typically takes place sometime during weeks 7 or 8 of the quarter. If printing costs are of financial concern, please contact [Shahla Rahimzadeh](#), the Academic Counselor for the Food Studies Minor, to explore options for financial support.

The information provided in this document, including the sample email, were adapted from the [Undergraduate Research Center’s \(Humanities, Arts, and Social Science\) website](#).