



Oxford High School

Oxford, CT



2009-2010

Senior Project Manual

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the Senior Project.

Senior Project is designed to be the culminating experience of your high school education in Oxford and is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your mastery of the key skills and attributes that are the foundation of an Oxford Public School's education. Supported and aligned with the Mission of Oxford High School, these skills and attributes are the focus of the high school course of study and all of the programming decisions we make at Oxford High School.

Mission and Goals:

Oxford High School is a collaborative learning community dedicated to the personal, academic and career success of every student. Working in partnership with parents, citizens, businesses, and civic organizations, we ensure the development of each individual's talents, skills, and character so that all of our graduates are prepared to be independent and successful members of our society.

To achieve this mission, Oxford High School's learning experiences are designed to guarantee that every student achieves the following expectations;

Academic:

- **Think critically and inquisitively -**
 - Sustain processes of reflective inquiry and problem solving
 - Listen, view and read with comprehension and purpose
- **Communicate effectively and creatively -**
 - Write clearly, imaginatively, cogently, and persuasively, in modes appropriate to the audience and point
 - Speak confidently and effectively
 - Develop a personal creative voice and express ideas through a variety of media
- **Access, evaluate, and use information for a variety of tasks and purposes -**
 - Determine what is needed, identify and prioritize sources based on credibility and relevance
 - Use digital and print resources to access and retrieve information
 - Examine, evaluate and analyze ideas from multiple perspectives, audiences, and points of view
 - Evaluate information in terms of relevance, credibility and the social, economic, political, legal, and ethical issues that may impact it
 - Apply information to accomplish specified purpose

- **Master appropriate content and skills from a variety of disciplines -**
 - Build foundational understandings from a range of academic areas
 - Explore, retain, and interpret advanced concepts and knowledge in selected areas of interest
 - Demonstrate mastery of digital literacy in a variety of contexts
- **Make connections among and between critical concepts for learning -**
 - Make connections between one’s own life experiences and those of others
 - Identify and analyze patterns of meaning that occur within areas of study

Civic and Social:

- **Demonstrate citizenship and social responsibility -**
 - Knowledge of foundational values of citizenship in a democracy
 - Contribution to the community
 - Understanding of interdependence, respect, and responsibility for others in and beyond the Oxford community
- **Personal character and growth -**
 - Awareness of the importance of physical and emotional well being
 - Respect for self and others
 - Honesty and integrity
 - Self awareness and purpose

Completed in the spring of Senior year, primarily through the ½ credit course called “Senior Project,” the work of the Senior Project consists of five major components and can be completed through one of four topic tracks; Product, Service, Thesis, and Performance. The five components are listed below and all are described fully in the following chapters.

1. Proposal/Project Outline (described in Chapter Two); the student creates a proposal for his/her project idea and gets approval from the administration, his/her parents, and mentor.
2. Project Review Committee (described in Chapter Three); three adults serve on the Project Review Committee. The student identifies two adults in addition to his/her mentor who will agree to serve on his/her Senior Project Review Committee. One of these adults should be a teacher on the Oxford High School staff and the other should be a member of the outside community who has a working knowledge of the content area that is the focus of the proposal.
3. Paper and Research Process (described in Chapter Four); this is the formal mechanism through which the student researches and documents the necessary information needed to successfully complete his/her project. There are specific requirements for the paper and this is a critical part the Senior Project Process.

4. Project/Product (described in Chapter Five); the actual product that represents what was originally outlined in the Senior Project Proposal.

5. Portfolio and Presentation (described in Chapter Six); this final event is the culmination of the Senior Project process and includes the student's presentation of his/her product and its supporting documentation (Project Journal, appropriate forms, research paper, the product itself) to his/her Project Review Committee.

The Senior Project is the culminating experience of your Oxford Public Schools education and your most important opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned in your years with us. In fact, this process is so important, that a successful completion of the process is a requirement for graduation. The most important details of this process are described in the pages that follow. If you have questions beyond what you see listed on the following pages, please do not hesitate to contact your mentor at the high school, your principal Mr. Samuelson, or your guidance counselor for more information.

Chapter **2** Proposal/Project Outline

What is the purpose of the Senior Project?

Senior Project is designed to be the culminating experience of your high school education in Oxford and is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your mastery of the key skills and attributes that are the foundation of an Oxford Public School's education. In the world that you will live and work in after you leave Oxford High School, the ability for you to integrate a wide range of knowledge and skills for the purpose of solving problems and adding value to important processes will be a critical component to your future success. The Senior Project is an opportunity to build that asset and to gain experience doing so in a safe and supportive learning environment.

What is an acceptable project and how do I pick one?

An acceptable project is usually selected from one of four possible project tracks:

- **Product** – students pursuing the Product track are interested in developing a product or thing and will engage in planning, design, and actual production of that product or thing. Examples of projects in this track may include items like original inventions, unique product alterations, complex designs, or hand-made objects.
- **Service** – students pursuing the Service track design and implement a plan that involves providing a unique service to a person or group that needs assistance. Examples of projects in this track may include items like setting up tutoring services, volunteering in a unique way, or adding value to an existing human service process.
- **Thesis** – students pursuing the Thesis track research and write an in-depth thesis style research paper. This paper is produced IN ADDITION to the shorter research background paper that is due as part of the Senior Project process (see Chapter 4). Students that chose this route use the project paper as a way to explore the viability of a more complete research study on the topic that they have selected. Examples of projects in this track include studies of key or important issues of the day or explorations of historical ideas of interest to the student.

- **Performance** – students pursuing the Performance track conceptualize, plan, and perform some unique individual performance. Examples of projects in this track include song writing and performing, instrumental solos or original dramatic events.

Regardless of which track you pursue, a selected and approved project proposal must meet the following criteria:

The Senior Project **MUST**...

- **Successfully meet expectations in each of the areas of the project process.** A student may not complete the outline, fail the research paper, or not do a presentation and then expect to have a positive project assessment. Each step builds on the previous step so each must meet with the panel's expectations. Remember, it is our goal that each student be successful in this project so there are multiple pathways and support mechanisms in place to help ensure that all students who give the requisite effort will be successful.
- Represent, in the opinion of your advisor and panel, **a sufficient challenge to encourage effort and growth.** Proposals that represent performances, projects, or papers that are already part of a learner's existing performance portfolio or experience are not acceptable.
- Incorporate evidence of mastery and applicability of Oxford High School's **academic, civic and social expectations for learning.**
- Incorporate evidence of **an international perspective** through either the research or development process. Regardless of the topic or product, a successful project will include the infusion, synthesis, or integration of a point of view and source materials with an origin that is outside our own country's boundaries.
- Be **consistent and aligned** with the pre-project planning that you have completed. Projects that vary, without panel consent and documentation, from the descriptions outlined in the project proposal and subsequent research paper are not acceptable.
- Be **approved in advance by your parents and advisor.** In addition to your panel and advisor, your parents must indicate that they are aware of and support your choice of Senior Project.
- Meet requirements of **age appropriateness and legality.** Having the project be a challenge does not mean it can or should challenge accepted notions of what is right or legal.

- Be ***individual*** in nature. Projects that incorporate group or team performances are not acceptable. The purpose here is to see what a student has accomplished in their own skills and abilities. Projects that are designed with dependence on others make it difficult for project advisors and panels to accurately assess the contributions of the project sponsor. In the rare instance that a collaborative project with another student is approved, all written work, presentations and performances must stand alone and be wholly separate without any duplication of writing or tasks.
- **NOT BE *dependent on weather or other uncontrollable events.***
- **COMPLETE.** Closing the deal and bringing closure to a project is a significant part of this process. Projects that cannot or are not completed are not acceptable.

Now that you know the criteria for a successful project, you are/will inevitably face the moment of truth where you must actually come up with an idea, select it, and make it your own. For many, this is the most difficult part of the entire process. Ideas for good projects rarely come as a flash of brilliance out of thin air, but rather are cultivated and developed as part of a thoughtful process.

Start by thinking about all of the things you are interested in your neighborhood, your school, your town, your state, or things you would like to fix, do, learn, understand, see, improve, create, experience, or own. Create lists, idea webs, or simply brainstorm your ideas on sticky notes as they come to you. And don't edit yourself at this point, if you're into video games and want to design your own, write it down. You can always eliminate ideas later if they turn out to be not practical, too expensive, or just don't hold your interest.

Once you have a wide-range of ideas to work with, organize the materials that you have generated. Work to narrow the ideas down by prioritizing; try to reduce the ideas to three or four which that you think are the best combination of interest and potential for meeting the criteria of the project assessment. Think carefully about your top options.

Talk with your friends, your parents, and your mentor at school. Once you have carefully considered the various options, it is time to choose. Take your top idea and fill out the ***Project Proposal Form*** (see page 26).

How long should it take?

Most students will be able to complete the senior project during the class periods provided plus 20-40 hours of outside of class work depending on the scope of the project involved. This means that a successful Senior Project, from start to finish will take most students 80-100 hours of work to complete. It is a big job and we understand that and everything we do is designed to help every student be successful in this process. By far the most important element is careful planning and discipline. Senior

Projects and procrastination definitely do not go well together. In fact, many successful students begin to plan for their project long before the official start of the Project Class spring of senior year.

How will it be assessed and graded?

The Senior Project is graded as a cumulative total of all the steps of the project and is then reflected as your semester grade for the Senior Project class (see the assessment forms in Chapter 7). Each of the key elements of the process (the proposal, the research paper, etc.) all have their own assessments and value and each one plays a percentage role in the final grade given. The process grades (all of the steps leading up to the final product or presentation) total 60% of the total grade while the last step is worth the remaining 40%. A specific breakdown of all the steps and their value can be found in the ***Project Master Assessment Form*** in Chapter 7 on page 28.

Because a successful Senior Project is a graduation requirement, failure is not an option. Any student who does not meet expectations will be formerly assessed as “incomplete” and given opportunities, plans and support for remediation. This process will continue until the described expectations are met.

What will success look like?

Success in the Senior Project will have some elements that are very similar from student to student and others that will be unique for each completed project. Those elements that we hope will be shared are the senses of challenge and accomplishment that accompany the successful completion of a complex project. The skills needed for this project are critical for success not only in school but in the work environment that every Oxford High School student will enter once they graduate from either O.H.S. or the higher education institution of their choosing. As such, it is our intention that every student obtain these skills and demonstrate their competence in them as a result of this process.

Individually, we hope that all students have a chance to express their own unique skills and interests through their choice of a project or performance. The design of the project should allow each student to make his/her project unique to him/her and in doing so, create an opportunity to celebrate an interest or talent that is special on an individual basis. This implies that every project will have something that is different and unique and that makes the Senior Project process exciting for everyone.

What do I need to know about the Project Proposal Form?

The ***Senior Project Proposal Form*** is the form that starts the process. A full copy can be found in the forms section of Chapter 7, page 26. Basically, what this form asks you to do is to describe, in outline form, your idea for the Senior Project. The purpose of the

form is for you to demonstrate conceptually how the idea you have has the potential for meeting all of the criteria for the project. The key components of this form are:

- Summary of the project idea.
- Names and signatures of advisor and Project Review Committee (PRC) members.
- Brief descriptions of how the project idea will meet the main project requirements
 - Project pathway/type
 - Challenge rationale
 - Skill demonstrations
 - Research resources
 - International component
 - Completion assurances.
- Student and parent signatures.

Once you have identified a project idea, you fill out the form, except for the signatures, and then take it to your proposed PRC for review. At this meeting, the PRC may or may not recommend that changes or adjustments be made to the proposal. Once you have the descriptions on the form in a manner that is satisfactory for all of the members of the PRC, they either ask you to make changes and then sign it or they approve it right there and sign it along with you. Once that is done, all that is required for final submission is a parent/guardian approval signature. With that complete, your project is ready to go. Because it is so important for your idea be described correctly and completely and then approved, this form alone is worth 5% of your final project grade.

When is the Project Proposal Form Due?

The Project Proposal Form will be due in draft form around February 1st and due for final approvals around February 15th. A complete timeline for the Senior Project can be found in Chapter 7 on page 24.

What is the Project Portfolio and why do I need it?

A good Project Portfolio should resemble a road map of your project's development from beginning to end. It plays an important role in helping your PRC members see that you are on track and it also provides an excellent foundation for reflection and, if needed, diagnostics if there should be a need for problem solving.

For you, the Project Portfolio is your way to demonstrate that you have worked the hours and put in the effort that is required for a successful project. On an ongoing basis, it is helpful to think of this as a "project journal" or "project diary." In this space or

file, you will keep a record of the work you have done and any records, receipts or results of your work that play a role in the development and execution of a successful project. A form that you can use for this (***Project/Journal Portfolio Entry Form***) is found in Chapter 7 on page 27. Electronic versions of this form in MS Word or PDF formats will be available for you to use and copy as you need.

We recommend that you complete an entry on this form electronically every time you work on your project and once you have filled in a page, print it and go on to the next one. By creating both an electronic version and a hard copy version of this record, you are consistently generating the most important “receipt” that you have done of all the work you need to complete for a successful project.

By keeping both versions you are safe; if there should be a computer virus, you will have a paper back-up, and if the dog eats your journal, you can always print another copy of what you have done so far. If you believe that BOTH viruses and dogs may be problems, you might want to keep a third edition in a separate location!

In addition to the electronic/paper journal entry sheets, there is another component of the portfolio that is very important. You will want to be sure to put other helpful documentation in your portfolio as well. Letters you wrote or received, drafts, receipts, important articles, artifacts, anything that helps to create a record of your work.

By collecting work products in addition to work descriptions, you create the final link between the hours and the product that is demonstrable proof that you did the work. If you were to have a journal that says you spent 300 hours working but have nothing to show for it, your mentor and PRC will be skeptical of your journal. The reverse can also be true; if your journal shows that you only worked 20 hours but you have a professional project, we may wonder “where did this work come from?”

When is the Project Portfolio Due?

The Project Portfolio is due right at the end of the project process – usually around May 15th (again, a complete timeline for the Senior Project can be found in Chapter 7 on page 24). The Project Portfolio is worth 15% of your final semester grade.

3

Chapter Project Review Committee

What is the Project Review Committee (PRC)?

Every student must have three adults agree to serve on his/her Project Review Committee. One of these adults must be your home-room mentor. Additionally, you should identify two other adults who will agree to serve on your Senior Project Review Committee. One of these additional adults should be a teacher on the Oxford High School staff and the other should be a member of the outside community who has a working knowledge of the content area that is the focus of the proposal.

Who should/could serve on the PRC?

Beyond the requirements listed above, the most important criteria for selecting members of the PRC is your ability and willingness to work with them. We want this to be a positive experience for everyone so be sure you ask people who not only meet the criteria but that you also feel comfortable talking to and that you trust.

What do members of the PRC have to be able to do?

Members of the PRC have to be able to stay in contact with you and then attend your final presentation of the project during the presentation week in the late spring. The “staying in contact” portion of the responsibility simply means that you need to be able to either call or email a member of the PRC so you can ask questions and forward materials related to the project. This is usually at a minimum of two or three times during the course of the project (just before or at key benchmarks of progress).

Unquestionably, your Senior Project mentor is the most important member of the PRC as he/she will have the primary contact with you and have the most responsibility in terms of guiding you through the process and ensuring successful assessments. The other PRC members are there to give advice and counsel on content and process and to help ensure that you are on track for a successful project

Is there a form for the PRC?

Yes. The **PRC Information and Consent Form** can be found on page 25 in Chapter 7. Each member of your PRC should receive a copy of this form before they sign your proposal.

Chapter 4 Project Review Committee Paper and Research Process

What is the purpose of the Paper and Research Process?

The main purpose of the paper and the research process is to ensure that you have the factual foundation upon which to build your Senior Project. This step is based on our belief that anyone can create a minimal project, but it takes a thoughtful and reflective learner to understand why something looks the way it does and then convert that understanding into a quality product/service. To ensure that your project has the quality that we require, we want to be sure that you have taken some time to understand what is behind it. Consider the following examples:

<u>Student Project</u>		<u>Research Base</u>
- Song writing	—————>	Music theory and composition
- Play writing	—————>	Character/plot study
- Community service	—————>	Demonstrated need
- Design/build	—————>	Design principles/aesthetics
- Thesis paper	—————>	Source exploration/alternative views

With your project idea formed, your mentor can/will help you focus on research focus for your paper. By the time you are ready for your Senior Project, writing a research paper should be something you have lots of experience with. You'll use the same format that you've used for all of your research papers at Oxford High School. In addition to the correct format for sources, your paper must:

- be **typed or word processed** in a clear legible font of 10-12 point size
- have a **title page** which identifies the student and project focus
- be a minimum of **1,000 words pages of text** (not including the title page, Works Cited, labels, graphics or other supporting information)
- be properly **formatted** with one-inch margins, double-spacing, proper source citations and a separate Works Cited page
- use a minimum of **five sources** (must have at least two non-print sources)
- be firmly bound with a single staple or a simple cover.

How will it be assessed and graded?

The Research Paper is worth 25 points (25%) of your total semester/project grade so it is a significant part of the Senior Project Process. Of these 25 points, 5 are earned by the degree that your research and writing are aligned with the specific components you

have described on your **Project Proposal Form**. If your paper is focused, on topic, and totally supportive of your project, you will earn those 5 points.

Another 5 points can be earned by adhering to the structural requirements of the paper. The bulleted list that you see above (on page 14) describes the critical components of the paper and those bullets are the frame of reference here. Finally, the remaining 15 points are determined by the extent to which your writing meets our expectations for student writing which are described in our Community Expectations for effective and creative communication. The writing portion of that rubric will be used to judge the quality of this paper.

When is the Research Paper due?

The outline of the Research Paper is due around February 15th, the first draft of the Research Paper is due around March 1st, and the completed paper is due about a week later (a complete timeline for the Senior Project can be found in Chapter 7 on page 24).

What are the biggest barriers to success and how do I avoid them?

Experience with Senior Projects shows us that the biggest barriers to success in the research writing process are found in the following areas:

- **PROCRASTINATION!** It is easy to think that this paper is an annoyance that is not really important and you may be thinking of putting it off believing that it can simply be disposed of quickly and then you can get on to the important work of actually doing your project. This is dangerous thinking – without the information in this paper, your project will not be successful and it takes time to do this well. Plus, the paper is worth 25% of your grade!
- **LETHARGY!** We know, it's senior year, it's winter and it's cold, dark and grey outside, you thought you would cruise to the OHS finish line and now you have to gather yourself and actually do some work. Welcome to life. It is a big job, it is going to take a lot of work and effort and this is the first big step. Get off the sofa and get started!
- **INDECISION!** Sometimes you get worried because you have a feeling that maybe your project idea is not exactly what you wanted or that perhaps you have this feeling that you may want to change your mind... We know that there is always some doubt and indecision when big decisions are upon us. Usually what separates those who succeed from those who fail is simply a sense of purpose and commitment. You have done your preparation, you have an approved idea, now get out there and write that paper – it is going to be great!

- NOT FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS! The key elements of success here are well known – the bullets are listed on page 14 and the writing rubric you have been using for at least three years. Follow the guidelines and you will be fine!

Chapter 5 Project Project/Product

When and where will I do the work I need for my project?

Most of the work that needs to be done for the project can and should be done in class on a daily basis. We know that there are some tasks that will not be able to be completed during the school day for a variety of reasons (more time is needed or resources that may be required are not available at school). In some circumstances, you may need to arrange a unique framework to accommodate special projects, tasks or circumstances that need to be taken care of outside the normal school day. For most, however, our expectation is that through your normal class time plus approximately 20-40 hours of outside work you will have enough time to successfully complete the Senior Project process.

What will success look like?

One of the most exciting things about the Senior Project process is that success, in large part, looks different for each student. Even under the rare circumstance where two students have similar ideas, the way each would personalize and make the project their own means that the end result will be different for each. Certainly, there are elements that will be similar (everyone has to do a paper, etc.) but in the end our expectation is that each Senior Project will be unique.

As described in Chapter 1, there are four distinct project tracks that you can pursue:

- **Product** – if you pursue the Product track you will be developing a product or thing and will engage in the planning, design, and actual production of that product or thing. Examples of projects in this track may include items like original inventions, unique product alterations, complex designs, or hand-made objects.
- **Service** – if you pursue the Service track, you will design and implement a plan that involves providing a unique service to a person or group that needs assistance. Examples of projects in this track may include items like setting up tutoring services, volunteering in a unique way, or adding value to an existing human service process.
- **Thesis** – if you pursue the Thesis track, you will research and write an in-depth thesis style research paper. This paper is produced IN ADDITION to the shorter research background paper that is due as part of the Senior Project process (see Chapter 4). If you chose this route, you will use the project paper as a way to

explore the viability of a more complete research study on the topic that they have selected. Examples of projects in this track include studies of key or important issues of the day or explorations of historical ideas of interest to the student.

- **Performance** – if you pursue the Performance track, you will conceptualize, plan, and perform some unique individual performance. Examples of projects in this track include song writing and performing, instrumental solos or original dramatic events.

Once you select a track and an idea, you need to ensure that the project you pursue also meets all of the following requirements (these were also described in Chapter 1).

- **Successfully meet expectations in each of the areas of the project process.** A student may not complete the outline, fail the research paper, or not do a presentation and then expect to have a positive project assessment. Each step builds on the previous step so each must meet with the panel's expectations. Remember, it is our goal that each student be successful in this project so there are multiple pathways and support mechanisms in place to help ensure that all students who give the requisite effort will be successful.
- Represent, in the opinion of your advisor and panel, **a sufficient challenge to encourage effort and growth.** Proposals that represent performances, projects, or papers that are already part of a learner's existing performance portfolio or experience are not acceptable.
- Incorporate evidence of mastery and applicability of Oxford High School's **academic, civic and social expectations for learning.**
- Incorporate evidence of **an international perspective** through either the research or development process. Regardless of the topic or product, a successful project will include the infusion, synthesis, or integration of a point of view and source materials with an origin that is outside our own country's boundaries.
- Be **consistent and aligned** with the pre-project planning that you have completed. Projects that vary, without panel consent and documentation, from the descriptions outlined in the project proposal and subsequent research paper are not acceptable.
- Be **approved in advance by your parents and advisor.** In addition to your panel and advisor, your parents must indicate that they are aware of and support your choice of Senior Project.

- Meet requirements of ***age appropriateness and legality***. Having the project be a challenge does not mean it can or should challenge accepted notions of what is right or legal.
- Be ***individual*** in nature. Projects that incorporate group or team performances are not acceptable. The purpose here is to see what a student has accomplished in their own skills and abilities. Projects that are designed with dependence on others make it difficult for project advisors and panels to accurately assess the contributions of the project sponsor. In the rare instance that a collaborative project with another student is approved, all written work, presentations and performances must stand alone and be wholly separate without any duplication of writing or tasks.
- **NOT BE *dependent on weather or other uncontrollable events***.
- **COMPLETE**. Closing the deal and bringing closure to a project is a significant part of this process. Projects that cannot or are not completed are not acceptable.

Regardless of the track/project you choose, the project is worth 40% of your final semester grade. Many of those points are earned by adhering to these very requirements.

When is it due?

The Senior Project itself along with all of the supporting paper work (journals, etc.) is technically due the day before your Project presentation. Depending on the order that the presentations are scheduled, this could be anywhere from May 15th through the end of the first week of June.

What is the Project Journal and why does it matter?

As described in Chapter 2, a good Project Portfolio should resemble a road map of your project's development from beginning to end. It plays an important role in helping your adult helper's see that you are on track and it also provides an excellent foundation for reflection and, if needed, diagnostics if there should be a need for problem solving. It also is the most important historical record of the work that you have completed.

What are the biggest barriers to success and how do I avoid them?

- I FEEL OVERWHELMED! No question about it, at some point in this process you will think..."this is impossible, this is too much work, I will never get this done!" I wise person once said, "a trip of a million paces must begin with one

step.” You are right, this is a big job, but if the work is broken down into steps and you do a little each day, you will get there. Many have before you and many will after you. The one most important danger is... (see below).

- **PROCRASTINATION!** We have established that this is a lot of work – but we also know that if you can accomplish a little every day, you will get it done. If you wait, put it off and do not take advantage of your class time to work on your project, the job will become more daunting than it needed to be. If you make this mistake, you will need to go back to the first bullet in this list because that is what you will feel... and you will deserve it!

Chapter 6 Presentation and Portfolio.

When and where does the presentation occur?

Senior Project presentations are held in the main conference room in the main office area of the high school. A schedule which gives each you an hour to do your presentation will be announced in early May of your project year. The presentations themselves usually run from about May 15th through the first week of June.

Your place on that schedule, whether you are early, in the middle or at the end is a matter of random chance in a presentation lottery. So, if your name starts with a “Z” you should not think that you won’t be on until the end and that you have an extra 3 weeks to do your project. You will not find out your presentation slot until a week before presentations begin so you have just as much chance of going first as you do of going last. With this being the case, you are better off planning on being first and then anything else is just a bonus.

What will success look like?

A successful presentation will be judged by the criteria found in the speaking rubric that is part of the “Communicate Effectively” academic expectation, by how aligned your presentation is with the content of your project, and also by your ability to respond to questions from your Panel. Combined with presentation itself, these items are worth 15% of the final semester grade. Most presentations take 10-20 minutes with the rest of the time (you have up to an hour) is usually taken up with questions or comments from your panel. A successful presentation will usually cover the following topics:

- Some background on how you decided on your project idea.
- Some background on your PRC members and how they may have helped you in this process.
- Descriptions of how the development process for the project went.
- Evidence of how you used the academic, civic, and social expectations of the community through your project.
- Major barriers, problems and lessons learned.
- Any concluding or summary remarks about what the process and your career at Oxford High School.

When is it due?

As described above, your presentation can take anytime from around May 15th through the first week of June.

Who needs to attend the presentation?

At a minimum, your mentor and the other two members of your Project Review Committee need to attend. It is possible and encouraged that others in your life who you would like to have present (if you would like and you don't think it would be too distracting or nerve-wracking) may also attend if you choose. It is important to remember, however, if you do invite guests to attend, their role is to OBSERVE ONLY. Only members of the panel may ask questions and only you may respond to those questions. It is not appropriate for friends or loved-ones to volunteer information or try to help you out during this important presentation. The purpose here is to see what you have learned, not what anyone else thinks or knows.

What happens to the portfolio and product after the presentation?

After all of the grades are recorded and your passing marks entered into the system, the project and materials are yours to keep. The staff may ask students to donate their work as models or examples to show other students in future classes, but whether or not you donate your work for that purpose is entirely up to you.

What are the biggest barriers to success and how do I avoid them?

- LETDOWN! You think, "Whew, the project is done, that's it, I'm DONE!" Not so fast Sparky, you still have one task left to complete. The final test is to present your work and to respond to questions about it. It is through this final give and take with your panel that you will demonstrate beyond any doubt what you have learned and the value of the work to your development as a learner. So... even though your project work is done, stay focused through the presentation, you will be glad you did.
- PRESENTATION ANXIETY! If you are not used to speaking in front of groups or answering questions, this might be a nerve tester. Fortunately, because speaking is one our graduation competencies, you should have had several opportunities through your career in Oxford to do these kinds of presentations. If you are new to the community or were sick on earlier presentation days, our advice is to practice a few times before the big day. You will be more relaxed and confident going into your presentation and it will be more enjoyable for you as a result.

Chapter **7** Project Forms and Assessment Frameworks

Suggested Project Timeline/Completion Checklist
PRC Information & Consent Form
Project Proposal Form
Project Journal Entry Form
Master Assessment and Grade Form

Applicable Skill Rubrics

Senior Project Rubric
Access, Evaluate, and Use Information
Speak Confidently and Effectively
Write Clearly, Imaginatively, and Persuasively
Develop a Personal and Creative Voice
Make Connections Among and Between

Oxford High School Senior Project

Suggested Project Timeline and Completion Checklist

Student _____ Mentor _____ Year _____

Benchmark	Suggested Timeframe/Deadline	Date Completed
1. Review Senior Project Manual.	Summer/Fall, Senior Year	
2. Preliminary Project Brainstorming.	Fall Semester	
3. Preliminary PRC member identification.	Fall Semester	
4. Begin Project Journal.	1 st day of SP class	
5. Final project idea identification, formally invite PRC members and distribute PRC Information Forms.	February 1 st	
6. Approval of Senior Project Proposal Form with appropriate signatures.	February 15 th	
7. Research Paper research and paper outline completed.		
8. Research Paper draft complete, feedback acquired.	March 1 st	
9. Preliminary project work started.		
10. Research Paper due.	March 7 th	
11. Project mid-point feedback.	April 1 st	
12. Most project work complete.	May 1 st	
13. Presentation preparations begun.		
14. All paper work complete	May 15 th	
15. Presentation ready.		
16. Presentation and grade complete.	June 10 th	

Oxford High School Senior Project

Project Review Committee - Member Information/Consent Form

Student _____ Mentor/PRC _____ Year _____

Thank you for agreeing to be on my Project Review Committee. By agreeing to be on my PRC, you are declaring that:

- I have met with the requesting student and that you understand the purpose and role that the PRC plays in the Senior Project process at Oxford High School.
- I acknowledge that the student will work on his/her project during the 2009-2010 school year, and that I will offer assistance in completing the project phases of Oxford High School's Senior Project during that time.
- I understand that I will be a resource and consultant for the student and will be asked occasionally to verify the student's progress and the hours spent on his/her project.
- I understand that Senior Project is the sole responsibility of the student and that I am not to complete, in whole or in part, any aspect of the project for the student.
- I understand that I will work with the student by phone, e-mail or on-site at Oxford High School unless given express written permission by the parents/guardians of the student to meet off campus.
- I understand that I will be asked to participate in the final presentation of the project during a 1-2 hour period sometime in the late spring of 2010.

Name (*print*) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Oxford High School Senior Project

Project Proposal Form

Student _____ Mentor _____ Date _____

1. Overall Project Summary:

2. Project Pathway (*performance, product, etc*):

3. Challenge Rationale (*how will the project meet the appropriately challenging criteria*):

4. Skill Demonstrations/International (*how the project will include OHS key skill demonstrations*):

5. Research Resources (*assurances that there are enough research resources*):

6. Completion Assurances (*assurances that the project can be reasonably completed*):

Student Signature _____ Mentor Signature _____

PRC Member _____ PRC Member _____

Parent(s) _____

Oxford High School Senior Project

Project Journal/Portfolio Entry Form

Student _____

Mentor _____

Project Name: _____

Date	Purpose/Activity	Comments	Total Time
Total Time:			

Date Range for this Sheet: From (date) _____ to _____

Oxford High School Senior Project

Project Master Assessment Form

Student _____

Mentor _____

Project Name: _____

Item	Points Available	Points Earned		Comments
		Mentor	Student	
Project Proposal & Form	5			
• Brainstorming evidence	2			
• Short answers	2			
• Signatures	1			
Research Paper	25			
• Alignment	5			
• Structure	5			
• Rubric Score	15			
Portfolio	15			
• Time sheets & descriptions	5			
• Quality reflections	5			
• Total hours	5			
Presentation	15			
• Rubric Score	10			
• Structure and Response	5			
Project	40			
• CLE Rubrics Score	10			
• Senior Project Rubric	30			

Final Semester Grade:

Student Signature _____ Mentor Signature _____

PRC Member _____ PRC Member _____

Parent(s) _____

Oxford High School
Senior Project Final Assessment

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Alignment of Project with Project Pathway	The final project varies markedly from what was approved and plan. There are many elements that were not represented in the early planning or approved project proposal.	While there may be significant variations, the final project is substantively aligned with the original proposal. The substance of the final project is represented on the approved project proposal.	While there may be minor variations, the final project is substantively aligned with the original proposal. The substance of the final project is well represented on the approved project proposal.	The final project is completely aligned with the original proposal. The substance of the final project is entirely represented on the approved project proposal.
Challenge and Self-Direction	The product does not represent an appropriate level of challenge /difficulty. There is no evidence that the work completed was ever outside the student’s capacity at the beginning of the project.	The product represents some evidence of an appropriate level of challenge /difficulty. The student can produce some evidence that the work completed was at least in part outside the student’s capacity at the beginning of the project.	The product represents an appropriate level of challenge /difficulty. There are multiple examples of how new skills were developed or new circumstances met for the first time as a result of the project work.	The product represents a high level of challenge /difficulty. There are numerous examples of how new skills were developed or new circumstances met for the first time as a result of the project work.
	The project is not complete or it is clear that without sustained adult intervention, most work processes would not have occurred.	The project is complete as planned and most work processes are completed with minor adult intervention or guidance.	The project is complete and most works processes are completed without adult intervention. The student may have sought information on his/her own initiative.	The project is complete and all work processes are completed without adult intervention and are clearly above common expectations for the task at hand. The student may have sought information on his/her own initiative.
Expertise	There is no evidence of technical expertise in the project area.	There is some evidence of technical expertise in the project area.	There is strong evidence of technical expertise in the project area.	A high level of technical expertise was developed and is evident throughout the project.
Originality	Most student work is clearly derivative or copied with minimal or no evidence of imaginative effort.	Derivative elements may be present but there is some evidence of imaginative effort throughout the project work.	Imaginative effort is predominant, and there is some ability to articulate inspiration or genesis of ideas.	Imaginative effort is striking and there is a consistently demonstrated ability to articulate inspiration or genesis of ideas.

Passing = 5 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 20 is a perfect score.

Oxford High School

Access, Evaluate, and Use Information for a Variety of Tasks and Purposes

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Determines What is Needed	Has not identified the information needed, where to find it, or why it is relevant.	Can identify some of what is needed, but may struggle with where to find it or why it is relevant.	Can identify the information needed, where to find it, and why it is relevant.	Can identify a wide variety of types of information needed, possible sources, and provide a rationale for selection of these sources.
Uses Digital and Print Resources	Cannot create a search strategy that is relevant to the required information.	Creates and documents a search strategy that is relevant to the required information but may lack a rationale or specific details.	Creates and documents search strategy that is relevant to the required information and allows tracking of progress towards goals.	Creates and documents detailed search strategy that is relevant to the required information and will allow detailed tracking of progress towards goals.
	Cannot find the minimum number of sources required, and information is lacking relevance and essential details.	Uses the minimum number of sources to retrieve information and has a rudimentary organizational structure, however, some of the information is irrelevant and/or may contain errors in essential facts.	Uses an appropriate number of print and non-print sources to retrieve information, has a sound organizational structure, and most of the information is relevant and contains correct essential facts.	Exceeds expectations for the number of print and non-print sources to retrieve information, has a sound organizational structure, and all of the information is relevant and contains correct essential facts.
Examines and Evaluates Ideas and Information	Cannot summarize, paraphrase, or integrate information.	Summarizes, paraphrases, analyzes, integrates, and cites information from multiple perspectives with some minor inconsistencies.	Summarizes, paraphrases, analyzes, integrates, and properly cites information from at least five sources or perspectives.	Summarizes, paraphrases, analyzes, integrates, and cites information from more than five sources and perspectives.
	Does not apply or develop a criteria to judge information accuracy or reliability.	Attempts to apply or develop a criteria to judge information accuracy or reliability but application is uneven or unreliable.	Reliably applies, or develops and applies, criteria to judge information accuracy or reliability.	Reliably applies, or develops and applies, criteria to judge information accuracy or reliability and is able to reflect or improve on the quality of the information.

Continued...

Access and Evaluate Continued...

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent – 3
Apply Information for Specified Purpose	Does not keep records of sources and has no system for organizing facts.	Attempts to cite resources and has most of the correct corresponding information in a works cited or references page in an agreed upon research format.	Successfully cites most of the appropriate resources and has the correct corresponding information in a works cited or references page in an agreed upon research format.	Successfully cites all appropriate resources and has the correct corresponding information in a works cited or references page in an agreed upon research format.
	Original purpose is not satisfied, there is little or no connection between the result and the goal.	There is evidence that the original purpose is satisfied, goal and result are at least somewhat aligned.	Original purpose satisfied, goal and result aligned.	Original purpose satisfied completely, goal and result totally aligned.

Passing = 7 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 21 is a perfect score.

Oxford High School
Speak Confidently and Effectively

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Has a Clear And Valid Point	Has no discernable, coherent or valid point.	Presents outline of a valid point.	Presents a complete, discernable, and valid point.	Presents a complete and valid point which is clear, present and consistent throughout.
Structures Presentation Logically	Presents in an unclear, illogical, or confusing manner.	Presents main points in a logical and successful manner although some arguments may not be clear.	Presents main points in a logical and successful manner.	Presents main points in a clear, logical and compelling manner.
Uses Language Appropriately	Chooses language that is limited, too complex, or inappropriate.	Chooses language that is appropriate but may be limited	Chooses language that is appropriate and some word usage is particularly vivid and precise.	Chooses language that is vivid and precise.
	Uses speech that contains slang and many inappropriate word choices. Speech is frequently interrupted by extended pauses or verbal miscues.	Uses speech that may contain some slang or minor inappropriate word choices. There may also be an occasional extended pause or verbal miscue but in general, the speech flows from point to point.	Uses speech that contains minimal slang or pauses, and the speech flows nicely from point to point.	Uses speech that is fluid and slang free; emphasis and tone are used to support key ideas and the speech flows nicely from point to point.

Continued...

Speak Confidently Continued...

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Delivers Appropriately for Audience and Venue	Makes no connection between tone, projection, volume and audience. Audience is unresponsive to speaker and message.	Matches tone, projection, and volume to audience to some degree and attempts to respond to their comments or needs. Audience may respond to either the speaker or the message.	Consistently matches tone, volume and projection with audience and there is evidence of responsiveness to their comments and needs. Some evidence present that the audience related to the speaker and the message.	Consistently matches tone, volume and projection with audience and is highly responsive to their comments and needs. It is clear that the audience relates to the speaker and the message.
Visual Aides	Uses multi-media techniques; however, connection to information may not be evident.	Uses multi-media techniques to illustrate information or ideas.	Uses multi-media techniques to illustrate and interpret information and ideas.	Makes skillful and creative use of graphic organizers and other multi-media techniques to illustrate and interpret information and ideas.
Maintains Appropriate Posture and Body Language	Makes little or no eye contact. There are no meaningful gestures. Posture is closed and inappropriate.	Makes some eye contact. Gestures inconsistently support point being made. Posture is mostly appropriate to the topic and audience.	Makes eye contact with most members of the audience. Gestures generally support point being made. Posture is appropriate to the topic and audience.	Consistently makes eye contact with all members of the audience. Gestures enhance and support point being made. Posture is appropriate to the topic and audience.
	Displays pronounced nervous behavior or difficulty with the content	Displays some nervous behavior or minor difficulty with the content	Displays confidence with the content.	Exudes confidence and is at ease with the content.

Passing = 8 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 24 is a perfect score.

Oxford High School

Write Clearly, Imaginatively, Cogently, and Persuasively

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Presents a Clear Thesis	Exhibits no evidence of a developed main idea/thesis statement or the thesis is incorrect.	Displays identifiable main idea/thesis statement.	Displays a well developed main idea/thesis statement.	Displays a main idea/thesis statement which incorporates all of the facets of the issue or topic. The thesis is original and contentious.
Creates a Logical Structure	Displays little or no evidence of logical presentation or structure.	Demonstrates an identifiable progression of ideas and structure, although there may be some logical inconsistencies	Demonstrates a logical progression of ideas with few digressions. Structure is evident and contributes to the effectiveness of the piece.	Demonstrates a unified, logical and consistent organization throughout, with a sophisticated structure that contributes to the effectiveness of the piece as a whole.
Creates Artful Transitions	Displays no continuity between sentences, paragraphs or major elements of writing.	Displays occasional continuity between sentences, paragraphs and major elements of writing. Transitions may be mechanical, mundane or cliché.	Displays well crafted transitions between sentences, paragraphs and major elements of writing.	Displays consistent and artful transitions between sentences, paragraphs and major elements of writing.
Provides Compelling Support	Provides no supporting evidence or the evidence provided is either not appropriate to the work or too general to be meaningful.	Provides at least some evidence or support that is appropriate for the work.	Provides several specific and well developed examples that effectively support the argument.	Provides many specific and well developed compelling examples that creatively or powerfully support and advance the argument.

Continued...

Write Clearly Continued...

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Utilizes Appropriate Vocabulary and Voice	Uses inappropriate and/or limited vocabulary for the topic and purpose.	Uses appropriate but limited vocabulary for topic and purpose.	Uses effective and precise language for the topic and purpose.	Uses rich, precise and sophisticated language for the topic and purpose.
	Demonstrates no evidence of development of a voice or uses one that is inappropriate for the audience.	Demonstrates development of a voice that is personal and mostly appropriate for the audience.	Demonstrates consistent evidence of a voice that is personal and appropriate for the audience.	Demonstrates consistent and effective evidence of a voice that is personal and always appropriate for the audience.
Applies Rules of Grammar and Mechanics	Writes with numerous errors which prevent the reader from understanding the main idea.	Writes with some grammatical errors but the reader is still able to determine the main idea.	Writes with few if any grammatical or punctuation errors.	Writes with no grammatical or punctuation errors.

Passing = 7 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 21 is a perfect score.

Oxford High School

Develop a Personal and Creative Voice

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Attempt	Unwilling to communicate through a variety of artistic media.	Occasionally communicate through more than one media ; show some willingness to try new artistic avenues.	Consistently contribute through more than one media and try new artistic avenues.	Independently pursue several artistic media and integrate experiences in multiple artistic pursuits.
Awareness	Does not articulate an awareness of the creative process in general.	Articulates an awareness of the creative process in general, and may be able to identify some elements of their own creative style.	Clearly demonstrates an awareness of their own creative style and the conditions that contribute to their own creativity.	Use their knowledge of their own creative style to broaden their creative range.
Sharing Results	Even with encouragement, refuses to share the results of their creative efforts.	May be hesitant, but when encouraged will share the results of their creative efforts.	Consistently willing to take some risk in sharing the results of their creative effort.	Openly shares their creative efforts and seeks feedback. Always open to constructive criticism to improve the quality of their creative work.
Originality	Clearly derivative or copied, minimal or no imaginative effort.	Derivative elements may be present but there is some evidence of imaginative effort.	Imaginative effort is predominant, and there is some ability to articulate inspiration or genesis of ideas.	Imaginative effort is striking and there is a consistently demonstrated ability to articulate inspiration or genesis of ideas.
Choice of Media	No awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses or preferred learning style.	Some awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses – can articulate a reason why selected media is appropriate for purpose and/or process.	Identifies personal strengths and weaknesses, articulates a reason why selected media is appropriate for purpose and/or process.	Identifies personal strengths and weaknesses, articulates several reasons why selected media is appropriate for purpose and process.

Passing = 5 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 15 is a perfect score.

Oxford High School

Makes Connections Among and Between Critical Concepts for Learning

Item	Insufficient – 0	Minimal - 1	Proficient - 2	Excellent - 3
Makes Connections	Does not make a personal connection to the work or to larger universal themes.	Makes a connection to own life experience or to larger universal themes.	Makes connection to own life experience or to larger universal themes and supports it with details.	Makes multiple connections to own life experiences and to larger universal themes and supports all of them with details.
Identifies Patterns	Unable to make even minimal connections among sources.	Is able to make some connections among multiple sources.	Makes numerous connections among multiple sources.	Makes numerous and complex connections among multiple sources.
	Rarely able to notice features or patterns of information and has significant difficulty organizing data in ways that reflect an understanding of the subject matter.	Sometimes able to notice features and patterns of information and organizes data in ways that reflect an understanding of the subject matter.	Frequently able to notice features and meaningful patterns of information that are not noticed by novices and organizes data in ways that reflect an understanding of the subject matter.	Consistently able to notice features and meaningful patterns of information that are not noticed by others and organizes data in ways that reflect a deep understanding of the subject matter.
	Knowledge is not contextualized and student cannot transfer knowledge in their approach to new situations.	Knowledge occasionally reflects contexts of applicability and student shows some flexibility in their approach to new situations.	Knowledge reflects contexts of applicability, the knowledge can be "conditionalized" on a set of circumstances and student shows some flexibility in their approach to new situations.	Knowledge reflects contexts of applicability, the knowledge is "conditionalized" on a set of circumstances and student shows varying levels of flexibility in their approach to new situations.

Passing = 4 with a minimum of 1 in each indicator. 12 is a perfect score.