



Atlantic University

TP6999 Culminating Project Study Guide

PURPOSE

The Culminating Project (CP) provides a capstone experience for students in the Master of Arts in Transpersonal Psychology program. This capstone experience is a chance to select a topic from the field of Transpersonal Psychology and conduct independent work under the supervision of a faculty member. Students who elect to bring their academic experience to a conclusion with a CP must demonstrate the ability to synthesize their experience into a comprehensive project that reflects skills or levels of understanding derived from their studies. There are four types of CP: research, application, creative, and service.

OVERVIEW

Once all core, specialization, and elective courses are completed, a student may enroll in TP6999 as the last course in the Master of Arts in Transpersonal Psychology curriculum. All coursework is completed in the online classroom, and faculty mentors return all work through this portal. While it is acceptable to communicate with mentors via email or phone, it is required that all coursework be submitted through the online classroom to ensure proper tracking of timelines.

Students have a total of two consecutive semesters to complete the project. Full completion means the project is fully written: The mentor has approved, graded, and signed off on the final draft. In addition, the verbal presentation has been given, and three copies of the project are bound. Extensions, while permissible in certain extenuating circumstances, are not otherwise encouraged or approved.

To ensure students stay on track and to keep the administration informed of student progress, mentors submit an evaluation at the end of the first semester of enrollment. If a student has not been in communication with the mentor or completed enough work (as suggested in the CP schedule or the student's individual timeline) to demonstrate a sincere commitment to completing the project within the two semesters allotted, the student could receive an Administrative Withdrawal (AW).

A student may enroll in TP6999 a maximum of two times. After two unsuccessful attempts, the student is required to follow the alternative track (39 credit hours) to graduation.

OBJECTIVES

- Synthesize various elements of your learning experiences in previous courses;
- Demonstrate the ability to design and complete a systematic program of original research or an application of principles from the field of Transpersonal Psychology;
- Create a written report of the project, using recognized conventions of graduate-level academic research and writing;
- Give an oral presentation of the project to faculty and other members of the university community.

ORGANIZATION

TP6999 consists of five Learning Modules.

Module I: Creating the Proposal and the Approval Process

- Identify a topic and primary mentor.
- Submit a proposal for the Faculty Committee's final approval.

Module II: Conducting the Culminating Project

- Complete the actual work of collecting research and data, creating original work, fulfilling a community service, etc., depending on the type of project.

Module III: Documenting the Culminating Project and Writing a Personal Essay

- Complete the written documentation of the project. This may require several drafts.
- In addition, write a personal essay about your overall experience in the Atlantic University Master of Arts in Transpersonal Psychology degree program.

Module IV: Oral Presentation of the Culminating Project*

- Give an oral presentation to a committee of at least three faculty members. The audience may also include current students, Atlantic University alumni, Atlantic University community members, and/or additional Atlantic University faculty.

**To present, the entire project must be completed and signed off by the faculty mentor.*

Module V: Binding the Culminating Project and Other Graduation Requirements

- At least three copies of the CP are printed, bound, and sent to Atlantic University
- The [diploma fee](#) and any remaining balances on the student's account are paid.

MODULE I

Creating the Proposal and the Approval Process

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of Module I, students will have:

1. Identified a topic;
2. Identified a category from among four choices;
3. Secured a primary mentor;
4. Created a draft proposal to be submitted to the full faculty via the primary mentor;
5. Revised the proposal per recommendations from the full faculty;
6. Obtained full faculty approval of the proposal;
7. Secured a commitment from a faculty member to serve as second reader.

Culminating Project Categories

Students can choose one of the following four types of culminating project.

1) **A Research Project** refers to library research and is primarily theoretical in nature. It focuses on a well-defined aspect of Transpersonal Psychology in an effort to bring greater understanding to this subject. This type of project provides an opportunity to explore a theme (e.g., reincarnation, dreams, the body-mind-spirit connection) in depth and to synthesize the best of current scholarship and research pertaining to this theme. A student's own ideas and theories can certainly be part of this type of project, but it is *not* acceptable to have a Research Project based solely on the student's own theories. (80-150 pages)

2) **An Application Project** refers to formulating a question that can be explored via active, personal experience. An Application Project allows students to explore a theme of great interest in the laboratory of life itself. A particular theoretical framework regarding the chosen theme is tested via the devised application. The entire process is then described in such a way that the application could be replicated. (80-150 pages)

3) **A Creative Project** refers to the expression of some aspect of the transpersonal through one or more media, such as painting, photography, music, or creative writing. In this case, the CP includes the fruits of the creative endeavor, plus a document describing the relation of the work produced to transpersonal theory. In some instances the written report will be considerably briefer than the written document for the other categories. The written document should include photographs or other ways of representing the essence of creative expression. In other cases, such as a piece of creative writing, the creative expression itself will appear as an appendix to the written report. (25-50 pages for essay *in addition to* the creative expressions)

4) **A Service Project** refers to the demonstration of transpersonal principles in the community. This type of project seeks to help others understand some aspect of the transpersonal domain and apply their understanding to their own lives. Where the application project is self-directed, the service project is outward directed. Since this involves closely working with others, the student and primary mentor will devise appropriate safeguards for the protection of the well-being of all concerned. For this category of project, the written document will give the rationale for the

project and will explain the relation between the project and the transpersonal perspective and provide a detailed report on the outcomes of the service undertaken. (80-150 pages)

Previous [Culminating Projects](#) can be reviewed via Henry Reed's Creative Spirit network.

The Primary Mentor

Faculty members have diverse backgrounds and areas of interest and can provide valuable advice regarding the types of projects and particular topics students may wish to investigate. Before enrolling, the student must secure a primary mentor by contacting the prospective mentor with a working outline or proposal. Once the faculty member agrees to be the primary mentor, the student may enroll in TP6999. If the student's first choice of primary mentor is unavailable, the Assistant Registrar will assist in securing one.

The primary mentor will assist the student in securing a second reader. A second reader provides feedback at two points primarily: (1) the initial design of the project, and (2) comments regarding the penultimate draft of the written document. Both the primary mentor and second reader must approve the final draft of the CP, and both will sign the title page.

The Culminating Project Proposal

During Module I, the student will create a formal written proposal within the *first 3-4 weeks* of the semester. The proposal is submitted via the online classroom, and the primary mentor submits the proposal to the Faculty Committee. Revisions may be required following this review. Once the Faculty Committee approves the proposal, the student can begin completing the other modules.

An effective proposal:

- Includes 1000 words (3-5 double-spaced pages);
- Identifies the category (research, application, creative, or service);
- Summarizes the topic/theme of the project (more information below);
- Provides a statement regarding the procedures to be followed to ensure the protection of project/research participants (where applicable);
- Clearly outlines the organization of the final written document;
- Includes a References list. This is *not* the final list of sources.

Summarizing the Topic/Theme

This narrative is the largest portion of the proposal. Its content differs from category to category.

- **Research Projects:** *The Proposal defines the topic and questions you hope to answer.*
- **Application Projects:** *The Proposal explains the application methodology and purpose of the project.*
- **Creative Projects:** *The Proposal describes the work (e.g., a screenplay, an illustrated children's novel, etc.) and discusses the relationship of the project to transpersonal principles.*
- **Service Projects:** *The Proposal describes the service and its relationship to one or more transpersonal topics.*

MODULE II

Conducting the Culminating Project

Each project unfolds in its own unique way. As important as it is to have a plan going into the project, this plan may develop new aspects as the work progresses. It is important to stay in touch with your primary mentor as the project progresses.

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of Module II, students will have:

1. Conducted a background review of previous research, endeavors, etc.
2. Completed the library research, the application, the service, or the creative productions involved in the approved project.
3. Maintained sufficient records to create a written report for Module III.

NOTE: The end of first semester review will likely fall in this module. If you have not been in communication with the primary mentor or completed enough work to demonstrate a sincere commitment to completing the project within the two semesters allotted, you could receive an Administrative Withdrawal (AW).

For a **research project**, students conduct library and other research, gathering information from a variety of sources. Then students will make sure they have clearly defined the scope of the project. Balance is required in order to maintain focus and explore the topic deeply, while resisting the temptation to write a book on the topic. Remember, this is a culminating project – *not a dissertation*.

An **application project** involves an exploratory or experiential application of a practice related to Transpersonal Psychology. The primary emphasis is self-application. If other people are involved, they must be willing participants who are assisting the student in the self-directed application or exploration. Prior to beginning this application project, students must ensure the soundness of their application methodology with their primary mentor. Faculty mentors can aid students in staying in compliance with university mandates.

The **creative project** will have two components: the creative expression (e.g., a screenplay, a set of paintings) and an essay of 25 to 50 pages of a literature review and a discussion of the outcome of the creative work. For example, a creative project like a full-length screenplay on the subject of human consciousness would be accompanied by a lengthy essay about the role of the media in presenting ideas about consciousness.

A **service project** requires students to explore and explain how they can apply what they have learned in service to others. The written portion of the project may attend to the following questions and ideas: How is the chosen population responding to the service? What have other or similar projects accomplished? What new elements does your project bring to this work? Any resource materials developed as part of the project (e.g., handouts, brochures, questionnaires) should be included as supplemental material in appendices.

Module III

Documenting the Culminating Project and Writing a Personal Essay

In this module students will create the written Culminating Project report. This report will be bound (a minimum of three copies) and kept in the Atlantic University offices and in the Association for Research and Enlightenment's Library collection.

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of Module III, students will have:

1. Written the Culminating Project report and gained approval of that report by both faculty committee members;
2. Written, submitted, and gained approval for the final essay, a requirement for graduation.

This module has two writing assignments. By far the more ambitious of the two is the Culminating Project report. However, the final essay, while much briefer, is also important. Students should work on these assignments simultaneously.

Culminating Project Report

This is a lengthy undertaking, and students should proceed under the direction of their primary mentor. We recommend that you submit first drafts of each chapter *as you complete them*. Additionally, the primary mentor should have a clear outline of the report. When the proposal was created, it included a statement of what this final project report would look like. Once this phase of the project is achieved, revisions may be needed.

All Culminating Projects require that the report is hard cover bound. In general, any project should fit into the guidelines of 45 to 200 pages, and all projects will have the same first pages:

- A title page
- A signature page
- A table of contents
- An abstract of approximately 200-300 words which summarizes the project

It is very important that this paper follows citation and formatting guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*. Samples of a title page and a signature page follow.

ORIGIN AND DESTINY OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Joan Doe

Bachelor of Arts, University of Georgia, December 2010

A Culminating Project Submitted to the Faculty of Atlantic University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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President

For a library *research project* there might be:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Chapter Topics
- Conclusion
- Appendices as needed

For an *application project*, the standard chapter formatting will usually be appropriate for the report. For example, chapters would include:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
- Appendices as needed

For a *creative project*, the report will generally consist of:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology or similar discussion of creative process
- The actual creative expression (illustrations, children's book, etc.), which can become an appendix to the report
- Appendices as needed

For a *service project*, the report will generally be similar to the creative project. There will be:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Chapters describing
 - the context of the project
 - what others have done in this field
 - what is already known about the needs of the people you chose to serve
 - what has worked well in other settings, even if it did not have a transpersonal orientation
- A report including observations, personal reports, interview summaries, etc.
- Conclusion including how the student and others might continue the work
- Appendices as needed

Feedback

It is important for the student and primary mentor to reach a mutually agreeable rhythm and pattern for critique and feedback. Remember that all drafts of the project must be submitted through the online classroom. While students are advised to contact their mentor by phone and email, official communication and submission of work must be through the online classroom. Students should understand clearly that *faculty members are NOT expected to be editors, fact-checkers, or spell-checkers*. Even the first draft submitted to the primary mentor should be a

polished version. That very likely means having someone else proofread the draft prior to submitting it. The mentors' responsibility is to help students achieve the best possible level of critical thinking and to ensure they are addressing the issues and questions that need to be included in a final project for a Master's degree.

The Personal Essay

In an essay of approximately 2000 words, address the following questions and issues:

- How have you grown as an individual during your time as an Atlantic University student?
- In what ways can you see that your course work has directly or indirectly impacted your growth?
- What in your course work led you to the Culminating Project? Describe briefly the process of deciding upon the CP type and topic.
- How well did the Atlantic University coursework for your MA program fulfill the three program learning outcomes (below)?
 1. To learn the theoretical basis of the transpersonal perspective;
 2. To experience your own transpersonal nature;
 3. To give expression of the transpersonal perspective to the world around you through various forms of communication, manifestation, and demonstration.

The essay is not graded. The personal essay should be sent to registrar@atlanticuniv.edu. Once submitted, the student will receive confirmation of its receipt, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

Module IV

Oral Presentation of the Culminating Project

In this module students will make an oral presentation to a committee of at least three faculty members and other members of the Atlantic University community, possibly including current and former students, faculty, and staff.

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of Module IV, students will have:

1. Gained the experience of preparing for an oral presentation;
2. Successfully communicated the essence of the project to a gathering of members of the Atlantic University learning community.

The presentation is generally done, when there are more than three presenters, at a Convocation held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. If extenuating circumstances will prevent you from attending Convocation, you should have your primary mentor work with the administration to devise an alternative plan for the oral presentation.

The Convocation presentation is *not* a thesis defense. Rather it is a report on the project and a conversation within the learning community. The project must be fully completed in order for the student to present at Convocation. Once the primary mentor indicates that the student is ready for the presentation, a university representative will contact the student with a schedule and information about preparing for the next Convocation (or make plans for an alternate presentation). Should the student have any questions, they should email registrar@atlanticuniv.edu.

Please note: After students have completed the oral presentations and paid any outstanding fees, including the diploma fee, we are very pleased to send them their diploma. But, given the fact that we do not have a formal graduation ceremony, the Convocation serves the purpose of celebrating students, their work, and their impending graduation. In some cases, and when the student has met all graduation requirements, the diploma may be presented.

Convocation

Each student has approximately 40 minutes for the presentation (20 minutes to present, 20 minutes for questions and answers). The primary mentor typically introduces the student. If that person is unable to attend, a video introduction may be sent in advance. The second reader or a member of the Atlantic University staff may also introduce the student in the primary mentor's absence.

Once students are introduced, the first 20 minutes of the allotted 40 minutes are reserved for the presentation of the project. Students should *practice and time* their presentations in order to know that they can do so to their satisfaction in the time allotted. After the initial 20 minutes, members of the faculty can ask questions or make comments. The faculty question and answer period usually takes about 10 minutes. The final 5 - 10 minutes are for questions or comments from the gathering at-large.

- **Handouts:** Students are welcome to have handouts if they feel that would help listeners follow their presentation. Handouts are not required.
- **PowerPoint Presentations:** PowerPoint presentations are strongly recommended. If used, they must be submitted via the online classroom in advance.
- **Audiovisual Needs:** Notify the administrative office in advance with any other audiovisual needs (white board, music, video, easels, etc.).
- **Artwork:** Students bringing artwork for display should communicate the types of artwork and the dimensions in advance so that we can plan accordingly.
- **Guests:** Students may invite guests. For planning purposes, we will need an approximate count. A reception will follow the student presentations.

Module V
Binding the Culminating Project and Other Graduation Requirements

In this final module, students are tying up loose ends related to the binding of their report, plus any other administrative details before graduation.

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of Module V, students will have:

1. Duplicated the appropriate number of copies of the CP and submitted them for binding;
2. Successfully completed all administrative tasks related to graduation;
3. Ensured that their diploma fee and any other outstanding fees have been paid.

The final Culminating Project manuscript

- Submit ***three bound copies*** to Atlantic University. Students may request additional copies for themselves, other libraries, mentors, or other purposes.
- Complete the Signature Page and send it to the administrative office. Be sure to follow the exact formatting guidelines and advise the administrative office of the total number of copies being bound (at least 3 copies are required). Once all the necessary signatures are obtained, the administrative office will mail those pages to the bindery. Email signature pages to registrar@atlanticuniv.edu.
- Send print copies of the manuscript to the bindery. You may also email a PDF file directly and request that copies be printed at the bindery. (Contact the bindery for printing costs.) Use white paper and single-sided printing only.
- Send a PDF copy of the completed manuscript to the administrative office. This will be place in the student's digital file. Email the PDF to registrar@atlanticuniv.edu.

We recommend the following bindery:

Longs-Roulet Bookbinders, Inc.

2800 Monticello Ave.

Norfolk, VA 23505

757-623-4244

www.longs-roulet.com

bindlrbi@gmail.com

In correspondence with Longs-Roulet, be sure to arrange that three copies are sent separately to:

Atlantic University

215 67th Street

Virginia Beach, VA 23451

ATTN: Assistant Registrar

Arrange the delivery of additional and personal copies as needed, as well as payment and shipping fees with the bindery. Additionally, include your choice of ***cover color and type***. Options are

shown on the Longs-Roulet Bookbinders web site. We recommend the buckram hard cover, which is more economical and durable. *The ink may be black, gold, or silver.* The front cover should include the project title and student name; the spine should include the project title, the student name, and the year.

Graduation

Once the bound copies have been received and the diploma fee has been paid, the remaining steps to graduation are the final personal essay and a zero balance on the student's financial record.

We will order the diploma and obtain necessary signatures, including the President of Atlantic University and the Vice President of Academic and Administrative Affairs. The signed diploma will be mailed to the student.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE COMPLETION OF TP6999 AND THE AWARDING OF YOUR MASTER OF ARTS IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE!