

# SENIOR PROJECT 2010

## GILMOUR ACADEMY

### Philosophy & Goals:

The successful completion of a senior project is a requirement for graduation from Gilmour Academy. Students develop projects that emerge from their interests and insights and are then engaged using **self-designed learning plans**. Students extend their knowledge of a topic for which they have a particular passion or genuine interest through the guided senior project experience, that is, through preparation, the experience itself, and ultimate reflection. Students demonstrate the ways in which they have extended their knowledge in exhibitions at the end of their designed experiences, providing evidence of the educational outcomes of Gilmour Academy (effective communicator; collaborative contributor; complex thinker; lifelong learner; effective problem-solver; morally responsible individual; person on a journey of faith).

### General Phases & Requirements:

The Senior Project is divided into four phases:

Phase 1: Project **Proposal** (Due Date: Thursday, **March 4, 2010**)

*(Once approved, permission forms will follow.)*

Phase 2: Project **Design** and **Mentor** Selection (From approval to **Thursday, April 8, 2010**)

*(On April 8, 2010, the parent/mentor authorization form is due.)*

Phase 3: Project **Experience** (Monday, **May 3** through Thursday, **May 20, 2010**)

*(40 documented hours are completed on-site to fulfill your approved plan.)*

Phase 4: Project **Exhibition** (scheduled **May 21 through May 26**)

*(The project **summary paper**, research **bibliography**, and mentor **verification form** are due upon your arrival for the exhibition.)*

## Phase 1: Create and Submit a Project Proposal

### A. Selecting the Topic

Students choose a topic with their advisor. They should meet individually with their advisors and discuss their thoughts.

#### Initial Questions for Consideration:

- What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- Is there any social problem you would like to investigate?
- Are you artistic? Are you creative?
- If you could pursue your wildest dream, what would it be?
- Have any travel experiences given you ideas?
- What would you like to be doing 10 years from now?
- What careers have sparked an interest for you? Why?
- How would your peers describe you?
- If asked, what would your parents and/or friends say about what you will do for a career? Why do they say that? What things do you do best?
- Does anything from your academic studies resonate as having truly grasped your interest?
- What have you been longing to learn about, but have not had the time or the opportunity?

### B. Developing Essential Questions

The Essential Question(s) should guide the project. Taking the topic/idea **and writing it in the form of a question** that illuminates the importance and a perspective of the topic/idea is critical for depth, focus, and clear learning outcomes. Points to consider about the “essential” question include:

- Does the question facilitate understanding something *more deeply*?
- Does the question promote *exploration* of at least *one perspective* of the idea or topic. Does it allow for a *reflective answer and evaluative judgment*, not simply facts and obvious right answers?
- Does the question truly get to the *heart of your interests and values*? Does the question create the ability to *view the topic through a specific lens*, e.g., politics, culture and society, ethics, economics, spiritual, integration/comparison, or values in conflict?

## Phase 2: Design the Project and Select a Mentor

The project design should be one or more experiences that will assist each student in exploring and answering their essential question(s). A mentor is selected by the student to assist in guiding the work and verifies completion of hours and the implementation of the project experience. ***The mentor must be someone other than a relative.*** The finished Project Proposal should be submitted to the Advisor for initial review and then to the Senior Project Director for final authorization. ***Specific placement locations and/or mentor names are not required at this point, but students should move quickly to secure potential opportunities.***

Signed approval must be obtained **from parents and mentors** (Parent and Mentor Authorization Form) **after** the project has been approved and **prior** to beginning the Senior Project Experience.

The Senior Project is an **individual** experience, not a paired or group activity. In addition, students should understand that topics, essential questions, and plans for the project experience will be approved as received; duplicate proposal ideas (by more than one student) may not be approved. While Catalyst students and those seniors participating in service trips have unique and valuable experiences, seniors will be required to start with **new** “fresh” topics to explore that have no connection to meeting previous academic or service requirements. In addition, embedding projects within cruises or other family excursions is not permitted.

Depending on the complexities of the approved Project Experience, the **Senior Project Mentor** operates within one of three contexts:

- The Mentor is generally the contact at an internship/site-based experience who can verify the completion of the total hours

***OR***

- The Mentor is the internship/site-based contact **who also** keeps in communication about any additional steps off-site outlined in the Project Experience

***OR***

- The Mentor is a professional from the student’s chosen field or associated in some understandable way with the topic and essential questions. The Mentor independently works with the student in directing the steps of the Project Experience, meeting frequently with the student **and/or** maintaining good communication throughout the project via email and/or phone contact.

The Mentor will eventually sign two forms: a Parent & Mentor Authorization Form and a final Mentor Verification Form.

## Phase 3: Implement the Project Experience

### A. Project Experience

Each student will arrange for and fulfill a 40-hour field experience **during the period May 3 through May 20**. It may take the form of an internship, a practicum, a shadowing experience, or any other participatory, hands-on experience that the student has designed and arranged. Although some projects will require additional time, *40 hours of field experience is required and must be completed during this period of release time in May.*

The Project Experience flows logically from the essential question. The Project Experience portion of the project proposal will more than likely be a combination of a number of avenues by which a student will “seek answers” to the essential question(s). More than one site location is possible. Interviews, surveys, and questionnaires are common.

### B. Project Summary & Research Bibliography

The Project Summary is a one-page paper that both summarizes and synthesizes the Project Experience. The paper will be a self-evaluation and meet the standards of the rubric that will be supplied. In addition, an annotated bibliography is submitted of research sources related to the topic/idea and essential questions. The summary paper and bibliography are submitted at the time of the Project Exhibition along with the mentor verification form.

## Phase 4: Conduct a Public Exhibition

A public presentation or exhibition of 15-20 minutes is the required culmination of the project. Students explain what was done to plan and complete the process, demonstrate what was learned about the topic and essential question(s), and discuss how the Gilmour educational outcomes relate to the experience.

The project exhibition may take any form that is appropriate to the project, such as a PowerPoint presentation, slide show, video, web design, or performance of some kind. Exhibitions should be thorough, informative, creative and engaging. Exhibition Guidelines will be provided. **Each senior is required to attend and assess at least three exhibitions by peers in his or her own advisory group during the exhibition period.**

**Senior Project Exhibitions and Project Summary Submissions will be scheduled on weekdays beginning Friday, May 21 through Wednesday, May 26.** Students should be available to present their projects at any time during this period. A specific appointment will be assigned prior to embarking on the project. *The project experience should not interfere with this exhibition period, unless the student has obtained an exemption in advance from the director for Friday, May 21.*

## SAMPLE SENIOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Medicine</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does understanding the complexities of the human body directly relate to patient care?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentorship at a local hospital with either an immunologist or biomedical engineer</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Grief and Support Programs</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What specific needs are particular to adolescents during the grieving process and what strategies can be initiated for support?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Work with volunteers and patrons at the Gathering Place</li><li>2. Contact a variety of schools and agencies to research grief programs</li><li>3. Develop a grief support program for students at Gilmour</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Sports Management</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do sports agents balance the potential conflicting interests of their clients and parties involved in contract negotiations and endorsements?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Placement at a sports management firm</li><li>2. Interviews of sports agents</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Fashion Design</p> <p><b><u>Essential Questions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can fashion design reflect the designer's life experience?</li><li>• What values are inherent or in conflict for those "successful" in this field?</li><li>• Why do some "artists" follow their dreams while others do not?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentoring opportunity with local fashion designer</li><li>2. Creation and presentation of personal clothing designs</li><li>3. Utilization of fashion design instructors at local colleges or with alumni of their programs</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Satirical Writing</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In what ways does satirical writing contribute to society?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentorship with local writer</li><li>2. Research satirical works</li><li>3. Contact writers of satire to pose essential question</li><li>4. Develop personal portfolio of satirical writing</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Country Music</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can country music entertainers maneuver this industry to move from obscurity to some level of success/fame?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentoring opportunity at Nashville's Grand Ole' Opry</li><li>2. Interview with recording studio professionals in Nashville</li></ol>

## SAMPLE SENIOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Photography</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By what means can photography communicate—present, engage, manipulate—various information, opinions, and emotions?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentoring opportunity with local photographer</li><li>2. Interviews with photojournalists at local newspapers</li><li>3. Demonstration of communication strategies through photo exhibition</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Military</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are people’s perceptions of military service and how do they differ?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Design, distribute and analyze survey for student body and faculty</li><li>2. Interviews with former and current military personnel</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Journalism</p> <p><b><u>Essential Questions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What makes something newsworthy?</li><li>• What types of influences exist that affect the nature of a story?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mentoring opportunity with local newspaper reporter</li><li>2. Interviews with editor and other staff members</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Justice System</p> <p><b><u>Essential Questions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is justice?</li><li>• Does the justice system work?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Observe activities of two judges at Cleveland Municipal Courts</li><li>2. Interview judges</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Farming</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is necessary for the small, independent farmer today to succeed in society?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Work in all areas of farm management on secured farming site</li></ol>
<p><b><u>Topic/Idea:</u></b> Forensics</p> <p><b><u>Essential Question:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does science contribute to America’s justice system?</li></ul> <p><b><u>Experience/Plan:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Intern at a forensics lab</li></ol>

# SENIOR PROJECT 2010 TIMETABLE & CHECKLIST

## I. Requirements for **final** Project approval:

\_\_\_\_\_ Submission of an approvable **Project Proposal** (by Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>)

\_\_\_\_\_ Submission of **Parent-Mentor Authorization Form** (by Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>)

## II. Requirement **prior** to scheduled Exhibition:

\_\_\_\_\_ Fulfillment of the approved **Project Experience** of 40 hours between May 3 and May 20

## III. Requirements during the four-day Exhibition Period

(Weekdays beginning Friday, May 21, through Wednesday, May 26)

\_\_\_\_\_ Presentation of **your own exhibition** on the date and at the time scheduled

\_\_\_\_\_ Your **assessment of at least three other exhibitions** by peers in your advisory group

## IV. Requirements **at the time** of the scheduled Exhibition:

\_\_\_\_\_ Fulfillment of all **Exhibition Guidelines** at the “competent” level

\_\_\_\_\_ Submission of the **Mentor Verification Form**

\_\_\_\_\_ Submission of the one-page **Project Summary Paper**

\_\_\_\_\_ Submission of **your Annotated Bibliography**

*Note: All areas stated above must be fulfilled in order to meet the Senior Project graduation requirement and to authorize a diploma.*

**PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM  
SENIOR PROJECT 2010  
GILMOUR ACADEMY**

*Due to your advisor by Thursday, March 4, 2010 (for the advisory meeting).*

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

FACULTY ADVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Topic/Idea:**

**Readings/Research Pertaining to the Topic/Idea:**

**Essential Question(s) to be Explored:**

**Plan for the Project Experience in May:**

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**Review / Approval**

Signature of Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Senior Project Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_