THE COURSE: N445 - The Capstone Course for Registered Nurses is a 3-credit seminar and clinical course that focuses on the integration and synthesis of theory and practice in nursing. The course consists of two credits of seminar (which is done in a blended format both on campus and online) and one credit (60 hours) of clinical project practice, which is obtained in a wide variety of non-direct and non-acute care settings. Students in this course are licensed registered nurses in the RN to BS-Nursing completion program and typically expect to graduate at the end of the semester. They will have completed a variety of classroom courses and are working toward the transition to baccalaureate nursing preparation. The student’s performance in meeting the course objectives is evaluated by their clinical performance, a clinical project, clinical narratives and the presentation of a seminar.

CLINICAL SETTINGS: The preferred clinical setting for the RN-BSN Capstone course is a non-acute care or non-direct care setting. Many of our Capstone RN to BSN students have past educational, clinical and practice experiences in acute care settings and thus need additional exposure to non-acute care settings. Clinical settings can include direct care and non-direct care settings. We also hope to provide the students with exposure to a wide variety of settings within the health care system. Examples of appropriate RN-BSN Capstone clinical settings include (but are not limited to):

- **Non-direct care clinical project practicum sites:**
  - Working with a clinical nurse specialist, nurse educator or manager on a specific project, initiative, audit, policy, proposal, guideline or staff development project
  - Care coordination departments, care management departments, quality improvement departments, safety and infection control departments,
  - Magnet Recognition Program committees
  - Project or quality improvement work in work settings, schools, public health departments, child care centers, senior centers or assisted living centers
  - General clinic settings, specialty care clinic settings, free clinics, occupational health departments, workplace wellness initiatives, organization of a health fair in a workplace, community agency or school setting
  - Public health departments, community nursing centers, community health centers, prenatal clinics, prenatal care coordination
  - Schools, child care centers, senior centers, assisted living centers
  - General clinic settings, specialty care clinic settings, outpatient clinics, free clinics, nurse managed clinics, urgent care centers, hemodialysis centers
  - Cardiac rehabilitation departments, occupational health departments, discharge planning departments, diabetic nurse educator site, camp nurse site
  - Home care agencies, hospice care agencies, stroke programs
  - General clinic settings, specialty care clinic settings, free clinics, occupational health departments, workplace wellness initiatives, organization of a health fair in a workplace, community agency or school setting
THE CLINICAL: Capstone students are all registered nurses. All students are required to have 60 hours of clinical project/practicum experiences to complete this course. Students are assigned to a BSN (or higher) prepared nurse who is their clinical preceptor and who will help to facilitate their learning. Most (although not all) Capstone students are employed as registered nurses in acute care settings. RN Capstone students are in the process of completing their final course in their RN-BSN completion program. We encourage our RN-BSN Capstone students to complete their clinical practicum hours by working on a project that benefits the agency they are working within. Capstone students may also provide direct care within their scope of practice to individuals, families and communities, as they are licensed registered nurses.

Most capstone students spend 4 - 6 hours per week with their preceptor until they complete the required 60 hours of clinical project experience, however it is possible for students to complete their hours in a more condensed time frame if mutually desired. Clinical hours are flexible and are arranged individually to meet the needs of both the student and the preceptor.

- **THE CLINICAL PROJECT:** A clinical project that meets an agency need and improves the outcomes of care in your setting is ideal for a Capstone clinical practicum. 8-10 hours of the clinical project time and can be completed off-site as needed. Each clinical project is very individual and is focused on the needs of the setting. Examples of past clinical projects include developing a staff education presentation or resource binder, updating of a policy, plan of care or clinical guideline, collecting data or performing chart audits as a part of a quality improvement initiative, evaluation of the literacy level or development of patient education materials/toolkits, working on a workplace wellness initiative, joining a quality review or Magnet team or creating an annotated bibliography. These are only examples of clinical projects – we want the students to focus on an agency need and work with their preceptors to determine the best clinical project for their setting.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Provide safe and effective patient centered care to individuals, families, groups and communities.
2. Integrate professional standards, evidence, clinical expertise, patient preferences and clinical judgment to improve the outcomes of care.
3. Demonstrate transition to professional baccalaureate nursing practice by recognizing the impact of evidence based practice, informatics, quality, safety, teamwork, collaboration and patient centered care on outcomes of care.
4. Demonstrate effective communication and collaboration in the professional nursing role.
5. Articulate a commitment to lifelong learning and individual accountability for own nursing practice.

Questions? See our Capstone web page below or contact our program director:

http://uwm.edu/nursing/academics/undergrad/capstone-resources/

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