

There is no five-page paper attached to this Capstone. I recognize and understand that this will greatly impact my grade for both the final project and the course, and would like to offer an explanation as to why. This explanation will come in three parts: my poor choice of topic, my over-ambitious plans for my presentation; and my poor time and resource management over the course of the semester.

The short version is that I am over-extended and burned out after picking a bad topic and putting extensive amounts of time and effort into the wrong portions of the project. If you are taking the time to read this explanation, I thank you for your time and patience.

My Topic and Vision

In order to provide the context for the rest of this self-analysis, I have to detail both my research question, and describe my original vision for the multimedia portion of the capstone. I chose the research question, "*How does advertising promote myths of 'clean beauty'?*" The multimedia portion would have been a PowerPoint presentation that essentially used the many tools of the software to "behave" like a video, complete with automated transitions, extensive voice-over from me, and exporting as an mp4 file. The presentation itself would have mimicked the style of a Vox video, debunking the myths surrounding clean beauty before analyzing how brands still use the term to make money. I envisioned something bright and poppy and very professional in appearance. I chose the software because I have never recorded or edited video or audio, and did not have confidence that I could teach myself either skill during this course.

First, I chose a bad topic. It was a poor choice for two reasons: It first requires the writer to prove that clean beauty is a myth in the first place, and then conduct a full analysis of the marketing of several brands within the clean beauty space to determine the effectiveness of their strategies.

Trying to debunk clean beauty was a mistake; I drastically overestimated my ability to decipher a scientific research article. Scientific literature is written for and by individuals with PhDs in very specific areas; I am a communications undergraduate, and I do not have the experience and training in biology, toxicology, or chemistry necessary to understand the complexities or nuances of dense scientific literature as it pertains to dermatology. I picked this topic without realizing that this lack of knowledge and understanding would place a serious handicap on my final product as intended, and this led directly into my issues with time management in the creation of this project.

My Overambition

PowerPoint is software built for slideshow presentations; it can be very impressive, but it is not FinalCut or Adobe Premiere, and trying to force it to act like video-editing software absorbed a lot of my time and effort over the course of trying to put this project together. Trying to make a Vox-style video was also a mistake; I am not a content creator backed by a full media company, who has access to a professional editing team or an extensive library of assets ready at a moment's notice. I did not take the fact that I am a communications undergrad with a relatively tight turnaround time and other coursework to complete when I chose this avenue of content delivery, and I did not realize how big that mistake was until about halfway through April.

My Poor Time-Management

It took me far longer than it should have to realize how badly my poor choices at this project's outset were going to affect the final product. I got extremely hung up on the "debunking" aspect and spent far too much time attempting to research the scientific veracity of clean beauty; of the fifteen weeks I was given to complete this project in various stages, I spent about twelve working on the project, and easily seven or eight of those weeks were spent on this one portion of my presentation. I didn't even touch my paper until the beginning of April, and even then only sporadically.

On top of that, I was informed that I was invited to present at the Humanities Symposium on the Friday before spring break (April 15), and proceeded to do extensive work on a second, Symposium-specific presentation before concluding that I was on the brink of a mental breakdown and withdrawing from the event. By the time I realized that my multimedia project as intended was untenable—that I would have to make drastic changes to my project and essentially start from scratch—it was already the very end of April. I was out of time. A second, slightly more focused paper was attempted, and then abandoned in favor of making sure that my multimedia portion was in any kind of acceptable, finalized state in time for the due date on May 18.

Conclusions

I take full responsibility for all of my mistakes and missteps over the course of this project. I should not have chosen "clean beauty" as my topic due to my lack of scientific background. I should not have had such ambitious plans for my multimedia project when I am an amateur with only 15 weeks to complete the full capstone. I should have managed my time better and re-started my project far earlier. There's honestly no excuse, but I hope that this explanation can provide some context for what decisions contributed to my lack of a paper to submit. I end this semester frustrated with myself and completely burned out by my own self-sabotage.

Please find the bibliography for my presentation attached. If you have read this far, I sincerely thank you for your time in doing so. If there are any other questions about this complete disaster of a capstone (or just want to tell me I should have known better), please find my contact information below.

Best regards,
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