

Challenges of Completing Course Work

Particularly for limited-residency MA & Graduate Certificate (GC) or nondegree students

Persons applying for graduate credit in the summer format should consider and be prepared for the challenge. In our years of experience of summer MA, GC and nondegree students, it has become clear that real challenges exist in completing course work within the time frame allowed after SPI courses end.

IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETING SUMMER COURSEWORK THE STUDENT WILL NEED:

- **Self-discipline** (especially if working and studying at the same time).
- Strong **personal commitment** to complete the course(s) and/or program.
- **Family/community commitment and support.** While completing coursework, the student may need to forfeit some family or community responsibilities. It is invaluable to have the student's community be committed to the achievement of the student's goals of completion.
- **Creativity** in finding ways to "stay the course."
- **A support structure.** Find a mentor or coach. Another suggestion is to find other CJP students that live in the same area and create a regional cohort. Stay in touch by email, Zoom or through regular meetings.

The following holds true for those attending summer intensive courses and those completing directed or independent courses arranged with the program.

It is expected that students who opt to do the MA or a GC in the limited-residency or online format recognize this is an adult learning format in which the student is expected to take responsibility for the learning experience. Instructors are available for consulting and advice but will not be there reminding or coaxing students to get work in on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For each 3-credit course students are expected to do at least 100-115 hours of work outside of the classroom. Students should use this information when determining how many courses they can conceivably do in the allotted time. Various programs have noted that the longer course work commitments are extended, the less likely it is that they will be completed.

Here is some advice from students who have traveled this road before on how to successfully complete course work while working full-time, balancing family commitments and/or various community responsibilities:

- Create a support structure as advised above.
- Schedule part of a day each week to work on course work, or take 2-4 days a month solely committed to course work (this depends on how many courses in a year a student has registered for).
- If the weekly/monthly schedule does not work, some students have found it necessary to schedule one to two weeks per course away from family and commitments. This is to give full attention to course work.

We want all students to have a fruitful learning experience taking classes in this format and will do what we can to enable that to happen!