SIP Overview and General Policies

A SIP in English is the culmination of both your learning within the K-Plan and your cumulative work within the English department. As such, it is a capstone experience that allows you to use and synthesize the preparation you have acquired in all of your English courses in order to undertake and create a substantial piece of independent scholarship. These projects may take the form of a creative writing project, a critical research thesis, a documentary film, or a writing project built around an internship experience. A one-unit SIP is a graduation requirement; however, you may choose to complete a two-unit SIP. SIPs may be completed over one quarter or two consecutive quarters, from the junior summer through the senior winter.

The SIP Process:

Proposals:
In the Spring quarter of your Junior year, you will be required to submit a preliminary proposal by 5:00 pm on Friday of Week 2. In that document you should include:

1) The kind of SIP you will be undertaking: Creative Writing, Critical Research, Documentary Film or Internship;
2) a 250-word description of the project;
3) a 250-word description of how the SIP serves as a capstone project of work in the major, including a list of the pre-requisite courses you have taken in preparation;
4) 3-4 potential supervisors (If doing a Creative Writing SIP, please include at least two non-creative writing faculty members);
5) The quarter(s) you intend to do your SIP and your plans to do either a one or two-unit project.

The final proposal for the SIP will expand on this preliminary document (see guidelines below), and must be submitted by 5:00 pm on Friday of Week 8. Both of these documents will be submitted in hard copy to the English SIP coordinator.

Those on extended study abroad will also be held to this requirement and can submit their proposals via email. It is also the policy of the English department that summer SIP proposals from students overseas in the spring will be denied unless the student demonstrates significant extenuating circumstances. In that case, the student must formally petition the English department for approval.

Supervisor Assignment and the SIP Contract:
The English Department will assign SIP supervisors based on the preliminary proposals and assign supervisors before the spring Hilberry Symposium. Once supervisors have been assigned, students must initiate two meetings: one before the final proposal is due to talk about revisions and clarifications and one before the end of the quarter to complete a departmental SIP contract that establishes expectations and deadlines. (For those doing a summer or summer-fall SIP, it will be especially important to set up clear deadlines and work expectations for the summer months.)
Institutional Review Board Approval:  
If you are interviewing people for your SIP—regardless of the kind of project you are undertaking—you will need to get approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). **All IRB applications are due by Week 8 of the Spring Quarter.** The necessary forms and further information are available at the IRB website: [https://reason.kzoo.edu/irb/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/irb/). Please make sure that you plan ahead and allot enough time to complete these forms.

Grants and Other Funding:  
There are some funding sources available for SIPs that meet certain criteria. A list of most of these sources are available here: [https://reason.kzoo.edu/scholarships/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/scholarships/) Please be aware that the application timelines for these grants and scholarships do not always align with the departmental timeline for the SIP proposal process. Look at the deadlines carefully and plan accordingly.

The SIP Quarter:  
During the SIP quarter, students typically meet with their faculty advisors and/or with other students doing similar SIPs every other week. This schedule can vary, however, depending on your arrangements with your SIP supervisor. Please note: it is important that you have taken significant steps in preparing to write the SIP before the quarter you plan on enrolling in SIP credits. This preparation could include: gathering important research materials and key texts; outlining your ideas for your poem collection, short fiction collection, memoir, or narrative journalism piece; arranging your interview subjects for your documentary film; and gathering notes, clippings, etc. from your internship experience. If you are only starting these activities when you start your SIP quarter, it will be very difficult to complete the writing and revision processes by the final deadline.

For students who elect to do a two-unit SIP, you and your SIP supervisor will determine the amount of work that will be due on the first day of classes of the second SIP quarter. If this requirement is not met, the SIP will automatically be reduced to a one-unit project. If you are relying on the two SIP units to allow you to graduate on time, please be very conscious of the preliminary deadline. The English Department accepts no responsibility for insuring that students will have sufficient units to graduate on time.

Deadlines:  
You and your SIP advisor will set specific deadlines within SIP quarter in the SIP contract. This may include deadlines for drafts, interim feedback, revisions, presentations, etc. **For all SIPs, the final copy (i.e., no more revisions) is due to the SIP supervisor no later than Friday of the Week 2 of the term following the SIP quarter.** Once you have been notified that your SIP has passed, you are required an electronic copy to the English department’s Office Coordinator. Students are expected to be completely finished with all work associated with the SIP, with the exception of the Hilberry Symposium, by the Spring term deadline.
Evaluation and Honors:
The SIP is read and evaluated by the SIP advisor, on the basis of the student's success in meeting deadlines, completing revisions, and producing a competent piece of work. Faculty will submit Credit/No Credit grades by Friday of Week 6 of the quarter following a registered SIP unit. If the SIP advisor would like to recommend the SIP for Honors—because it represents exemplary work, including exemplary work in the preface—another member of the department or occasionally a faculty member outside the department reads it. If that faculty member agrees, then the SIP is awarded Honors. Please also note: in addition to the quality of the final product, the awarding of Honors also takes into account the integrity of the process. This includes meeting deadlines, demonstrating the ability incorporate feedback and make successful revisions, as well as engaging and effectively communicating with your SIP advisor.

The Hilberry Symposium:
Although it is not a part of the evaluation process, all English majors who have completed a SIP within the department are required to present their SIP at the Hilberry Symposium. Those English majors who have done a SIP outside the department and non-majors completing a SIP in English are encouraged, but not required, to present their SIP at the majors symposium.
The SIP Proposal Process

Please use the following guidelines in generating your final SIP proposal, using the titles provided with each section. (Guidelines for the preliminary proposal are listed above) The proposal should be typed, double-spaced, use 1-inch margins and conform to MLA or Chicago style format. All proposals are due to the SIP Coordinator by 5:00 pm on FRIDAY OF WEEK 8.

I. Why I Chose This Project. (1 page)
   Explain why you chose this particular project.

II. Project Description. (1-2 pages)
    Describe the project itself. Though the project will, of course, transform as you work on it, please be as specific as you can be at this time. Offer a general sense of what the project’s major organizing units might look like.

III. Relevant Preparations: Coursework and Writing/Research. (1-2 pages)
    Articulate how your SIP will function as a capstone for your work in English by explaining how your coursework has prepared you for this project. You should not only refer to the specific pre-requisites listed in the SIP guidelines, but also name courses you’ve taken that introduced you to the topic and/or method your SIP will pursue. In addition, describe any previous writing and/or research you have done that will form a foundation for your SIP.

IV. Annotated Bibliography.
    Include an annotated bibliography of 5-8 sources (primary and secondary). For SIPs that are primarily critical or research-based, these sources might comprise some of your research on your SIP topic, they might be the primary texts you are examining, they might be models for your project, or they might offer a rationale for a project such as yours. Bibliographies for creative writing or documentary film SIPs might also include writers or filmmakers who have influenced your work, works that serve as models, books/essays on form, essays you have read in advanced workshops or other courses that have inspired your idea, etc. In two-three sentence annotations for each entry, describe the source and indicate how it informs your SIP (serves as a primary text you are examining, offers another critic’s research on your topic, serves as a stylistic model, etc.).

Note: be sure to fill out and also attach the Registrar’s “SIP Registration Form” regarding SIP term(s) and number of units to your proposal. The form is downloadable at: https://reason.kzoo.edu/registrar/Student_Forms/Acad_policies_sip/
Guidelines for SIPS

SIP PREFACE

Every SIP completed in the English department must include a preface. This preface should be an 8-10 page document that is connected to your SIP, but which is not included in the page guidelines listed below. The preface has two primary tasks. The first is to explain the intellectual, aesthetic, and/or professional stakes of your work. The second is to reflect on the process of writing the SIP and how it fits into your growth as a scholar and writer during your time as an English major. The specific way that you do so will vary depending upon your project, but your Preface should include the following discussions:

• How important authors, courses, and experiences shaped your project and provided a critical and theoretical framework for how and why you constructed your SIP in the way that you did.
• How your project draws upon and contributes to a critical conversation or literary tradition, with reference to particularly influential scholars, filmmakers, and/or writers.
• Why you made specific choices around materials and methodologies, and what these choices allowed you to do—in terms of both the content and the form of your writing or creative production.
• What you have learned through your experience in the SIP about the processes of research and writing.
• What new awareness you gained about yourself as a researcher, critic, writer, or filmmaker.
• How this project fits within the intellectual trajectory of your education at Kalamazoo College and beyond, and specifically your learning within the English major.
• Finally, it is customary to include an acknowledgments section in your preface, where you thank your supervisor and any other people who have supported and helped significantly with your project.

While the SIP Preface will likely be the last part of your SIP that you write, it nevertheless will contain some of its most important work—since it will be the final place where evaluate the “so what?” of your project and where you articulate how your project serves as the capstone in your path through the English major and in your K-Plan.

CREATIVE WRITING SIP

Students may undertake a substantial work of creative writing for their SIP. This includes a collection of poetry, short stories, or essays. It can also be a substantial single work of poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, or narrative journalism. Students may also choose to incorporate a critical research component of the SIP, which would include literary and/or cultural analysis.
Prerequisites and Preparation:
Only those who have taken Introduction to Creative Writing and either Creative Non-Fiction, Intermediate Fiction Workshop, or Intermediate Poetry Workshop are eligible for a creative writing SIP in that specific genre. Students interested in doing a journalism SIP should have taken an introductory and intermediate-level journalism course. Taking an advanced writing workshop before the SIP quarter is strongly encouraged but not required—with the following exception. Those students wishing to do a Fiction SIP and who took THEA 255: Playwriting to satisfy their English major requirements in the fiction track must take Advanced Fiction before undertaking the SIP. Please also note: the intermediate-level writing course in the relevant SIP genre must be completed at Kalamazoo College. Since the SIP should be a capstone experience of your coursework at the College, we are no longer advising projects in the following areas: playwriting, screenwriting for film or television, or graphic novels.

Guidelines and Length:
Generally, a one-unit SIP should contain: 30-50 pages of prose, or 30-40 pages of poetry. Two unit SIPs should contain: 50-80 pages of prose, or 40-60 pages of poetry. A novel length fiction SIP (120-250) pages is also possible.

CRITICAL RESEARCH SIP

Students may undertake a substantial work of literary, theoretical and/or cultural analysis for their SIP, based upon thorough research. This would likely include a critical analysis of a collection of literary or filmic texts organized thematically, aesthetically, and/or historically. This option is especially recommended for those students who wish to pursue graduate study in English (M.A. or Ph.D.).

Prerequisites and Preparation:
Since the SIP should be a capstone experience of your coursework at the College, you should have completed coursework at the intermediate level (e.g., a 200-level course) within the English Department in your planned research area. Students wishing to write a critical thesis SIP specifically on films must have taken ENGL 153 Global Cinemas: Classical Hollywood in Global Context and ENGL 260 Studies in Film. Note: The intermediate-level course must be completed at Kalamazoo College. Taking an advanced literary seminar before the SIP quarter is highly encouraged but not required. We also recommend taking ENGL 436 Literary Theory in your senior year.

Guidelines and Length:
A critical thesis SIP might be comprised of 2-4 parts/sections/chapters, an introduction and conclusion, or some organizational equivalent. The number of required (peer-reviewed) bibliographic citations will be determined by the SIP advisor in consultation with the student. Generally, a one-unit SIP should contain 30-50 pages of writing, excluding bibliographical materials. Two unit SIPs should contain: 50-80 pages excluding bibliography.
DOCUMENTARY FILM SIP

Students may undertake the creation of a documentary film for their SIP.

Prerequisites and Preparation:
If you wish to complete a documentary film SIP, you must have taken ENGL 153 Global Cinemas: Classical Hollywood in Global Context and ENGL 260 Studies in Film. Since filmmaking is inherently interdisciplinary, you are also required to take courses outside the English department, if you chose this SIP option. You will need to complete ARTX 250 Introduction to Documentary Video Production, ARTX 350 Advanced Documentary Video Production, and should have relevant coursework in the area or topic you will be exploring in your film. It is also recommended but not required that you take ENGL 436 Literary Theory. Note: The intermediate and advanced-level film courses must be completed at Kalamazoo College. We are no longer advising narrative film projects.

Guidelines and Length:
One unit SIPs should be 10-15 minutes of film. Two-unit SIPs: 20-30 minutes of film.

INTERNSHIP SIP

Students may undertake a SIP based on an internship experience that they have completed. The work experience alone cannot serve as the SIP, and thus a passing SIP will include a substantial writing component. This includes the following options: 1) a portfolio of writing generated as a part of internship, framed by a critical essay that provides an analytical reflection of the internship experience; 2) a narrative journalistic account that critically examines the internship experience; or 3) a critical analysis of the internship experience that uses a cultural studies approach and that builds on scholarly research and/or critical theory.

Prerequisites and Preparation:
Since the SIP should be a capstone experience of your coursework at the College, your proposal will need to demonstrate completion of the kinds of writing you will undertake in your internship and your SIP writing up to the intermediate level. For options 1 and 2, this will likely mean completion of an intermediate-level journalism course or Creative Non-Fiction Workshop. For option 3, this will mean completing a relevant 200-level course in the area or topic of cultural analysis you will be undertaking.

Guidelines and Length:
Option 1: A one unit SIP should include a substantial portfolio (at least 30 pages of publishable writing) generated in the internship experience and a 15-30 page critical essay, excluding bibliography. Two unit SIPs will include a portfolio (50 pages) and a 25-40 pages critical essay, excluding bibliography. Options 2 and 3: Writing for these options will likely be comprised of chapters and/or sections that are relevant to the internship experience and the SIP. A one-unit SIP should include 30-50 pages, not including bibliography and appendices. Two unit SIPs should contain: 50-80 pages of writing, excluding appendices.
Formatting the SIP

TITLE PAGE

The title page must contain the following:
- Complete title of the Senior Individualized Project
- Author’s name
- The SIP’s title and authors name should be visible through the “window” of the SIP folder, which is available to purchase in the book store
- Name and department of the SIP supervisor(s)
- The legend: “A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Kalamazoo College.”
- The year you completed the SIP

Please see the following page for a sample title page.

DOCUMENT FORMATTING

The SIP will be formatted as follows:
- The SIP will use single-sided copies
- The left margin must be 1.5 wide
- All other margins must be 1 inch wide
- Text must be double spaced, with the exception of poetry collections. Footnotes, citations, and long quotations should follow either MLA or Chicago style conventions. Please consult either the *MLA Handbook* or the *Chicago Manual of Style* for specifics, both of which are available in the library.

PAGINATION

Each page, except for the blank page following the title page, must be assigned a number according to the following:
- Preliminaries (such as the preface) use small Roman numerals, with placement on the page dependent upon MLA or Chicago style conventions. Poetry collections should center page numbers one-half inch above the bottom of the page.
- The blank page is neither counted nor numbered.
- Hence, the first number appearing will be “ii” and appears on the page after the blank page.
- The remainder of the SIP uses Arabic numerals, with placement on the page dependent upon MLA or Chicago style conventions. Poetry collections should center page numbers one-half inch above the bottom of the page.
- Number each page on which material appears and begin with “1” and run consecutively to the end of the SIP.
“The Project to End All Projects”
Reframing the Literary Complexities of
British and American Novels
for All Time

Jane Elizabeth Doe

English Department
Dr. Maria Jones

A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Bachelor of Arts at Kalamazoo College
2002