

Senior Individualized Project (SIP) Handbook for Political Science

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A. Senior Individualized Projects in Political Science

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The Department of Political Science sees the Senior Individualized Project (SIP) as a vital part of its curriculum and the members of the Department take seriously their obligation to effectively mentor rigorous and innovative student projects. For our majors, a SIP done in our Department should serve as the capstone to their exploration of political topics. For students from other departments choosing to do a SIP in political science, the SIP should provide a substantial insight into some aspect of politics.

There is no set definition of what a political science SIP should look like. In the past, political science SIPs have ranged from abstract, theoretical research projects on political thought to analyses of internships with governmental agencies in Washington and Brussels. What the Department encourages in all of its SIP proposals is an effort to deepen one's understanding of the political world.

Most political science SIPs in the past have involved substantial written work. However, there is no set page requirement for either a one-unit or two-unit SIP. Students should confer with their advisor about the appropriate length of their own SIP.

All political science SIPs should focus on some aspect of political phenomena or thought. While we encourage interdisciplinary approaches, and welcome perspectives from other fields, SIPs that focus too directly on topics in psychology, economics, history, philosophy, or other social sciences should probably be done in those departments. If a SIP topic straddles political science and another field, a student should consider doing an interdisciplinary SIP with one credit in political science, and one in the related field.

In general, political science SIPs have involved sustained research and/or an internship. "Pure" research SIPs have included archival and library research, interviews, and surveys. Those that involved internships have either focused on the history and function of the group or agency, or looked at an issue relevant to that group or agency.

B. SIP Structures Available in Political Science

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The Department of Political Science allows students to perform one- or two-unit SIPs. The choice is one that involves a number of factors, including commitment, interest in original scholarship, graduation requirements, and outside obligations. This is a decision that should be made in consultation with the SIP adviser. The decision is not final until the SIP is read and approved by the adviser. A SIP that fails to achieve the higher standard of a two-unit SIP may be deemed to be sufficient as a one-unit SIP.

One-unit SIPs – A one-unit SIP often involves an internship experience outside of the college. Such internships can exemplify experiential education in the finest sense. There are many such opportunities available to our students. There must be a written account presented to the adviser of the internship. This report should be substantial, and show evidence of some exposure to broader theories about the specific area in which the internship was completed. A one unit SIP may also be research-based, and unconnected to an internship.

Two-unit SIPs – A two-unit SIP typically represents an original scholarly contribution to the field of political science. In some circumstances, two units may, at the discretion of the adviser and the Department, be awarded to internship-based SIPs that do not make such a contribution. Any SIP may, of course, originate in an internship experience. For both internship-based and research SIPs, the awarding of two units signifies a substantial understanding of an important topic in political science.

1. SIP Structures in Political Science: Schedule

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These structures are available for SIPs in Political Science:

- A. Summer Quarter SIP, one unit
- B. Summer and Fall Quarter SIP, one unit each quarter, for a total of two units.
- C. Fall Quarter SIP, one unit** [This is by far the most common schedule for our majors]
- D. Fall Quarter SIP, two units
- E. Fall and Winter Quarter SIP, one unit each quarter, for a total of two units.
- F. Winter Quarter SIP, one unit

	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring
Plan A SIP	One unit	<i>SIP due</i>		
Plan B SIP	One unit	One unit	<i>SIP due</i>	
Plan C SIP		One unit	<i>SIP due</i>	
Plan D SIP		Two units	<i>SIP due</i>	
Plan E SIP		One unit	One unit	<i>SIP due</i>
Plan F SIP			One unit	<i>SIP due</i>

C. Departmental SIP Planning Requirements

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The planning for your SIP must be done in the academic quarter that precedes your SIP quarter. (Note: for students planning to do their SIP in the Fall Quarter, this means that SIP planning must be completed in the Spring Quarter). Planning for a Political Science SIP consists of the following steps:

Selection of a SIP Advisor

Students should submit a memo to the Department Chair stating their tentative SIP topic and their preference for their departmental SIP Advisor no later than Friday of 4th week of Spring Quarter (or the academic quarter preceding the SIP Quarter). The Chair will confirm the assignment of SIP advisors no later than Friday of 5th week.

[Note: The department is concerned that SIPs be distributed more or less evenly among departmental faculty, thus it reserves the right to assign you to one faculty member or another, depending on their SIP loads and the focus of your planned SIP. However, the department will do its best to honor your stated preference.]

Initial Discussion of Topic Area with SIP Advisor

Students should schedule a meeting with their SIP Advisor no later than Friday of 6th week to discuss the following issues: a) the proposed topic of their SIP; b) the type of SIP project to be undertaken (See Section A); and c) the SIP structure that will be followed, including an initial decision on whether a SIP qualifies for one or two units (See Section B).

Submission of Initial SIP Proposal

Students should submit an initial SIP proposal to their SIP Advisor no later than Monday of 8th week. The initial SIP proposal should be a written statement that includes the following: a) a discussion of the primary research question that the student will address in the SIP, along with its importance; b) a brief discussion of the methodology that the student will use to address this question; and c) a tentative bibliography.

Submission of Revised SIP Proposal and SIP Registration with Registrar's Office

Students should revise their initial SIP Proposal based on suggestions given by their SIP Advisor. The revised SIP proposal should be completed by 10th week and given to the SIP Advisor for approval. Students must then complete the SIP Registration form required by the Registrar's Office and submit this form to the Registrar along with their revised SIP Proposal. SIP Registration should be completed no later than Friday of 10th week of the academic quarter preceding the SIP quarter.

Submission of the Completed SIP

The deadline for submission of the completed SIP will be the first week following the SIP enrollment. SIPs that are not submitted by Monday of the 1st week will fail to qualify for "honors" in the department. *SIPs that are not submitted by Friday of the 1st week will receive a grade of "No Credit."* Students are reminded that, in accordance with College policy, "[a]n incomplete in a SIP may be given only for illness or conditions which are out of the control of the student and prevent the completion of the SIP."

Submission of the Revised SIP

If the faculty advisor suggests that the student should revise portions of their SIPs, the student may have until Friday

of the fourth week of the quarter following the SIP quarter to make final revisions to the SIP. The final, *revised* version of the SIP may not be turned in later than this day.

Grade Submission

The faculty advisor will submit the grade for the SIP no later than Friday of the sixth week of the quarter following the SIP enrollment. SIPs receive a grade of Honors (H), Pass (P), or Fail (F).

1. Summary of SIP Schedule

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Academic Quarter Preceding SIP Quarter

- Friday, 4th Week:** Submit memo to Chair stating tentative SIP topic and preference for SIP advisor.
- Friday, 5th Week:** Chair will confirm assignment of SIP advisor
- Friday, 6th Week:** Initial discussion of SIP topic with SIP advisor
- Monday, 8th Week:** Submission of initial SIP proposal to SIP advisor
- Friday, 10th Week:** Submission of revised SIP proposal to SIP advisor;
Completion of registration form required by Registrar's Office

SIP Quarter(s)

- Meet with advisor within first two weeks of the SIP Quarter
- Arrange a mutually acceptable schedule of meetings with your advisor to review your progress during the course of the SIP Quarter. Failure to adhere to the established schedule will give the advisor the right to terminate the advising relationship
- Do all necessary work and research for the SIP
- Write the SIP!

Academic Quarter following the SIP Quarter

- Monday, First Week** – Submission of completed SIP to SIP advisor
- Friday, Fourth Week** – Submission of revised SIP to SIP advisor
 - o When you submit your final bound copy of the SIP to your advisor, send an electronic copy of the SIP via email attachment to polisci@kzoo.edu
- Friday, Sixth Week** – Faculty advisor will submit final SIP grade to Registrar's Office

D. Departmental SIP Presentation Opportunities

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Students who complete their SIP in the Political Science Department will have the opportunity to present the results of their SIP in an open forum that will be scheduled during the Spring Quarter.

E. Departmental Policy for Honors in SIP and Honors in Department

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Honors in the Senior Individualized Project (SIP): For a student to receive honors in the SIP, the student must meet the following requirements:

The completed SIP must be submitted by the first day of the quarter following the SIP enrollment; and the revised SIP must be submitted by fourth week of the quarter following the designated SIP quarter.

The SIP Advisor as well as one other faculty reader must be in agreement that the SIP merits honors. (Note: If the SIP is a Political Science SIP, then the second reader must be from the Political Science Department; If the SIP is an interdisciplinary SIP, then the second reader can come from outside the Political Science Department).

Honors in the Department of Political Science: For a graduating major to be granted honors in the Department of Political Science, the student must meet at least two of the following requirements:

- A grade point average of at least 3.5 in Political Science courses, and an overall grade point average of 3.0
- A grade of "honors" in the comprehensive exam
- A grade of "honors" in the Senior Individualized Project, of which at least one unit must be completed in Political Science.

F. Departmental Style Requirements for Citations and Bibliography

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In writing their SIPs, students must follow the style set forth in the [American Political Science Association's Style Manual for Political Science](#). This style follows the Chicago Manual of Style, which is currently the most universal standard. Copies of the Style Manual for Political Science are available for purchase in the campus bookstore. Students with more specific questions about style should consult the Chicago Manual of Style in the reference section of the UpJohn Library.