Guidelines for SLA I460 Capstone Project Proposals
Individualized Major Program

Capstone projects vary according to the interests of the student and the focus of the individualized major. It might take the form of a traditional research paper; it might involve translating a text, giving background information on the text and the author, and a reflective essay discussing how you went about deciding on the particular decisions you made; it could consist of an internship, with a journal and a paper showing the intersection of your coursework and the work you did. Discuss appropriate options for your capstone with your advisor and the program director.

Your proposal should be at least 3-5 pages in length (typed, double-spaced). The suggestions below are intended as guidelines, and may not all apply to the type of project you are proposing. Be as specific as possible with regard to methodology and your data source(s). If writing a proposal is unfamiliar territory, you might want to work with a tutor in the Writing Center. It helps to have a second reader’s input.

A project proposal should:

- Identify the research question.
- Outline how you plan to address the question (the data or sources to be used, the text to be translated, etc., the methods/theoretical framework you will use).
- Give an overview of background literature relevant to the topic. What relevant sources can you identify? Remember that you might not find a book or an article on your exact topic.
- Discuss the type of analysis that will form the substance of your project.
- Include a timeline for when you will complete various aspects of your project.

Instead of identifying a question that you want to investigate, you could give a research statement or formulate a hypothesis. Your hypothesis should state what you think you will be able to prove in your study. (Don’t worry about the possibility of your hypothesis being wrong. Many excellent projects end up refuting rather than supporting the original hypothesis. You will not be penalized for this. The hypothesis is a starting point.) Try to play to your own strengths and academic goals in designing your project. It is quite possible that your focus will shift as your study progresses. Nevertheless, by beginning with a fairly explicit proposal you will find it easier to get into your study. It is important to make sure that your advisor and committee members approve of any changes you hope to make. Be sure to keep committee members informed of your progress. A final draft of your project should be submitted at five weeks before the end of the semester in order to have enough time for you to get feedback and make revisions.