SPIRITUALITY MIND BODY INSTITUTE
TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Integrative Project (IP) Guidelines

SMB AREA OF FOCUS

Psychology in Education M.A. Program

Teachers College, Columbia University

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I.   IP Overview

As a crucial element of the SMBI Master's Program, the Integrative Project (IP) represents an extraordinary opportunity for students to apply insights from spiritual traditions and scholarship toward a significant real-life question or issue. Within the supportive and educational structure of the program, students have the chance to weave together their own questions, interests, knowledge, and skills into a finished product that can have an impact beyond the walls of the academy. To inform the development of this project, students are encouraged to draw from multiple streams of their SMBI experience, including didactic courses, practical training, research skills, experiential learning, and relationships with professors, mentors, and colleagues.

The IP can take various forms. Some examples include (but are not limited to) a secondary analysis, a literature review article, a workshop curriculum, a start-up business plan, a book proposal, or a documentary film. It is an invitation to dive deeply into one's deepest questions, utilize the resources within the program and the larger university, and create something novel. The result will be a polished product that, upon completion of the program, SMBI graduates can bring out into their personal and professional lives.

At its best, the IP can serve as a bridge between classroom education and the world that lies outside. Along the way, students will develop important cognitive, contemplative, interpersonal, and practical skills. In addition, students are recommended to use this opportunity to contact and seek guidance from professionals in the relevant field who might later support career development, e.g., a start-up venture, a publication, employment, or further study. In this sense, the IP is an opportunity to expand one's network and build relationships for the future.

The general structure of the IP begins with brainstorming, connecting with a sponsor, drafting, and finally completing one's final draft. After completing the first draft (well in advance of the final due date), the student should expect to make significant revisions and re-write drafts, often multiple times. Students should plan to assess their own work critically and leave ample time for reworking and finalizing their drafts. Students have the opportunity to meet with the IP Instructor and/or TC Writing Center for additional sources of support with the writing process. IP checklists and suggested timelines are on page 14 of this document.

Questions pertaining to the IP should be directed to the IP Instructor, Melanie Lown, MA (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu).

II.   Format Options

IPs must be between 20 and 40 pages in length, double-spaced.

The page length requirement means 20* pages of *written academic content*, which excludes the title page, references, or any tables/figures for the research format.
*Note- 10 pages of *written academic content* is sufficient for the alternative format literature review.

All written academic content must be in APA 7th format. More information about how to format in APA7 can be found here. Beyond this requirement, students have the option to use the standard research format or the alternative format. More information about either format can be found below.

A. Research Format	B. Alternative Format
20-40 pages of academic writing ***APA 7th Format*** ***Research Format Options (choose one):***	***Foundational 10-page Literature Review*** ***APA 7th Format + Alternative Project*** ***Alternative Format Options (choose one):*** *(10 pages, or equivalent)*
● Literature review or conceptual paper *(Most popular)* ● Qualitative methods paper, including case studies, ethnographic studies, and interviews ● Study proposal and outline for future research ● Analysis of data collected by the student, or pre-existing data ● Questionnaire construction and/or validation *No research can be conducted. IRB approval is not available to students within the program.	● Curriculum, workshop, or retreat plan ● Business plan ● Documentary film ● Public policy proposal ● Novel or screenplay ● Interactive website or new media Project ● Other project approved by the IP Instructor

III.   Choosing a Topic

To begin, students are encouraged to start with what they know, what they truly care about, and what they have always wanted to learn more about. *Begin brainstorming ideas for your IP in your first year.* Students have the option to meet with the Integrative Project Instructor to discuss ideas related to the IP and to receive practical guidance for moving forward.

IV.   IP Sponsors

The Integrative Project is a primarily self-led project to be created under the supervision of an official sponsor, who will serve as the evaluator of the IP. While sponsors will provide expert feedback, the IP is largely an independent project, and students are expected to become immersed in their own scholarship and take full charge of their own progress.

Your IP sponsor must be a faculty member working under the umbrella of Columbia University. Core faculty members of SMB, Teachers College, or any college affiliated with Columbia University are all suitable options.

It is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that you find and declare a sponsor before the end of your second-to-last semester before graduation (i.e., if you are graduating in Spring, find and declare your sponsor before the end of Fall semester). Once a sponsor relationship has been finalized, students should complete the online "SMBI Sponsor Information" form, available [here.](#)

        a. Sponsor Responsibilities

You are responsible for 95% of your IP workload, and your sponsor for 5%.

The official responsibilities of your sponsor are as follows:

1. Provide written consent to sponsor your project.
2. Provide feedback on your final draft via the SMBI IP Evaluation form.

You may ask your sponsor for help with secondary responsibilities, such as meeting with you to discuss conceptual development and/or reviewing preliminary drafts and providing feedback; the completion of these tasks is at the discretion of your sponsor. Please be mindful that your sponsor's schedule may be limited.

b. Selecting a Sponsor

Create a list of three to five potential sponsors whose work aligns with your IP interest. It is suggested to start with the Spirit Mind Body (SMB) core faculty members, as listed in the emails below. You may also broaden your search to all of Teachers College, or to any college affiliated with Columbia University. (More information about SMB core faculty members' experience and specialty areas can be found on the SMB website and in the Student Handbook). You have the option to make an appointment with the IP Instructor (Melanie Lown, mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) for a Sponsor choice consultation.

List of SMB Core Faculty eligible to serve as an IP Sponsor	
Faculty Name	*Faculty Email Address*
Aurélie Athan, Ph.D	ama81@columbia.edu
Mark Kuras, Ph.D	mfk8@tc.columbia.edu
Linda Lantieri, M.A.	ljl2139@tc.columbia.edu
Jack McGourty, Ph.D	jm723@columbia.edu
Ruth Rosenbaum, Ph.D., L.P.	rtr2117@tc.columbia.edu
Mitchell Saskin, Ph.D	mhs2191@tc.columbia.edu
Lorne Schussel, Ph.D	lms2191@tc.columbia.edu
Suza Scalora, Ph.D	scs2199@tc.columbia.edu

        c.   Reaching Out to a Potential Sponsor via Email

Once you have thoughtfully chosen your first (and other) choices, reach out to the faculty. In your email, it is suggested that you include the following:

1. Your name.
2. Express your interest in their work.
3. Give a little information about yourself.
4. Summarize your IP topic.
5. Optional: You may choose to include a proposal in your email; in this case, send it as an attachment and make a mention. An outline for an IP Proposal can be found at the end of this document.
6. Ask if the faculty is able to sponsor your IP, which entails giving written confirmation (via email) that they will sponsor your project, reading your final draft, and providing feedback via sponsor feedback form. (If they are able to give you more than one round of feedback, that is awesome, but they are not required to do so.)
7. Offer to share more about yourself, if they're interested.

      d. Sponsor Information Form

Follow these two steps to formally declare your sponsor.

1. Locate a sponsor and obtain their written consent via email.
2. Complete the online "SMBI Sponsor Information" online form, available here.

Note: It is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that you find and declare a sponsor before the end of your second-to-last semester before graduation (i.e., if you are graduating in Spring, find and declare your sponsor before the end of Fall semester).

VI.   Important Deadlines

Please refer to the following chart for IP due dates and important dates for graduation.

Graduation Date	Deadline: Apply to graduate via myTC	Deadline: Final Draft of Integrative Project
October	August 1	August 1
February	November 1	December 1
May	February 1	April 1

Closer to your requested graduation date, you will receive a notification from the registrar on whether you have been cleared to graduate. If there are any discrepancies on your degree audit (holds), the registrar will contact you via email. **Check your degree audit early and often. Do not wait for the registrar to contact you.**

VI.   IP Submission Protocol

After you have completed the final draft of your IP, follow these steps:

1. **Complete your final draft, ensuring that you correctly format your IP in APA 7th edition.** If your IP is not in APA7, your project will not be accepted. Resources on APA7 can be found here.
2. **Apply to graduate** via myTC for your intended graduation date, before the TC deadline.
3. **Email the final draft of IP Instructor, Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu), and your sponsor** in the same email.
    a. The subject line should read "SMBI Integrative Project: [Title of Project]".
    b. You must include your graduation date (ie. May 2026, October 2026, February 2027, etc.) in the body of your email submission.

a. CCPX 4001.002

Students are required to be registered for classes while working on an IP. If students have completed MA coursework (36 credits), and need more time to finish their IP, they can register for CCPX 4001.002, a zero-point course. CCPX 4001.002 offers full-time equivalency, allows the student to remain an enrolled student and retain their student status, and have access to campus facilities and Columbia Libraries Catalog (CLIO). **Please note that while enrollment in CCPX 4001.002 does not carry any tuition point charges, students who enroll in this course will still be required to pay the college fee to the TC bursar. As this fee is set by the college and not the department, please direct questions to bursar@tc.columbia.edu.**

VII.   After Submission

After you submit your IP, the IP instructor will do the following:

1. Evaluate the IP for compliance with requirements.
2. If accepted, satisfy the "special project requirement" in your degree audit.
3. Send you a PDF receipt of your degree audit reflecting the changes made.
4. Send your sponsor the SMB IP Evaluation form.
5. Send you a PDF copy of your sponsor's feedback from the Evaluation form, once received.

VIII.   IP Checklists and Suggested Timelines

Section VIIIa and VIIIb contain checklists and suggested timelines for you to use in structuring your IP planning and progress. These checklists are approximated for those completing the SMB Program in 2 years or 1 year, respectively. ***You are not required to use these checklists. They are provided as available resources, should you desire more structure.***

*Note: It is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED that you find and declare a sponsor before the end of your second-to-last semester before graduation (i.e., if you are graduating in Spring, find and declare your sponsor before the end of Fall semester).

a. *2-Year Track (Standard Timeline)*

<u>**Year 1:**</u>

Fall / Spring Semester

☐ Brainstorm potential topics.

☐ Review list of potential sponsors. You may ask a faculty member to sponsor your project as early as your first semester.

☐ Optional and strongly recommended: Meet with IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) to discuss ideas and goals.

<u>**Year 2:**</u>

Fall Semester

☐ Choose your topic.

☐ Choose your format (Research Format [standard] OR Alternative Format).

☐ Optional: Write an IP Project Proposal.

☐ Identify a sponsor.

☐ Obtain written consent from your sponsor via email.

☐ Complete the Sponsor Information form here.

☐ Begin drafting.

Spring Semester

☐ Continue drafting your IP. Expect to go through multiple revisions.

☐ Optional and recommended: Meet with IP Instructor Meet with IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) to discuss structure and writing improvements.

☐ Optional: Meet with TC's Graduate Writing Center for additional writing support.

☐ Complete final draft, utilizing APA7 format diligently.

☐ If completing your IP during your last semester at TC, apply to graduate via myTC.

    ☐ If you have completed your 36 credits of coursework to satisfy your degree, but need additional time to complete your IP, register for CCPX 4001.002 for the following semester.

☐ Submit your IP via email to your Sponsor and to the IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) on or before the deadline for your desired graduation date.

b. 1-Year Track (Accelerated Timeline)

<u>**Year 1:**</u>

Fall Semester

A. Start of Semester - October 31:

☐ Brainstorm potential topics.

☐ Review list of potential sponsors.

☐ Optional and strongly recommended: Meet with IP Instructor Meet with IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) to discuss ideas and goals.

B. November 1 - End of Semester:

☐ Choose your topic.

☐ Choose your format (Research Format [standard] OR Alternative Format).

☐ Optional: Write an IP Proposal.

☐ Identify a sponsor.

☐ Obtain written consent from your sponsor via email.

☐ Complete the Sponsor Information form here.

☐ Begin drafting.

Spring Semester

☐ Continue drafting your IP. Expect to go through multiple revisions.

☐ Optional and recommended: Meet with IP Instructor Meet with IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) to discuss structure and writing improvements.

☐ Optional: Meet with TC's Graduate Writing Center for additional writing support.

☐ Complete final draft, utilizing APA7 format diligently.

☐ If completing your IP during your last semester at TC, apply to graduate via myTC.

    ☐ If you have completed your 36 credits of coursework to satisfy your degree, but need additional time to complete your IP, register for CCPX 4001.002 for the following semester.

☐ Submit your IP via email to your Sponsor and to the IP Instructor Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) on or before the deadline for your desired graduation date.

IX.   Recently Submitted IP Titles

The following list of recently submitted IP titles is provided as both reference and inspiration:

1. *The Double-Edged Sword of Identity Development in Emerging Adulthood*
2. *Spiritual Ecology and Ecotherapy: A Literature Review and Informed Commentary*
3. *Unpacking Spiritual Activism: A Literature Review of Spirituality & Social Justice Action*
4. *The Supported Mother: A Mind-Body Approach to Maternal Mental Wellness*
5. *Finding Self-Love and Beauty in A Selfie Era*
6. *Supporting Educators in a Pandemic: A Facilitator's Guide to Stress Reduction Workshops*
7. *Screening for Suicidality in African American Churches*
8. *The Sculptor: Explorations in Buddhism and Nature*

X.   General IP Advice

1. **Contact sponsors early**. Many sponsors have busy schedules and may not be able to accommodate your IP timeline.
2. Pick a sponsor who you perceive will be **responsive** to your communications.
3. **Break the project down** into manageable pieces and **set personal deadlines** to complete the sections of your IP in a structured manner. If you need help with project management and/or accountability, reach out to the IP Instructor for support with planning and progress checks.
4. ==**Use APA Style 7th Edition**==. IPs will only be accepted if they are formatted properly in APA7.
5. **Do not fall into the perfectionism trap** (i.e. "Nobel Laureate Syndrome"). Find a balance of effort and ease.
6. Try to complete the IP before completing coursework, or during the immediate semester after all 36 points have been completed.

XI.   Further Guidance

IP Instructor

You are welcome to email Melanie Lown (mll2217@tc.columbia.edu) or set up a meeting with Melanie to discuss any of the following about your IP:
- Topic acceptability
- Topic feasibility
- Sponsor choice consultation
- Format choice
- Progress checks
- Graduation planning
- Submission planning

Graduate Writing Center

The Graduate Writing Center at Teachers College is an excellent resource for writing support. Make an appointment here. Find their website here.

XII.   IP Proposal Outline

You may choose to write an optional proposal for your IP. An IP proposal can be a useful tool, both while writing your IP and as an early milestone that sets you up for success. It can also be an effective tool to have before reaching out to your potential sponsor as it could increase their interest in sponsoring your project.

Your IP Proposal should be 1-2 pages and include the following:

1. A brief overview of the relevant literature.
2. Exploration of the gaps in the current research.
3. A carefully worded research question.
4. Explanation of the possible contributions of the topic in the field.
5. A description of the planned methods (i.e. specify your format option).