

Proposal check list (**Please submit entire proposal as a single .pdf document.**)

- Completed cover sheet with budget (and title!)
- Two page summary of project and tentative work schedule
- N/A One paragraph summary of previous funding accomplishments
- N/A Safety Supplemental Stipend statement
- One page statement from student
- Student's progress report

Faculty Mentor:

Name: Thomas G. Olsen (he/him/his)  
Campus Address: JFT 808 (mailing address JFT 714)  
Phone: 845.257.2723  
Email: [olsent@newpaltz.edu](mailto:olsent@newpaltz.edu)

Student:

Name: Andrea Bialosuknia (she/her/hers) Major (minor): English  
Expected graduation date: May 2018  
Phone: *information removed*  
Email: *information removed*  
GPA: *information removed*  
N number: *information removed*

1. Does this work involve human subject? No.  
If yes, has the IRB been notified? N/A
2. Does this work involve recombinant DNA? No  
If yes, has the IBC been notified? N/A
3. Does this work involve non-human vertebrates? No
4. List the faculty mentor's other funding sources (approved and pending): none
5. Preliminary supply budget summary: (cannot exceed \$1,000 including delivery fees) Please provide general preliminary list of items and associated costs:  
\$216 TOTAL (from page 2)
6. Title of proposed project: A Study of Power, Politics, and Personal Identity in Shakespeare's History Plays

**Expanded Budget Summary (from page 1)**

\$150 Printing costs for articles and chapters from library databases  
\$41 *The Hollow Crown* (2013) DVD set\*  
\$25 *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* (2016) DVD set\*

---

\$216 TOTAL

\*prices per Amazon.com as of 3/24/2017: films of the plays she will read, to be catalogued by Sojourner Truth

Library and remain in the permanent collection

Does the requested budget cover all expenses related to the proposed work? Yes

If not, explain the sources of funding that will be used.

**Note: The Summary of Previous Funding Accomplishments and the Safety Supplemental Stipend statement do not apply in this application.**

### **Mentor Statement: Overview, Critical Problems to be Addressed, and Working Hypothesis**

This project will involve focused, close, and critical study of eight inter-related full-length “history plays” by William Shakespeare, with the goal of preparing Andrea to present her findings in a series of written projects this summer and oral presentations starting fall 2017 and extending into 2018.

The “history plays” were written in the first decade of the playwright’s career, c. 1590-1599, but they focus on a tumultuous earlier period in English history known as the “Wars of the Roses,” under the monarchs Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV, Edward V, and Richard III (covering the years 1399-1485). These plays form an eight-part dynastic saga that persistently exposes and interrogates the inner workings of politics as the English people, from the royal to the low-born, struggled to reconcile opposing ideologies such as divine right monarchy vs. democracy and sought to understand the fundamental human impulses behind political behavior: trusting in images over realities, forming cults of the personality, collectively denying the past, privileging theory (or even magic) over material power, and so on.

Perhaps some of these behaviors sound quite contemporary? Although Shakespeare’s literary reputation has always rested to some degree on several of these plays, our own political moment has suddenly thrust the kinds of deep political and personal questions these works deal with to the fore, and with a new urgency. In part, Andrea’s project will be an inquiry into the timelessness of the truly important political questions that the history plays force readers to confront—and all the intrigue, suffering, and bloodshed that can accompany abrupt political change.

From her fall 2016 coursework, Andrea is already familiar in a survey fashion with three of these eight plays, but she will carefully re-read those three and take on five more as part of her work this summer. She begins the project with the humanities equivalent of a scientific hypothesis: that Shakespeare’s history plays are anatomies of the cyclical nature of kingship and the (self-) destructive patterns and traps set for—and by—those who hold the greatest power. She argued aspects of this preliminary thesis in February 2017 at a regional undergraduate conference in New York City, in her paper “‘Crooked Figures’: Personal and Political Performance in Shakespeare’s Henriad” (with Professor Samuel Fallon and myself as faculty mentors). With this grant she would be able to test her initial hypothesis against what she finds in the full scope of all eight of Shakespeare’s interrelated history plays.

### **Learning Objectives, Intellectual Development, and Intellectual Outcomes**

Although I have known of the SURE program since its beginning, I have never before offered to mentor a student because I was reluctant to trust even a very good undergraduate with such a long period of intensive primary and secondary text reading, critical writing, and perhaps most of all, responsible time management. In Andrea, a highly self-motivated 4.0 student who is among the best critics and writers I have taught in 20 years on the SUNY campus, I am convinced that we have found a student who will grow intellectually each day, deliver all the products described below, and manage both her time and this remarkable opportunity with intelligence, maturity, and care. Her learning outcomes are described below, and in her section Andrea comments on her personal goals as a scholar and learner.

### **Methods, Checkpoints, and Completed Work to be Produced**

I think in terms of “processes and products” in any extended project. Andrea will be guided and directed by me, but responsible for both the **processes** designed to guide and focus her learning (e.g. journal entries of

15-20 minutes of reflective writing at the close of each work day, a visit to a rare book collection at Vassar or Yale to see Shakespeare's works in their original forms) and the **products** (a variety of quality written work as well as oral presentations of her findings).

The "deliverable" products I expect from her are in part a tribute to her already outstanding abilities as a writer and thinker and in part my confidence that she is ready to take on a new level of scholarship, of the sort we usually require in our graduate seminars: a) an **8-10 pp. conference paper, intended for submission to a regional or national undergraduate conference** (e.g. the English honor society Sigma Tau Delta's 2018 national conference in Cincinnati, or regional undergraduate symposia at Boston University or SUNY Oneonta), b) a **5 pp. overview paper on the history plays and the allied arts traditions**, c) **20+ pp. extended research paper**, d) an **oral presentation** at the fall 2017 SURE presentations, e) a **submission to SURE Abstract Book**.

In addition, this fall she will **co-teach with me a unit on the history plays** in my ENG 407 (Shakespeare II) course—an event that may also help enhance the visibility of SURE program among English majors—and we will begin to look for conferences and publishing opportunities to which she can submit her work.

#### **Summer Schedule and Typical Unit Timetable**

Advanced work in the humanities requires great mental focus, much of it either poring over texts or creating them. With this reality in mind, Andrea and I have agreed that a paced, gradual schedule extended over most of the summer fits this project best. Thus, we are planning on **ten full weeks of work at 30 hours per week (total 300 hours). Work will begin Monday, May 22 and will conclude August 19, with periodic pauses to offer her imagination some relief and to accommodate our respective summer travel plans. Andrea and I will meet at least twice per week, and will use the phone, e-mail, and especially the editing and responding capacity of Google Docs to remain in contact on an essentially daily basis for her daily journals, projects such as evaluating database search results, and written assignments.**

A **typical unit** will last 5-6 days, and will include:

- a) carefully reading one of the eight plays, in historical rather than compositional order,
- b) reading literary critical, historical, and biographical works related to the plays (lack of space prevents me from listing the order of readings and the bibliography I have prepared for her, but they will give her an excellent intellectual context for understanding the plays),
- c) searching for important secondary sources on her own, using databases appropriate to our field, d) reading some of the secondary works she discovers,
- e) viewing at least one—and sometimes several—film versions of the play, and
- f) seeking out works in allied arts traditions (painting, sculpture, fiction, poetry, opera, theater, etc.) to help her place the play in a larger, interdisciplinary framework. I will advise and monitor each of these activities, all the while working with her to build up a comprehensive understanding of the eight-play sequence, and a working bibliography to match, so that she is well prepared to deliver the written and oral "deliverables" outlined above.

Specific assignments and short-form "deliverables" (including the 8-10 pp. conference paper) will be set up at appropriate points in her reading and research over the first 8 weeks. I will offer a mid-point evaluation.

Approximately the last 2 weeks of the summer will be principally given to completing the "allied arts" paper and the research paper, and from them, the abstract for the SURE booklet and the text of her fall 2017 presentation.

## Student Statement: Project-Specific Aims and Personal Goals

My overarching goal for this project is to undertake a rigorous examination and analysis of William Shakespeare's history plays concerning the 15th-century Wars of the Roses, with a particular concentration on the timeless (and timely) issues they raise regarding human political behavior.

At SUNY New Paltz, I've studied Shakespeare with Professor Olsen and Literary Theory with Professor Samuel Fallon; both instructors mentored me on a paper on the "Henriad" plays of Shakespeare (*Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*) that I presented at a medieval and early modern literature symposium in Feb. 2017. Writing and refining that piece, let alone presenting it to others studying or teaching in that field, was extraordinarily rewarding and motivated me to delve deeper into Shakespeare's accounts of the key figures in England's tumultuous transition from feudalism to early modernism.

If I am granted this opportunity, I am prepared to commit to this project **full-time**, without enrollment in summer classes or additional employment for the entirety of the summer. The SURE workshops, meetings, and periodic assessments will provide additional checkpoints along the 10 weeks of my project.

I'll work toward the broader objective above by pursuing several project-specific aims (May 22-August 19):

- Comprehensive study of eight interconnected Shakespeare History Plays through:
  - Diligent close reading of the primary texts and annotations,
  - Extensive database research into existing textual and critical analyses of these works,
  - Insight into the each play's historical context via a bibliography curated by Professor Olsen,
  - Exploration of the cultural significance of these works through the fine arts,
  - Viewing and comparative analysis of at least one film adaptation per play,
  - Synthesis of my research into a series of my own conclusions, considering interpretive choices that reflect the values, concerns, priorities, and aesthetics of various socio-historical contexts and how those interpretations reflect, reinforce, or resist the source text.
- Production of daily journal entries monitoring my progress/process, an oral presentation at the Fall 2017 SURE conference, and several pieces of critical writing about these plays, including a conference paper, a research paper on connections to the fine arts, a more extensive research paper to be developed as I progress in my research, and a submission to this year's SURE Abstract Book.
- Twice-weekly meetings with Professor Olsen, with regular communication between meetings, using email/phone/Google Docs.

Aside from my ambitions for the project itself, I would be able to realize a number of personal goals:

- Exploring graduate-level work through immersion in the process of academic research, and doing so under the guidance of Professor Olsen, an expert mentor with whom I have an established, productive dynamic.
- Working proactively and efficiently when faced with considerable expectations from within and without.
- Attaining a deeper understanding of English history by viewing it through both historical writing and the most richly layered dramatic literature of the era.
- Producing substantive content that I can submit to regional and national undergraduate conferences.
- Developing a level of understanding of the history plays that will enable me to co-teach a unit of Professor Olsen's Fall 2017 Shakespeare II class.