

Independent Study Guidelines

1. What is an independent study?

Independent study involves an in-depth study of some particular problem in the field of communication. It offers advanced study in the Communications Department with opportunity to pursue studies in areas not specifically covered by course offerings. Students in the course assume primary responsibility for teaching themselves a subject area, under the guidance of a supervising professor.

2. Who should try for an independent study?

Advanced communication majors/minors who consistently do above average work in their regular courses, who have demonstrated capability for independent work (**Please note:** and independent study is **NOT** a way to fill hours. You should not try for an independent study if you are not highly motivated or require considerable direction from a professor.)

3. Procedures for a three credit independent study:

- a. The student should consult with a faculty member well before the term in which the independent study is to be conducted.
- b. The student must prepare a detailed, written proposal study and research. The proposal must include a rationale for the project, a description of the research to be performed, a preliminary hypothesis to be tested, a 2-3 page annotated bibliography of relevant research. The proposal must be signed by the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and well as the Chair of Communication and Theatre Arts Department.
- c. The student must assemble a three-person committee to evaluate and supervise the project. These committee members are the chair of the department, the faculty advisor for the project, and one other faculty member or professional who is familiar with the subject of the project. Each member must first review the proposal and sign it if it meets with his/her approval. Signing the proposal also indicates the committee member's willingness to work with the student.
- d. The independent study should culminate in an extensive research paper based on the project. The paper should be 25-30 pages based on primarily original research with a literature review relevant to the research. After the committee has read the paper an oral exam, conducted by the committee, will follow.

Procedures for 1-2 credit course

- a. Steps 1 & 2 of these guidelines are the same for a 1-2 credit study.
- b. Same as 3 credit requirement.
- c. The student must assemble a committee of two (the department chair and the faculty project advisor) who will co-sign the agreement and evaluate the project. There is no oral exam for a one or two credit project. The final grade is the average of the chair and advisor's grades.
- d. The independent study should culminate in a research paper based on the project. This paper should be 15 pages for a two course or 10 pages for a one credit course.