

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GRADUATE INDEPENDENT STUDY GUIDELINES

Independent Studies are intensive courses requiring a high level of commitment, organization, and energy. Graduate students must submit a written proposal and syllabus (including a reading list and reading schedule) to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee for approval before they are allowed to sign up for an Independent Study. Please include the following items in your proposal:

1. The *topic* of your course. Explain how you developed the topic and what the parameters are.
2. Explain how this course is necessary to your development as a graduate student. How will it advance your graduate education?
3. Provide us with the *reading list* and the rationale. How was it developed? Did you consult with other professors, bibliographies, or disciplinary specific databases?
4. Explain what kinds of *written work* will be required. *Be specific*. Remember that graduate level courses demand that students demonstrate sophisticated interpretive, research, and writing skills. Possible written assignments might include:
 - Bibliography or Annotated Bibliography (if so, how many sources?)
 - Journal entries or other kinds of short, reflective pieces
 - Summaries, analyses, or literature reviews of professional scholarship (peer-reviewed journal essays or scholarly monographs)
 - Prospectus for future project
 - Abstract
 - Draft work
 - Research essay (meaning a well-researched paper with an original thesis and well-integrated citations—**cite an expected page length or word count for your paper**).
5. If there are other kinds of assignments attached to your class, mention it in the proposal. This might include service work, field research, attending lectures, exhibitions, or performances.
6. Mention what *research resources* you anticipate using in this class. *Be specific*. Cite individual databases.
7. Mention how often you will *meet* with your professor to discuss your progress. It is recommended that you see your professor a *minimum* of 8 times throughout the semester.
8. Your syllabus and reading list should include your *deadlines*. Note that you must plot out required readings and any written due dates week by week in your syllabus.