Independent Study Guidelines

Purpose. An Independent Study offers students an opportunity to work individually with a full-time SSA faculty member on a topic of interest. Independent Studies may not duplicate material offered through the academic curriculum but can be undertaken to pursue a subject area in more depth or conduct research in a particular area of interest. Students may only pursue an Independent Study with a full-time faculty member; adjunct instructors are not able to engage students in Independent Study except on rare occasions that must be approved in advance by the Office of the Dean of Students.

Proposal. Students interested in arranging an Independent Study must submit a proposal to the faculty member with whom they wish to work. The student’s capacity for completing the Independent Study is addressed, including resources needed to complete the work and a specific plan for faculty consultation and oversight.

The proposal should contain the following elements:
1. An overview of the purpose and design of the Independent Study;
2. A plan for completing the work, including a time line;
3. A description of the product produced through the Independent Study. Generally an Independent Study results in a paper of 15 – 20 pages, a research analysis and report, or similar document. The investment of time and quality of work should parallel that of any course offered through the regular curriculum.

Credit and Registration: Independent Studies are counted for elective credit as one of the 18 courses required for the degree. Students may take up to two Independent Studies for application toward the MA degree. Pending faculty consent to work with the student, final approval of the Independent Study is provided by the Office of the Dean of Students.

Students may register for the Independent Study in any quarter using the faculty member’s Individual Readings and Research code.