

School of Media and Journalism Independent Study/Directed Reading Guidelines

Undergraduate and graduate students majoring or minoring in the School of Media and Journalism may seek out independent study and directed-reading course opportunities with faculty members who agree to supervise their work. An independent study or directed-reading course can take the form of (1) research that could, but does not have to, result in a major paper, (2) investigation of a topic not covered in the current curriculum or, in extraordinary circumstances, (3) completing coursework for a JOMC class that for serious reason does not fit into the student's schedule.

An independent study or directed-reading course can be taken only with the permission of the instructor who will supervise the work. Ideally, there should be discussion of the independent study or directed-reading course and agreement on specifics during the semester before it is begun.

Independent study and directed-reading classes should meet the following guidelines:

1. The course work should be at least as rigorous as the requirements of a regularly scheduled course, and, if appropriate, there should be regular graded assignments.
2. The independent-study form explaining content and expectations must be agreed upon between the student and the instructor no later than the last day to add a course for the semester in which it is taken, and all work must be completed before the end of that semester. The form should include a statement indicating what the course should accomplish, which may be a simple list of goals, and a copy should be provided to the student by the instructor.
3. The faculty member must sign the independent-study form, indicating his or her agreement to oversee the course, before the student attempts to register for the course.

Faculty members should consider the following when overseeing an independent study or directed-reading class:

1. Make sure that relevant readings and assignments are included, whether suggested by the faculty member or the student, and help the student become competent with the material.
2. Require students to meet with you regularly, such as once a week, to monitor progress. The meetings do not have to be in person but can be done via phone, Skype, email or instant messaging.
3. Be proactive in pushing the student to reach the goals set at the beginning of the semester.
4. The faculty member must sign the independent-study form stating that he or she agrees to oversee an independent study or directed-reading course with a student before that student is allowed to register for the course.

If the independent study is to fulfill a requirement in the School of Media and Journalism, such as a skills course, the student needs to secure permission of the senior associate dean (graduate students must secure permission from the director of the master's program or director of the PhD program) before taking the independent study with the appropriate faculty member so that approval can be put in the student's permanent file.

An independent study or directed-readings course cannot be taken Pass/Fail.

Working (i.e., an internship) for an organization or business outside of UNC-Chapel Hill is not permitted for an independent study by an undergraduate, unless it is part of the UNC-Chapel Hill APPLES service learning program. **For graduate students completing paid or unpaid internships, independent-study credit may be allowed by permission of adviser *provided* the internship is related to the student's area of study and that it culminates in a final paper addressing the knowledge or skills acquired and how that fits with the student's professional or academic goals.**

In addition, the School of Media and Journalism limits the number of independent study and directed-reading hours for any one student to 6 credit hours except in truly exceptional circumstances.

No faculty member can oversee more than two independent study or directed-reading courses in any semester.

The senior associate dean will regularly review independent study topics as patterns of independent study and directed-reading course offerings might warrant permanent courses or inform other curriculum changes.