

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES
INDEPENDENT STUDY PERMISSION FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS
SPRING 2008

Independent Study Application Procedures (for Undergraduates Only):

There are many reasons to engage in an independent study project: a desire to explore a policy research question in depth; an interest in determining whether academic research might be a potential career path; or the rewards of working closely with an expert in a particular policy field. For many students, an independent study project offers a welcome intellectual challenge. The combination of creativity and sustained effort required for a successful project can yield a strong sense of accomplishment. What students will often take away from the experience, in addition to recommendations and course credit, is a sense of self-awareness and knowledge of what they are capable of producing.

In order for the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) to approve your independent study, you must submit a proposal that contains: a) a preliminary bibliography of readings b) a schedule for the work to be done, including a description of the written assignments entailed, and c) a description of the overall course content and goals. Independent studies will often entail more work than a standard course, since the student will often need to create the reading list and course plan. If the proposal does not reflect a commitment to that level of work, it will be rejected. The earlier you submit the proposal, the longer you may have to revise it if you need to. The advisor for a general PPS independent study should be a PPS regular rank faculty member. Advisors for the independent studies in the honors track should be tenured/tenure track faculty in PPS, tenured/tenure track Duke faculty with secondary PPS appointments, or PPS faculty members actively engaged in research endeavors.

Independent Study as a path to graduating with Honors

Students in their junior or senior year who write an extensive paper in an independent study (or seminar) are encouraged to think about transforming it into an honors project if they earn an A- or higher on the paper. A student can write a proposal on how the work would be transformed into an honors project and submit this proposal, with the support of a faculty advisor, to the honors committee. The faculty advisor would not have to be the same individual who supervised the initial class that led to the proposal. The committee (e.g., the honors seminar director and another professor) would provide feedback on the proposal. This feedback will not be a yes/no assessment; it will rather provide advice and an indication of the likelihood of success for the project. The student can then undertake an independent study, with the goal of producing a project to be read for honors consideration. In order to submit the original class paper for initial evaluation of the research proposal, a student would have to have a 3.40 in the subset of cores (i.e., PPS 55, 114, 116, 128/substitute) taken to date. The final paper for honors consideration could be submitted in December or April of senior year. It would be read by the advisor and honors director, who would apply the same standards of assessment to these papers as to those emerging from the honors seminar. The honors seminar director might also ask for input from an additional reader. The honors seminar director makes the final determination of the grade quality of the paper (though the advisor in the independent study has the freedom to assign whatever grade she/he deems appropriate for that exercise). A student who earns an A- rating on the thesis and has completed the subset of core courses (i.e., PPS 55, 114, 116, and 128/substitute) and maintained at least a 3.40 average in these classes would graduate with distinction in PPS. Those who meet the grade cutoff and earn an A or A+ on the thesis would graduate with highest distinction in public policy.

* must have signature of professor and director of appropriate program. Return completed form to room 121 Sanford.

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Drop/Add ends January 23, 2008 (forms due before 5:00 p.m)

Please complete and submit to your faculty instructor for his/her approval. Then, bring the completed form to the director of undergraduate/graduate studies in Public Policy during office hours or to Anita Wright, 121 Sanford Institute Building. You will then be given the four-digit permission number required for registration.

NAME: _____ DATE _____

CLASS: SOPH____ JUNIOR____ SENIOR____ GRAD_____

TELEPHONE #: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Undergraduate (191 and 192)

Independent Study 191. _____ **Research Independent Study: 192.** _____

Honors Project Track yes/no paper #1 paper #2

Graduate (399 and 386)

Special Reading 399. _____ **MPP students only (variable credit)**

Research Topics 386. _____ **DCID students only (variable credit)**

INDEPENDENT STUDY TITLE: _____

INDEPENDENT STUDY DESCRIPTION: (you may attach a description)

INDEPENDENT STUDY WILL INCLUDE:

_____ RESEARCH _____ SPECIAL TOPICS
_____ PROJECTS _____ SPECIAL READINGS
_____ ADVANCED STUDIES

A student's independent study must result in (at least) a substantive paper or report containing significant analysis and interpretation of the approved topic.

*Signature of Supervising Professor _____

*Signature of Director of Undergraduate Studies _____

*Signature of Director of Graduate Studies _____

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