

Appendix F.
Undergraduate and Graduate Independent Study
Policy and Procedures
Department of Psychology
(approved: 9/06)

The Department of Psychology recognizes the vital role independent study can play in a student's education. Independent study allows the student to explore a topic of interest under the close supervision of a faculty member who has agreed to direct the student's work. The course may include directed readings, applied work, assisting the faculty member with a research project, carrying out an independent research project, or other activities deemed appropriate by the supervising faculty member and the department. Regardless of the nature of the experience, the work must culminate in a formal paper.

The following procedures apply to both undergraduate and graduate independent study projects.

1. Any student wishing to attempt an independent study must begin by obtaining the agreement of a faculty member to direct the project. The basic details of the project should be developed collaboratively before the paperwork necessary for registration is initiated.
2. The student and faculty member must complete an Independent Studies Proposal form (available in the department office) prior to the student enrolling in the course. The form is to be submitted to the department chair. Upon approval, a section of PSY 407 or PSY 887 will be created with the faculty supervisor designated as the instructor. The student should contact the department office to get the section number.
3. The instructor must submit an electronic copy of the course syllabus to the department administrative assistant. A syllabus template is provided below.
4. The instructor is responsible for submitting a course grade at the end of the semester.
5. Independent study supervision is voluntary and not included in the faculty member's teaching load.

Sample Syllabus for PSY 407 and PSY 887

Psychology 407 Problems in Psychology (PSY 887 Independent Work in Psychology)

Instructor:
Office Number:
Telephone:
Email Address:
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Independent study allows the student to explore a topic of interest under the close supervision of a faculty member. The course may include directed readings, applied work, assisting a faculty member with a research project, carrying out an independent research project, or other activities deemed appropriate. Regardless of the nature of the experience, the work must culminate in a formal paper. The specific course requirements are described in the Independent Studies Proposal form to be completed by the student and faculty supervisor.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students must have the Independent Study Proposal Form Approved by faculty supervisor and department chair prior to enrollment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will explore a special topic, chosen by the student and a faculty supervisor, through library research or empirical research techniques (and, in some cases, applied experience). The purpose of the course is to develop research (and in some cases, applied) skills, and gain expertise in the topic area. The course may be retaken to a maximum of six hours provided different problems are studied.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements will vary depending on the particular project, but will typically include use of Psychology data bases such as PSYINFO to locate relevant literature, and/or will include one or more of:

- preparing materials and procedures needed for empirical research,
- gathering data from human subjects,
- coding and analyzing data,
- preparing a final report,
- working with a clinical population

ASSESSMENT METHODS

At the beginning of the semester students and their faculty supervisor will decide on the specific objectives for the semester. Students will then meet weekly with the supervisor. The supervisor will evaluate whether tasks have been completed in a thorough and timely manner, and whether objectives have been met. The supervisor will also evaluate the final report. Students in all psychology courses are expected to use correct grammar, spelling and composition in written assignments. These elements of writing will be taken into consideration in grading all writing assignments. If you would like free help with your writing, you may use the writing lab: Case Annex 173 (622-6191; appointments are encouraged). Part of your student fees pay for this writing lab, so it is offered free to all students. Please take advantage of it.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students found guilty of an academic honesty violation may result in a grade penalty (including a failing grade for the course) and referral to the Academic Council.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If there is any individual who is in need of academic accommodations and who is registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please make an appointment with the course instructor to discuss accommodations. Upon request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms. If any individual who is not registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities has need of academic accommodations, please contact the Office directly, either in person on the first floor of the Turley House, or by telephone at 859-622-1500 V/TTY.

STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Students in all psychology courses are expected to use correct grammar, spelling and composition in written assignments. These elements of writing will be taken into consideration in grading all out-of-class writing assignments. If you would like free help with your writing, you may use the writing lab: Case Annex 173 (622-6191).

GRADING SCALE

Methods of student evaluation and grading criteria are described in the Independent Studies Proposal form. The grading scale for the course is:

A = 90%; B = 80%; C = 70%, D = 60%