

## INDEPENDENT STUDY

<b>Health Administration:</b>	<b>10:501:298/485 - Fall</b>	<b>10:501:299/486 - Spring</b>
<b>Planning and Public Policy:</b>	<b>10:762:298/485 - Fall</b>	<b>10:762:299/486 - Spring</b>
<b>Public Health:</b>	<b>10:832:298/485 - Fall</b>	<b>10:832:299/486 - Spring</b>
<b>Public Policy:</b>	<b>10:833:298/485 - Fall</b>	<b>10:833:299/486 - Spring</b>
<b>Urban Planning and Design:</b>	<b>10:971:298/485 - Fall</b>	<b>10:971:299/486 - Spring</b>

The Bloustein School offers eligible undergraduate students the opportunity to complete an independent study in the above subject areas, at both the 200 and the 400 levels, under the direction of a Bloustein faculty member.

### What is an Independent Study?

An independent study is an opportunity to work intensively under the supervision of a professor on a topic that falls within that professor's expertise and to receive course credit and a grade for the work. The proposed topic must be one that is not currently covered by an existing course and should be decided upon after a meeting between the student and the professor. An independent study is usually a 3-credit, semester long course that is offered in both the fall and spring semesters. At the end of the semester, the professor submits a grade, like in a regular course.

### What are the requirements?

Independent studies require a commitment of approximately six hours a week (assuming a 3-credit course). Weekly tasks usually include extensive reading of academic articles and practice reports, in-person meetings to discuss readings and questions, and writing assignments. An independent study is not a research assistantship; the student will be expected to complete work of an independent, summative nature, usually a significant paper at the end of the semester. The complexity of the topic and work depends on the level of the course:

- 200-level course – takes an introductory focus on a broad topic. Given the breadth of courses offered across the University, 200-level independent studies are offered more rarely as students are typically able to find comparable courses in their area of interest.
- 400-level course – takes a more advanced approach to a more specific topic that matches the expertise of the faculty member.

### Who is eligible to enroll?

Any undergraduate student who has identified a feasible topic with advice and approval from the supervising faculty member may submit an application. Students are encouraged to reach out to faculty to schedule a meeting. Students must meet with a faculty member to decide on the topic, scope, and requirements and draft a description and syllabus. (See attached example.)

### How does a student enroll?

In order to enroll, the student must complete the Application to Enroll for Independent Study, obtain the required signatures, and submit it to the Office of Academic and Student Services in the Civic Square Building Suite 100, along with a 100 word description of the project and a draft syllabus. (See attached example.) The student will receive official notification from Dr. Marc Weiner, Undergraduate Program Director, on action pertaining to this request.



**More information?**

If you have questions, please contact Christina Torian, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Advising, [Christina.torian@rutgers.edu](mailto:Christina.torian@rutgers.edu).

## EXAMPLE

### Independent Study Description and Syllabus

Topic: Exploring the Experiences of Domestic Violence Survivors with Supportive Housing

Student: xxxxxx

Faculty advisor: Prof. Andrea Hetling

Semester: Spring xxxx

Project description (100 words):

This independent study will focus on the topic of permanent supportive housing for survivors of intimate partner violence. The semester will be centered around a case study, a new program in NYC, and the student will explore qualitative data collected longitudinally from residents of the program. The goal of the independent study is two-fold:

- In terms of substance: to develop the student's understanding of the experiences of residents, both in terms of struggles and accomplishments, in three areas: housing stability, all forms of abuse, and progress towards family economic security.
- In terms of skills: to develop the student's ability to analyze qualitative data and conduct a thorough research literature

Syllabus:

We will meet approximately every other week on Fridays at 11:00am for in-depth meetings and discussion of progress. The student will also provide via updates via e-mail. The schedule and topics are listed below. Assignments are designed to be building blocks for the final paper. The paper should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages, not including references.

Schedule:

Weeks of:	Topic	Assignments	Meeting (Fridays, 11:00)
1/20	Intro to the semester and overview of topic		1/23
1/26 and 2/2	Review interview transcripts; identification of focus / research question	Proposal	2/6
2/9 and 2/16	Literature review on research question	Literature search and annotated bibliography (10 articles)	2/20
2/23, 3/2, and 3/9	How to conduct qualitative data analysis and use NVivo	Attend library training Upload and organize data	3/13
3/16	Spring Break		
3/23, 3/30, and 4/6	Qualitative data analysis	List of codes and themes	4/10 and one other date TBA
4/13 and 4/20	Pulling it all together	Discussion of final paper	4/24
4/27		Final paper due	5/1