

## **Independent Study Classes: ANTH 496 and 596**

Independent study classes are not classes in the traditional sense. They provide a mechanism for students to receive credit for research projects. They are designed primarily for undergraduate students who have a passionate desire to do research. Graduate students are normally better served by taking "Research" (ANTH 597) instead of "Independent Study", unless the topic they are researching is not related to their thesis or professional paper.

Independent Study is not designed to take the place of a regular class.

Independent Study is independent, which means that under most conditions you are on your own. Your instructor is probably not going to be able to meet with you regularly, or even help you much in getting going. The burden rests squarely on the shoulders of the student.

Independent Study represents a significant time commitment. The University counts three hours of independent study as equal to one lecture hour. Using this rule, signing up for 1 credit of Independent Study means that you are committing to working 3 hours per week on your research project. Signing up for 3 credits means that you are committing 9 hours per week. This has several implications:

You should probably not consider tackling an Independent Study if your schedule is already full. Independent Study is not a good substitute for a class, since you have to put in 3 times as much time.

Independent Study is not a good idea if you "just need a couple of credits to graduate", or "just need 1 more credit to qualify for financial aid". You are much better off taking a regular class.

There are lots of 1 credit and 2 credit classes offered by a variety of departments.

### **How to Develop and Carry out an Independent Study Project.**

1. Find a topic to research.
2. Prepare a written proposal including a description of your proposed research topic, the amount of time you are willing to commit to your project (= the number of credits you are seeking), how/where/when you will get access to any specimens or subjects you need for your research, a detailed (usually week by week) schedule of what you are going to accomplish over the semester and when, a plan for documenting your research (usually a paper around 10 pages/credit in length), and a plan for how you should be graded. Pass/No Pass grading is acceptable and encouraged.
3. Present your proposal to your instructor and work out any details with him or her.
4. Obtain a course override form from the registrar's office. Your instructor will sign it if all the details are satisfactory. Take the signed form back to the registrar to enroll.
5. Be diligent in following your schedule. If you fall behind, it will be very difficult to catch up. Your instructor will be reluctant to accept excuses.
6. Be sure to submit your final work (paper, etc.) to your instructor by the last day of class - not sometime during finals week, unless arrangements have been made ahead of time.