ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AD-HOC
INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES AT UNCP

A request was made that the Academic Affairs Committee have a look at Independent Study (499) courses at UNCP. The committee agreed to a four-part look as follows:

I. Prerequisites (enumerated on p 45 of the 2000-2001 UNCP Catalog) for Independent Study (499) courses: Should these prerequisites be changed?

II. Restrictions on who can enroll in independent study courses: Should independent study courses be opened to students other than seniors?

III. Standards for independent study courses: Should The University establish university-wide standards for independent study courses?

IV. Faculty credit for independent study courses: How should independent study courses be calculated into faculty course loads?

I. Prerequisites (enumerated on p 45 of the 2000-2001 UNCP Catalog) for Independent Study (499) courses: Should these prerequisites be changed?

Synopsis of current offerings as listed in UNCP Catalog.

INTERNSHIPS, PRACTICA, AND INDEPENDENT LEARNING. These programs (which include independent study) provide opportunities for students to earn academic credit for approved work or research programs in cooperating business-government, or education organizations. The internships, which are of one-term duration, are open to qualified junior or senior students with the approval of the department chairman.

Independent Study. Description in 2000-2001 UNCP Catalog, p. 45

A student who wishes to enroll in 499 Independent Study (IS) in any department must: (1) be classified as a senior, (2) have a QPA of 3.0 or better in major area, (3) request IS in his major area, and (4) submit a Request for Approval of IS in triplicate to the Office for Academic Affairs. The form can be obtained from the dept. head. It must be approved by: (1) the professor supervising the student in IS, (2) the dept chair, (3) the Registrar, and (4) the Office for Ac. Affairs. The student may select 1, 2, or 3 SH.

Upon completion of the independent study, the student must prepare a typewritten report of the study in duplicate. The supervising professor will evaluate the report and the overall work in the independent study and assign the appropriate grade. A copy of the independent study should be filed in the dept. chair’s office.

Experiential Learning and Cooperative Education, UNCP 2001-2002 Catalog, p. 44, 45. (Both programs offer academic credit for a working-and-learning arrangement. Both programs involve an outside business or agency.)

In order to better judge whether prerequisites should be changed a survey of the catalog as to independent study offerings by the various departments was undertaken. Also, some related offerings are noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Dept</th>
<th>Independent Study IS</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>AIS 499. IS in AIS. Directed reading &amp; research, app instructor. 3 sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>BIO 499 Research in Biology, sr, 3.0, app Jac</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>------------------------------------</td>
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</table>
CHM 480. Internship in Chem  
GGY 401. Internship in Geography |
| Eng, Theater & Languages           | PHY 499. IS. Consent of dept chair & instr, 1-3sh | ENG 399. Practice in Comp. Tutoring  
THE 322, 323. Special Topics in Theater. Cons of instr, 1-3sh  
| History                            | HST 499. IS in History. Directed reading and research. Sr, app of chair & dept, 1-3 sh | HST 399. Directed Reading in History. Permission of instr, 1-3 sh |
| Mass Comm.                         | MAT 499. IS. App dept chair, 1-3 sh | MAT 448. Special Topics. Teach. License. 3 sh  
CSC 499. IS. 3.0, app dept chair, 1-3 sh |
MUS 455. Special Projects in Music Industry. Ind. Study project, research project, paper or orig. work. 3 sh |
| Music                              | PHI 499. IS in Philosophy. (Des. same as listed on p. 45, Catalog), 1-3 sh | PHI 420. Seminar in Phi. May include directed research. Consent of instr. 1-3 sh., 9 sh max.  
REL 499. IS (same as above), 1-3 sh |
| Phil & Rel                         | PSPA 499. IS in Political Science. Directed reading & research. Sr, app dept chair, 1-3 sh. | PSPA 398, 399. Directed Research in PS I, II. Inst appr & submission to dept chair. 1-3 sh |
| Pol. Sc. & Public Ad.              | SOC 499. IS in Sociology. Sr, 3.0, app instr. 3 sh | SOC 398, 399. Directed Research I, II. 1, 2 sh  
CRJ 499. IS in CJ. Sr, 3.0, proposal, app instr, area coord, chair. 3 sh  
SWK 398, 399. Directed Research I, II |
ECN 499 Directed Studies in Econ. (same as above)  
FIN 499 Directed Studies in F. (same)  
MGT 499. Directed S. in Mgt. (same)  
MKT 499. D. S. in Marketing (same)  
EDN 433. Research in Second. Ed (same)  
EDN 433. Research in Second. Ed (same)  
PED 401. Special Topics. 1-3 sh |
| Aerospace Studies                  |                                 |                                                                             |
| Nursing                            |                                 |                                                                             |

**Analysis of data in table.** Departments are closely following the guidelines in the catalog for the Experiential Learning and Cooperative Education Programs. It therefore appears that these programs are meeting the needs of the departments as they are currently outlined. However, the same satisfaction level does not seem to apply to independent study, noteworthy points include:
a. Most departments that offer Independent Study 499 list the requirements in a way similar to the requirements listed on p. 45 but not in as much depth. Only the Dept of Philosophy and Religion uses the same description as listed on p. 45.

b. A number of departments have offerings that appear to be similar to independent study. These include variable semester hours credit, approval of instructor/dept/chair, proposal submission, and titles that include phrases such as research in, directed research, directed studies, senior thesis independent study project, special projects in independent study, etc. These listings seem to be addressing the same interest as independent study but differ from the independent study listing in some basic way, i.e. course number, title, class rank classification requirement, and description of general requirements. Examples: CHM 399. Research in Chemistry, HST 399 Directed Reading in History, PSY 399 Directed Study, SOC 398 Directed Research, and others.

CONCLUSIONS. It can be concluded from the above analysis that many departments do not support the current prerequisites for independent study. Possible dissatisfactions include:

a. The current policy as stated in the catalog is too involved. (too restrictive and burdensome) (Approval by Registrar, Office of Academic Affairs, etc). Rationale: Many departments do not list all requirements as outlined in catalog for their 499 IS offerings.

b. The restriction of classification to seniors only is too limiting. Rationale: Many departments have similar listings at the 300 level, i.e. CHM 399 Research in Chemistry. (Also, the off-campus programs, i.e. internships, are available to both juniors and seniors.)

c. ..

It can be concluded that there is a need for a more wide-spread, and more flexible, independent study program at UNCP. Some things that might be considered include:

a. Changing requirements. Can the process be altered to be more efficient? (dept level only?; would sub-committee on curriculum be equally useful as registrar and OAA approval, etc?)

b. If b) is an option of interest, what would be the maximum hours per semester and total numbers of hours that might be appropriate? (One suggestion is 6 total semester hours for a 4 year degree (see Experiential Learning policies)).

c. Pass/fail grading as an option? (or, should all similar offerings, including seminars, be P/F?) If P/F is an option, should fail line be around 80%? Freshman Seminar is 75%.

Recommendations.

1. That these similar programs, i.e. Internships, Practica, and Independent Learning, including Independent Study, etc. have consistent policies.

2. That Independent Study 499 and Cooperative Education go the way of the policy of internships. Specifically, this means:
   a. that juniors be allowed to participate.
   b. that only the dept chair is required to approve, along with the advising faculty member.
   c. that the GPA requirement be consistent (both 2.0 and 3.0 have merit).
   d. that the advising faculty member determine with the student what is required to complete the effort. In other words, don't automatically require a "written report," as specified in 499 policy.

II. Restrictions on who can enroll in independent study courses: Should independent study courses be opened to students other than seniors?

Based on analysis above it can be concluded that Independent Study should include class levels other than senior, particularly for the junior level. (Is there a need for more classification levels to have the independent study option available? If so, all -99 listings might be used for independent study, e.g. 099, 199, 299, and 399 in addition to the current 499 option).

III. Standards for independent study courses: Should The University establish university-wide standards for independent study courses?

We have a university-wide policy, and don't need to establish one. However, consistent standards are not being used with regard to Independent Study (although they are being used for Experiential Learning: Internships, Practica and Independent Learning).

Recommendation. We should establish new and consistent policies that reflect what departments ARE doing.
[Related questions as regards course prerequisites, as listed in the catalog for specific courses. How is monitoring done, if any, as to whether students signing up for a course has the required prerequisites? How are exceptions to prerequisites requirements handled, and are there consistent standards for permitting exceptions?]

IV. Faculty credit for independent study courses: How should independent study courses be calculated into faculty course loads?
Some thoughts:
  a. Treat IS in a way similar to how graduate course offerings are currently treated. For example, for each three semester hours IS one 3 semester hour reduction per academic year.
  b. Treat IS in a way similar to how Freshman Seminar is treated. For each 3 semester hours of IS (and Freshman Seminar) one 3 semester hour reduction in course load.
  c. No extra work load credit given. Consider it as extra work in the name of teaching, as a contribution to merit, which should show up on chair's evaluations.

Submitted by: Holden Hansen and Harold Teague