CAP Independent Studies and Directed Readings Guidelines

The faculty at OWU recognize the benefits of students pursuing their intellectual interests through individualized programs of study. Independent studies and directed readings provide students the opportunity to take ownership for their learning and connect it to other academic, co-curricular, or career experiences. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for faculty and students who are considering an independent study or directed readings (courses numbered 490/491).

The goals of individualized study may overlap with the Connection Experience general education requirement. If a student wishes to use an independent study as a Connection Experience, they must successfully complete the four-step process to propose that independent study as their required General Education Connection Experience (Gen-Ed CX).

Guidelines

1. Independent Studies and directed readings should provide students the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and follow their academic interests into areas beyond the OWU curriculum. Faculty partner with students to help them learn, but students should lead these experiences.

2. Because these are intense, special experiences, faculty should speak with students about their academic rationale for embarking on the independent study or directed readings and speak to students about how they'll fit the work of an independent study into their semester workload, making time and academic expectations clear prior to registration.

3. Students proposing an independent study or directed readings idea to a faculty member should do so by week 10 of the semester before the work will begin.

4. Faculty are under no obligation to supervise independent studies or directed readings for all students who ask.

5. Students and faculty should co-create a draft of the syllabus for the independent study or directed readings prior to the start of the semester in which the course will run. This syllabus should include learning goals, a schedule of meetings, a tentative list of readings, topics to be covered, and/or activities to be undertaken by the student.

6. Students and faculty should finalize the syllabus and agree to a meeting schedule, set of readings, tasks, and assessments for the independent study or directed readings prior to the end of the drop/add period in the semester that the course is run. These syllabi should be uploaded to the syllabus repository.

7. CAP recommends faculty and students meet at regular intervals, either weekly or biweekly as best fits the needs of the student's learning plan. On rare occasions, less frequent meetings may suffice, but faculty should meet with students no fewer than five times during

the course of the semester. CAP also recommends asking students to create a log or journal of the work completed weekly to provide structure and accountability.

8. OWU Guidelines for relating credit hours to student workload state that students completing an independent study or directed readings for 1.0 unit should spend approximately 140 hours per semester or 10 hours per week on course material, including time spent meeting with the instructor. Students completing an independent study or directed readings for 0.5 unit should spend ~70 hours on coursework. Independent studies and directed readings may be run as full-semester or modular courses.

9. Students should produce an artifact (e.g., a research paper, project, experiment, series of detailed problem sets, complex computer code, solo performance with written rationale, visual portfolio with written rationale) that can be assessed. Furthermore, CAP recommends having checkpoints and due dates throughout the semester on the road to any final assessment.

10. All students completing independent studies are encouraged to present at the Connection Conference, Student Symposium, or a departmental seminar, to share their work. Students using independent studies for their required Connection Experience are obligated to share with the broader campus community.