Independent Studies

Independent study (RUSS 499, SLAVIC 499) provides advanced undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to work closely with an individual faculty member on an area of shared interest. Independent studies are designed to complement and expand on existing courses, not substitute for them.

Am I eligible for an independent study?

Juniors, seniors, and graduate students who have already completed coursework in the Slavic Department and have a degree of familiarity with their chosen subject area may apply for an independent study. Students who do not fit this profile should speak with the undergraduate adviser to determine their eligibility.

Who can supervise an independent study?

Faculty at the rank of lecturer or above may supervise independent studies in their areas of teaching or research expertise, however they are under no obligation to do so.

How do I apply for an independent study?

Once you have determined a research topic that cannot be explored in existing Slavic Department courses, you should consult the Slavic Department Faculty Directory to find a supervisor that aligns with your intended study. You should then e-mail him or her to discuss your project and determine its feasibility. If the faculty member agrees to supervise the independent study, he or she will arrange with departmental staff to register you in RUSS 499 or SLAVIC 499.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your project must be approved by your faculty supervisor no later than the first day of the quarter in which you intend to complete the independent study.

How much work is involved in an independent study? How many credits is it worth?

These two things are directly connected. Based on the student's research project, the student and the faculty supervisor will agree on the number of credits sought:

**Literature and Linguistics Topics**

Generally, 1 credit hour = 1-2 books to be read, 3-5 pages to be written. 2 credits = 3-4 books, 6-8 pages; 3 credits = 5-6 books, 9-11 pages, and so on, up to a maximum of 5 credits. Students and supervisors will arrive at a mutually agreed-upon syllabus and reading list, and arrange how often to meet during the quarter.

**Language Study**

Students undertaking language study will complete a specified number of written assignments, tests, and essays, as determined by their supervisor. Meetings for language study may include more than one student.
How often do I meet with my supervisor for an independent study?

This varies depending on the nature of the material to be covered and the course load and class hours of both you and your supervisor. You should be prepared to be flexible in regard to schedule, as your faculty supervisor’s first priority is to the students enrolled in their regular courses. Please be aware there may be weeks when supervisors are unable to meet with independent study students.

Do independent study credits count towards a major or minor in the Slavic Department?

Undergraduates may earn no more than 15 independent study credits in the Slavic Department. Since independent study is NOT a substitute for required coursework towards a major or minor, independent study credits may only count towards elective requirements.

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