

COM 498 – Independent Study Syllabus

Description

Independent Study is a course designated for study and research in an area of Communication Arts or Mass Communication under departmental guidance and supervision. The length of time and amount of study will determine the amount of credit a student earns, which can be one (1) credit-hour, two (2) credit-hours, or three (3) credit-hours. This course may be repeated but not to exceed a maximum of three (3) credit-hours. Prerequisite: departmental approval required prior to registration.

Course and Senior Portfolio Requirements

Students majoring in Mass Communication or Communication Arts or minoring in the Department of Communications must earn a “C” or better to receive credit for this course (2017-2018 catalog and beyond). Majors are expected to save selected course assignments and include them in your Senior Online Portfolio (COM 420 Portfolio Prep).

Professional Values and Competencies

Though independent studies vary in activities, responsibilities, and scope, students should complete the independent study with most of the following competencies:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of *diversity* in domestic society in relation to communications;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and *impact of communications* in a global society;
3. Understand concepts and apply *theories* in the use and presentation of images and information;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of professional *ethical principles* and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
5. *Think* critically, creatively and independently;
6. Conduct research and *evaluate information* by methods appropriate to the communication professions in which they work;
7. *Write correctly* and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communication professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
8. Critically *evaluate their own work* and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
9. Apply *tools and technologies* appropriate for the communication professions in which they work.

Independent Study Guidelines

The point of an independent study is to allow you to propose a course of study (not just a project) in an area for which the Department of Communications does not currently offer courses. An academic supervisor will support you in your independent study. Proposals should be submitted to your academic supervisor by mid-term of the semester prior to the semester in which you plan to enroll in the independent study.

To propose a study abroad course, submit a memo to your academic supervisor that includes the following information:

1. The name of your course of study. The name should indicate a larger set of concerns, not just the project you want to do.
2. Two or three paragraphs that explain why this is a relevant study for Communications.

3. The specific materials (books, articles, interviews) you will use to learn about this topic in general or to prepare for one or more of the projects you will create.
4. A description of the project (research paper, case study, survey, etc.) for this study.
5. A syllabus, with dates, that indicates when you will complete all readings and the project. You cannot make all of your assignments due at the end of the term. Drafts of assignments must be due throughout the term.
6. Requested number of credit-hours (1, 2, or 3).

After your proposal has been reviewed by your academic supervisor, it will be submitted to the chair of the Department of Communications for review and approval. The chair will make a recommendation, and you will be informed of acceptance, rejection, or a request for revision no later than Study Day of the term in which your proposal is submitted.

During the term in which you are registered for the independent study, you are responsible for following your syllabus and for meeting with your academic supervisor regularly (at least once a month).

UNA Academic Honesty Statement

Students of the university academic community are expected to adhere to commonly accepted standards of academic honesty. Allegations of academic dishonesty can reflect poorly on the scholarly reputation of the University including students, faculty and graduates. Individuals who elect to commit acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or misrepresentation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

Incidents of possible student academic dishonesty will be addressed in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The instructor is responsible for investigating and documenting any incident of alleged academic dishonesty that occurs under the instructor's purview.
2. If the instructor finds the allegation of academic dishonesty to have merit, then the instructor, after a documented conference with the student, will develop a plan for disciplinary action. If the student agrees to this plan, then both instructor and student will sign the agreement. The faculty member will forward a copy of the signed agreement to the Office of Student Conduct for record-keeping purposes.
3. If the student disagrees with the instructor's proposed plan for disciplinary action and wishes to take further action, he/she is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the chair of the department where the course is housed to appeal the proposed disciplinary plan. The department chair shall mediate the matter and seek a satisfactory judgment acceptable to the faculty member based on meetings with all parties. If a resolution is reached, the disposition of the case will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct. If a resolution at the departmental level is not reached and the student wishes to take further action, he/she is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the dean of the college where the course is housed to appeal the proposed disciplinary plan. The college dean shall mediate the matter and seek a satisfactory judgment acceptable to the faculty member based on meetings with all parties. If a resolution is reached, the disposition of the case will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct. If a resolution at the college level is not reached and the student wishes to take further action, he/she is responsible for scheduling a meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (VPAA/P) to appeal the proposed disciplinary plan. The VPAA/P shall mediate the matter and seek a satisfactory judgment acceptable to the faculty member based on meetings with all parties. After reviewing all documentation, the VPAA/P may, at his/her discretion, choose either to affirm the proposed action, to refer the case to the Office of Student Conduct for further review,

or to dismiss the matter depending on the merits of the case. The final disposition of the case will be disseminated to appropriate parties, including the Office of Student Conduct.

4. If a student is allowed academic progression but demonstrates a repeated pattern of academic dishonesty, the VPAA/P may, after consultation with the Office of Student Conduct, assign additional penalties to the student, including removal from the University.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ADA Statement

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to an average person in the population. It is the responsibility of the student to contact Disability Support Services to initiate the process to develop an accommodation plan. This accommodation plan will not be applied retroactively. Appropriate, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow each student to meet course requirements, but no fundamental or substantial alteration of academic standards will be made. Students needing assistance should contact Disability Support Services at 256-765-4214.

Title IX Policy

The University of North Alabama has an expectation of mutual respect. Students, staff administrators and faculty are entitled to a working environment and educational environment free of discriminatory harassment. This includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic and intimate partner violence, stalking, gender-based discrimination, discrimination against pregnant and parenting students, and gender-based bullying and hazing.

Faculty and staff are required by federal law to report any observation of harassment (including online harassment) as well as any notice given by students or colleagues of any of the behaviors noted above. Retaliation against any person who reports discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. UNA's policies and regulations covering discrimination and harassment may be accessed at <https://www.una.edu/titleix/>. If you have experienced or observed discrimination or harassment, confidential reporting resources can be found on the website or you may make a formal complaint by contacting the Title IX Coordinator at 256-765-4223.

Copyright Statement

Copyright 2019 UNA Department of Communications as to this syllabus and all instructional material; materials may not be reproduced without the UNA Department of Communications's written consent. Students are prohibited from selling notes to (or being paid for taking notes by) any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the UNA Department of Communications. Students are also prohibited from taking photos, recording, or live streaming lectures, or sharing online course content without written consent from the UNA Department of Communications.