

**Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts - Independent Study I  
SYLLABUS**

<b>Course Number:</b>	802
<b>Course Name:</b>	Independent Study I
<b>Dates:</b>	September 21 -December 12, 2020 Fall Break: October 26-November 1
<b>Format:</b>	Online & Teleconference
<b>Instructor:</b>	IDSVA Faculty
<b>Chair of IS:</b>	Dr. Heather Dunn
<b>Credits:</b>	4 Credits

**Course Description:**

Independent Study I begins with discussions held during the summer Residency. Possible independent study topics are explored within the context of seminar readings and in light of the guest lectures, museum visits, and residency seminars. Students discuss their independent study topics first with their academic advisors, and from those discussions they formulate a topic, thesis and preliminary bibliography for proposal (due on June 30, 2020).

Proposals are finalized in consultation with the Independent Study Director, who is assigned prior to September 21 by the director of the school. The student and Independent Study Director work together toward the production of a twenty to twenty-five-page paper intended to hone the student’s critical thinking and writing skills, while broadening the student’s engagement with ideas and artworks. Note: The Independent Study proposal submitted at the outset is meant to help *guide* the process, not to be set in stone.

**Learning Objectives:**

The IDSVA Independent Study program is designed to help the student develop particular scholarly interests and to integrate those interests within the IDSVA curriculum. It is also meant to *encourage* exploration and extended research toward a dissertation topic, keeping in mind that eliminating unsuitable topics can be just as beneficial as identifying suitable ones. Thus, the Independent Study provides the occasion to cultivate advanced critical methods and scholarly writing skills, which will be indispensable later on when embarking on the more ambitious project of the dissertation itself.

**Course Requirements:**

Independent Study I involves substantial research that results in a 20 to 25-page paper on a topic

of the student's choice. This paper will be turned into a 20-minute written and spoken presentation (conference-style) after the end of the semester, in preparation for the winter residency, where it will be presented to your peers and faculty in residence. Your written presentation should not exceed 9 pages, double spaced.

While many students have excellent library access at their home institutions, we ask that you also use the IDSVA library resources for some portion of your research. Doing so familiarizes you with those resources prior to working on your dissertation, when you will have a great need for the specialized materials and wisdom the IDSVA library can provide.

Papers should include a minimum of eight bibliographic entries, approximately half drawn from current or past seminar readings and the remainder from new research. Independent Study Directors should use their discretion regarding the appropriate quantity of additional reading. If questions arise, the student and/or the IS Director should contact the Chair of Independent Studies for guidance.

The IDSVA Writing Guide must be used, especially at the early stages when drafting the outline and working on the thesis statement, to ensure that a proper argument-driven paper is developed throughout the process. Please make sure you use the latest version (revised September 2019), as it contains some useful tips on how to turn your paper into a 20-minute long presentation (see Appendix).

The MLA manual of style must be used. Students should buy the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, through which they can gain access to the online version as well. A succinct version of the MLA style is available online at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

(Unfortunately at the time of writing MLA does not offer institutional access to its handbook).

Papers must be written in Times New Roman or serif font, point 12, double-spaced, leaving a 1” margin on top and bottom, and 1” on right and left sides. *No other fonts or formats will be accepted*. Make sure all your documents (including drafts) are editable: files should have a word .doc or .docx extension – no .pdf will be accepted.

Note: in this course, please send your drafts directly to your IS director – no use of Canvas is necessary until the final paper is ready to be submitted (you will still need to send the final paper to your IS director). With your final paper, you will also submit a separate **abstract** with **keywords** (see Canvas/Assignments). This abstract will be posted in the IDSVA IS Database, accessible to all students at IDSVA (Canvas homepage), creating a valuable resource for students.

All students must submit one paper each year for conference presentation or scholarly publication, and should provide information about that submission to the Independent Study Director, as well as to the Chair of Independent Studies. While other long papers may be submitted for publication or conference presentation (for instance, the “quasi-IS”), the Independent Study is an obvious candidate for this, and attempts should be made toward publication. Please consult the **IDSVA Guide to Academic Publishing** for information on

professional journals and conferences (available in Canvas).

### **Assessment:**

Students receive a grade on the Independent Study paper directly from their IS directors, together with an assessment Rubric. They also receive a final grade (not necessarily identical to the paper grade), which will be recorded in their transcripts. Final grades are calculated on the basis of final paper (85%) and process (15%). Process includes quality of student communications, scholarly independence, and his/her ability to respond to suggestions and criticism. Please refer to the Student Handbook (available on the IDSVA website, <http://www.idsva.edu/policies-procedures>) for grading policies.

**Note on Incompletes:** for Independent Study I, the faculty who directs the Independent Study is not bound to guide the process after a student receives the grade of “Incomplete”. The teaching responsibility of the faculty is limited to the effective duration of the course. In case you need to ask for an Incomplete at the end of the course, you will be held responsible for completing the Independent Study on your own within the allocated time. You will then submit the completed paper to the director of the program. The director of the program may share the paper with the original IS director for feedback, or assign the final grade when that option is not available. Please check the Student Handbook for more information about “Incomplete” policies and due dates. “Incompletes” should be asked for and granted only in exceptional circumstances.

### **Course Schedule:**

*This schedule is provided as a guideline for students and Independent Study Directors. This schedule may be modified on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Independent Study Director and in consultation with the Chair of Independent Studies.*

1. **Preliminary proposal** to be submitted to Simonetta Moro by **June 30, 2020**. One page, clearly indicating: a) topic, b) question, c) possible argument, d) evidence (key thinkers, concepts, key terms, etc.). Provide at least 6 titles for your preliminary bibliography.
2. Thesis statement and working bibliography should be submitted to the Independent Study Director by the start of **week two (9/28/20)**.
3. Working outline and bibliography should be submitted to the Independent Study Director *and* to IDSVA librarian Laura Graveline by the start of **week three (10/5/20)**.
4. Rough draft of the first half should be submitted to the Independent Study Director by the beginning of **week five (10/19/20)**.

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5. Rough draft of the entire paper should be submitted to the Independent Study Director by the beginning of **week ten (11/23/20)**.

6. **Final paper and Abstract** (including **5 keywords**) should be submitted to the Independent Study Director by the end of **week twelve (12/12/20)**, and also uploaded to 802 Assignments in Canvas. Submitted documents must be titled according to the following format:

familyname, givenname\_802\_assignmentname\_ymmdd  
(e.g., “Jones, Sally\_802\_final paper\_151122”)

7. The Independent Study Director will submit to the student the final paper with Director’s written comments on the process and the paper by **12/20/20**. The IS director and the student should have a conclusive phone call to discuss the final outcome of the paper and possible further developments. The IS director may also give the student suggestions on how to revise and edit the paper to fit a 20-minute presentation to be given at the New York residency in January.
8. The Independent Study Director will submit both paper *and* final grades, and the compiled rubric for long papers with a brief written evaluation directly to the Chair of Independent Studies no later than **12/21/20**.

### **Communication:**

Please refer to the **Protocols for IS Communications** distributed at the start of the semester for detailed contact policies between student and IS director, and printed at the bottom of this Syllabus.

To summarize, faculty and student should communicate by phone *at least every other week*. Some email communication is expected along the way, even if this is simply a check-in to ensure work is progressing. Phone (or videoconference) communications are a formal component of the course, and should be scheduled as a courtesy to both parties.

While student/faculty telephone conferences and emails are confidential, for academic credit purposes Directors should keep logs of the durations of weekly phone discussions and keep email records.

The Chair of Independent Studies will be checking in with each Director and student on a scheduled basis (see aforementioned Protocols). When questions or difficulties arise, the Independent Study Director and/or student should contact the Chair immediately. This is especially the case if a student shows signs of falling behind schedule or losing focus. Three-way conference calls between IS Director, Chair, and Student are available on an as-needed basis.

## **IDSVA Independent Study Meeting Protocols**

Because much of the work done at IDSVA happens between the residency periods, students, mentors, and other members of the learning community need to be in regular and effective contact with one another to make sure that students succeed. To that end, we have established the following guidelines for maintaining long-distance contact.

### **Student Meetings with Independent Study Director**

Independent Studies are a single semester long. Students are assigned an Independent Study Director at the beginning of the semester. To ensure that communication is open and effective, the student and his or her Director should meet via telephone or videoconference **every other week**, with contact by e-mail in between as needed. Typically, such meetings last approximately thirty minutes. Students and Directors establish a meeting schedule at the beginning of each semester coordinated with the deadlines for drafts outlined in the Independent Study syllabus.

### **Student Meetings with Chair of Independent Studies**

The Chair of Independent Studies will periodically check on students' progress, to make sure that the research project is proceeding apace and that the student and mentor are working together effectively. During these meetings students may bring up problems or concerns that require her attention. These meetings are two-fold in nature: the student confirming adequate progress (or alerting the Chair to problems), and the Chair confirming that the student feels appropriately engaged and challenged. Typically, these meetings last approximately ten to fifteen minutes, and occur **three times** a semester (equally distributed at the start, middle, and end). Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

***Important Note:** The Chair of Independent Studies does not serve as an additional faculty advisor for Independent Studies. Responsibility for supervision of the research and writing of the Independent Study lies solely with the Independent Study Director. It is therefore inappropriate for students and the Chair to discuss the content of the research project.*

### **Independent Study Director Meetings with Chair of Independent Studies**

Similarly, to review the progress of IS students the Chair of Independent Studies and the Independent Study Director will meet via telephone or video conference **twice** during the semester, with additional telephone meetings scheduled as needed, on a case-by-case basis (it is advisable that the first meeting occurs towards the start of the semester).

In the event that a problem does arise between a student and that student's Director, it is the responsibility of the Chair of Independent Studies to intervene as an ombudsperson, and to help the pair address and overcome those difficulties. As needed, the Chair may engage the Director of the School to help moderate disagreements.