

Policy and Guidelines for Independent Study

Email: kowert@fiu.edu Dr. Paul A. Kowert Office: DM 436A Phone: 305-348-2938

Eligibility

You are eligible to register for an independent study with me only under the following conditions:

- You are an undergraduate student who has previously received a grade of at least B in a course I taught, **or**
- You are a graduate student who has previously received a grade of at least B+ in a course I taught, **or**
- You are a Ph.D. student in the Department of International Relations, **or**
- You receive special permission as a result of extenuating circumstances.

In any case, and regardless of the circumstances, you must receive permission from me in advance to register for an independent study. Ordinarily, permission will be granted only after you submit to me a *Proposal* (see below). Permission is *not* automatic; it depends not only on the above criteria, but also on the match between your interests and my expertise and on the pedagogical usefulness of the independent study you propose.

Proposal

To propose an independent study, you must prepare a one-page (typed, double-spaced) statement identifying the topic you wish to study, the specific research question you hope to answer, and any texts you would particularly like to read.

Requirements

An independent study is not a classroom course. **You are responsible for what you learn from the independent study.** We will jointly put together a reading list, and we will meet on an occasional basis to discuss the readings and/or your progress toward completing a required project. But it is ultimately your responsibility to be sure you accomplish the goal(s) of the independent study.

The requirements of the independent study generally take one of three forms:

1. Research Paper: an article-length (approximately 20-30 pages) paper that (1) asks a specific **research question**, (2) briefly **reviews** how other scholars have tried to answer that question, (3) states your **answer** to the question, and (4) offers **evidence** to support your answer. The paper must be typed and double-spaced in a legible font with one-inch margins, and should not be placed in a folder or binder.
2. Applied Project: in some circumstances, a more "applied" research project may substitute for a research paper as the final assignment. Such a project might, for example, involve **gathering, tabulating, and analyzing empirical or observational data, conducting interviews, or another form of fieldwork**. The grade will be based on satisfactory completion of the research project and will usually require preparation of a brief annotated bibliography listing and summarizing readings relevant to the project and method.

3. **Bibliographic Research:** finally, and particularly for graduate students contemplating a larger research project, completion of a detailed **annotated bibliography** summarizing important research in a specific domain may substitute for a research paper as the final assignment. The bibliography should include important works published either as journal articles or as books (ordinarily, more of the former than the latter). The bibliography should include a complete citation of each work and a summary of its main argument in approximately 4-5 sentences.

Unless some other arrangement is made, **all written and other requirements for the independent study must be completed by the last day of regular classes in the semester of the independent study. Failure to submit the required work on time will result in severe penalties.** All work must be submitted in typed form, and must conform stylistically to accepted scholarly standards. No work may be submitted by email. Above all, remember that while I will offer advice and guidance on your research, the independent study is ultimately **your** responsibility.

Research, Writing, and Academic Integrity

Be certain that you are familiar with the University's rules concerning academic misconduct as described in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism undermines the spirit of responsible inquiry on which the University relies and will therefore result in severe penalties (which, according to University policy, may include a failing grade and/or expulsion from the University itself). It is **your** responsibility to be certain that you understand and can avoid plagiarism. In general, keep in mind that *all* references to someone else's ideas — whether a direct quotation or simply an indirect summary — must be properly cited. A "proper citation" should, at the very least, identify the author, the work, the publisher, the place and date of publication, and the page number. Direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks. For more information, see my web pages on writing (<http://www.fiu.edu/~kowitz/writing.html>) and on plagiarism (<http://www.fiu.edu/~kowitz/plagiarism.html>).

I recommend that you buy William Strunk and E. B. White's The Elements of Style (New York: MacMillan) if you do not already own a copy. It is an excellent and inexpensive guide to good writing. The answers to many stylistic questions can also be found in Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). FIU's English Department maintains a list of several online resources that are useful for writers (see <http://www.fiu.edu/~english/writingres.html>). Finally, you may wish to consult the "student resources" page on my own website (<http://www.fiu.edu/~kowitz/resources.html>).

Questions? Problems?

You are always welcome to discuss this course or other academic issues with me during my office hours. To make an appointment, please call the International Relations Department at 305-348-2555. Please contact me directly if you cannot see me during office hours and would like to make an appointment for another time. The best way to do so is by sending me an email (kowitz@fiu.edu). Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or problems.