



What is the purpose of an Independent Study?

An Independent Study gives the serious, self-motivated student the chance to take on intensive research on a topic you are deeply interested in. Registering for WMNST 496 requires that you find a WGSS faculty advisor to direct your research, and to evaluate your work. Independent Study should *not* be used as a substitute for regularly offered courses.

For an independent study to be approved, you and your faculty advisor must submit this application form detailing the project you will be undertaking, listing your objectives for the semester's work, and explaining how the work contributes to your coursework and/or interests. Your faculty director will help you develop assignments and a work schedule, as well as criteria for evaluation. Your workload must be commensurate with that of other 400-level Women's Studies courses, and you should expect the course to be at least as demanding. Be prepared to devote the necessary time and energy to it.

Note: WMNST 496H is the designated course number for Paterno Fellows and/or Schreyer College Honors students earning independent study credit for work on an Honor's thesis in Women's Studies.

Formal approval is required *prior* to registering for WMNST 496; that is, only after the application form is filled out and signed off on by both you and your faculty advisor for the project, are you able to be registered. The WGSS office handles registration.

What to think about before applying for Independent Study:

- Assuming you have a topic in mind, what will your major research questions be? Is the topic narrow enough?
- Are you able your project to articulate your project to a potential faculty advisor?
- Do you know a faculty member with expertise in that area? (Most faculty like to have a track record with you.)
- Begin asking potential faculty advisors *early* -- not the first week of a semester, but during the *previous* semester.
- If a professor agrees to supervise an independent study project with you, you need to, then they and the student will negotiate a specific plan of readings, papers, meetings for discussions, and/or other coursework, as well as a standard for evaluating your work.
- Professors are not *required* to take on independent study projects. Usually a faculty member will prefer (sometimes require) that a student has taken a course with them in previous semesters. Students should meet with the Undergraduate Director in order to get assistance identifying an appropriate faculty mentor, to discuss independent study responsibilities and requirements, and to be registered for independent study credit.



Terms of the Independent Study WMNST 496

The following information must be provided (either on this form or on a separate sheet of paper) and submitted with the attached Signature Form before a student can be registered for WMNST 496.

Number of credits _____

To be completed (semester/year) _____

■ Learning Objectives

Describe the student's reasons for pursuing an independent study, as well as the research topic and focus to be explored.

■ Plan of study

Describe in as much detail as possible the student's workload (meetings with faculty mentor, research, reading, writing, and other assignments), including the form that the final project will take (ex: 30-page research paper, documentary, etc.)

■ Method of evaluation

On what criteria will the student's final grade be based?



Signature Form for Student *and* Faculty Advisor

WMNST 496

I have read and understand the Rules and Procedures for Women’s Studies Independent Studies, and I agree to the terms established for this project. (Independent Study registration will not be permitted without the signatures below.)

Student

Student’s name (please print)

PSU ID#

Phone number(s)

E-mail

Student’s signature

Date

Faculty

Faculty supervisor (please print)

PSU ID#

Phone number(s)

E-mail

Faculty supervisor’s signature

Date

Undergraduate Director

I approve this student’s registration for _____ WMNST 496 credits in _____.
semester/year

Undergraduate director’s signature

Date