



# MALS Independent Study

## Proposal Guidelines

Your Independent Study (IS) is one of your nine regular courses (not including your thesis defense). It is integral to your MALS degree. You must complete at least one IS in your chosen concentration (*you may elect to undertake a second IS in lieu of the elective requirement*) You may propose your IS only after having completed four (4) courses, one of which should be the Research Methods module in your chosen concentration (*General Liberal Studies students should choose a module that corresponds to the concentration of their intended IS & thesis – please seek advice from the research methods modules instructors*).

The IS course is a high-quality, graduate-level experience. It may be:

- An independently designed research course.
- A subject studied independently.
- A continuation of a course already taken, with new and original work.
- Independent study or research that is considered preliminary to the thesis.

Independent studies are supervised by Dartmouth faculty and are conducted during a regular ten-week term (*If you are unable to complete your IS in ten weeks, you and your advisor may apply for an incomplete – or extension, **at least one week before** the end of the term*).

As you think more deeply about your project, you should reach out to one, or more, of the following individuals:

- Your course instructor.
- One of the research methods modules instructors.
- Your concentration chair.
- The program director.

Your independent study must be proposed the term before you take the course (*see proposal submission deadlines below*). During the course of the term, you will meet weekly with your IS advisor (*this schedule is built into your detailed syllabus*). Your writing output for the term is expected to be between 25 and 35 pages, based on your *means of evaluation*, in consultation with your IS advisor.

### Independent Studies Proposal Submission Deadlines:

| Term starting IS | Secure Advisor commitment and begin designing IS | Advisor Proposal review | Deadline to submit proposal, with Advisor signature, to MALS Office |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summer           | 2/14                                             | 4/1                     | 4/15                                                                |
| Fall             | 6/2                                              | 7/18                    | 8/1                                                                 |
| Winter           | 8/16                                             | 10/1                    | 10/15                                                               |
| Spring           | 12/3                                             | 1/18                    | 2/1                                                                 |

## **CONCENTRATION-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

### **CREATIVE WRITING:**

Before you embark on a Creative Writing thesis, you are expected to have completed an independent study (IS) that will specifically prepare you for your thesis. Your IS should follow at least one course in the corresponding genre, except when a student makes an acceptable case for doing otherwise. Likewise, your thesis should also be in the genre of the IS you have completed. Exceptions may be made if a student has done outstanding work in more than one genre, or in the General Liberal Studies concentration. In general, the student should not expect approval to write a thesis in a genre in which they have not had a course as well as an IS.

For a Creative Writing IS, you will also address the following items:

1. Course. Goals and Objectives, 1-2 pages (This is a narrative description of your project, with clearly stated goals and objectives that can be understood by a non-specialist):
  - a. How does this project fit with your overall plan-of-study in creative writing? Explain how this independent study will relate to your thesis, and/or how they are different.
  - b. What is the genre of this independent study and how does it fulfill that genre's conventions? If this independent study involves background or other research related to your thesis, indicate this and explain the link to your thesis.
2. Means of Evaluation, including written or other requirements, with due dates, to be embedded in your syllabus:
  - a. You will write a minimum of 25-35 pages. This will be agreed upon with your advisor and will vary to be consistent with the requirements and practices of the genre.
3. Syllabus. Your syllabus will include:
  - a. Methods,
  - b. Materials,
  - c. Readings,
  - d. Calendar of meeting schedule with IS advisor.

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### **CULTURAL STUDIES or GLOBALIZATION STUDIES:**

For an Independent Study in Cultural or Globalization Studies, please be sure to address the following items:

1. Describe your Independent Study in 1-2 pages (This is a narrative description of your project, with clearly stated goals and objectives that can be understood by a non-specialist):
  - a. Outline the objective(s), subject and scope of the Independent Study.
  - b. What are the key variables to be investigated?
  - c. What central questions are to be addressed?
  - d. Discuss the relevance of the topic to the academic discipline(s) on which it is based and, as appropriate, as it relates to current events.
  - e. Explain how the IS may/will be relevant to your planned MALS Thesis.
  - f. Discuss how this independent study is related to a course(s) you have taken in MALS or to other academic or professional experiences you may have had, and how/why you are qualified to accomplish the objectives of the IS.
  - g. Discuss any special funding issues (travel, research costs, etc.) that may be associated with the IS.
- Outline the Syllabus for your IS, including:
  - Schedule of meeting times with the supervising advisor (meetings should be scheduled weekly).
  - Topics to be covered each week,

- Specific reading/writing assignments,
- The timing and nature of all deliverables.

### ***Submitting Your Proposal***

*You MUST upload your proposal for review by the Curriculum Committee the term before your research is to begin. The student, not the faculty advisor, is responsible for ensuring a complete proposal is submitted by the deadlines below. Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. Please plan ahead. When submitting an Independent Study Proposal, you must include the following components on time, to be considered complete:*

***Your proposal form must be signed by you, your IS advisor, and Concentration Chair.***

- A completed MALS Independent Study Proposal form. You may download the form from the MALS web site or use the QR code at the top of the page.
- Your proposal – see the general, and concentration-specific guidelines.

*The link to upload your proposal will be sent out via email from the MALS Office each term.*

### **Proposal Decisions:**

Once the review of your proposal has been completed, you can expect to receive a decision letter from the MALS Curriculum Committee. If you request MALS 127: Independent Study during pre-enrollment for the term you are planning to complete your IS project, the MALS Registrar will enroll you when Course Registration opens.