

Guidelines for Completing an Independent Study: Field Work Paper

Project Proposal: An independent study that will result in a field work paper is designed to give students an opportunity to do an independent scholarly study of their own design, to build upon field work, whether that field work was paid or unpaid. Accordingly, you should have an interest that is reasonably well-defined before requesting faculty supervision. You should begin by preparing a proposal for a field work paper to submit to a potential faculty supervisor. The proposal should set forth a potential topic and note the background research you have conducted. If you seek to continue or expand on work that you initiated previously (whether for a course, clinic, externship, practicum, or paid work) you must share the initial work with the professor supervising the project, to the extent that work is non-privileged, when presenting the proposal.

Topic Development: An initial meeting with your faculty supervisor will help to identify an interesting and focused problem that builds upon prior field work. The continued work must represent a meaningful and substantial contribution to the already existing project, significantly beyond mere editing or polishing. To the extent the project expands on work initially assigned in, or conceived during, a course, clinic, externship, practicum, or paid work experience, the project must represent a meaningful and substantial contribution to the already existing project. Within two weeks of your first meeting, you should submit a brief (one-paragraph to one-page) précis to your faculty supervisor for approval and comment. The précis should state the specific question you will explore and articulate a preliminary thesis. You should expect your faculty supervisor to provide comments within one week.

Grading: At your initial meeting, you should ensure you understand the faculty advisor's expectations for awarding a passing grade.

Reading List: In the first month of your research you should consult with a Research Librarian and thereafter send your faculty advisor a bibliography that lists the primary and secondary sources you plan to review. You should expect your faculty supervisor to provide comments within one week.

Detailed Outline: At least two months before your paper is due, you should submit an outline to your faculty supervisor and schedule a second meeting. Your three to five page outline will be a roadmap of the arguments you plan to make, the cases and commentary to which you are reacting, and the remaining questions you need to answer. You should expect your faculty supervisor to provide comments within one week.

Rough Draft: At least one month before your paper is due, you should submit a draft to your faculty supervisor for review and discussion. The draft should be largely complete and should set forth and support your thesis. You should expect your faculty supervisor to provide comments within one week.

Final Paper: The final paper that you submit for should be fully cited and carefully proofed.