

**UMass Amherst
Department of Communication**

Application for Independent Study (COMM 396)

Submit the form on the next page and your proposal as a PDF, signed by your faculty sponsor, to the Director of Undergraduate Advising Marianne Neal-Joyce at majoyce@umass.edu as far in advance as possible, at least three working days before the end of the registration period. If your proposal is accepted, then the DUA will register you for COMM 396. The DUA will reject your proposal or ask you to revise it if it fails to follow the guidelines on this page, or if it fails to define a clear, well-thought-out program of inquiry.

Independent Study consists of an academic project of a scholarly nature that involves guided reading and research. Independent Study cannot be used for field experiences, such as an internship or a co-op. **Only three credits** of "COMM 396: Independent Study" can be counted toward Communication major requirements.

Independent Studies require a formal proposal that must be approved by your faculty sponsor and the Director of Undergraduate Advising. The maximum number of credits for a semester-long Independent Study is three, which involves approximately 90 hours (**comparable to any 300-level course**) of documented reading, writing, and research. One and two credit Independent Studies are also possible, with proportionally less work. In all cases, the Independent Study will result in a formal written component that could conceivably be evaluated by someone other than the faculty sponsor. Other materials, such as video or audiotapes, films, portfolios, etc., may be submitted as parts of the Independent Study. You and your sponsor will determine the specific items that you will hand in for evaluation, and these items must be specified in your proposal.

The concept for the Independent Study originates with you and should develop out of the concepts, theories, or practices you have encountered in Communication courses. The proposal itself should be developed in consultation with your faculty sponsor, who should give you formal feedback on the initial draft of your proposal so that you can improve it before you submit it to the department.

The Proposal

Samples of successful proposals are on the Department website at <https://www.umass.edu/communication/undergrad/major/independent-studies>

The proposal must include a title, and separate, numbered sections that provide:

- (1) a statement of the purpose/goals of the project
- (2) a description of the subject matter
- (3) an explanation of its relevance to your interests and/or major area of study
- (4) a description of your proposed research methodology
- (5) a preliminary working bibliography and
- (6) information on the form and length of the final report

Communication Independent Study Form

Proposals must be submitted as a PDF to majoyce@umass.edu at least 3 days prior to the end of the Registration period. Students are encouraged to submit proposals as early as possible before the semester in which they wish to do an independent study.

Student Name:	Local Address:
SPIRE ID#:	
Class Year:	
Major:	Phone:
Overall Credits Completed:	E-mail:

In addition to the information on this page, you must also include a proposal which contains a title and each of the following six sections: 1. statement of the purpose/goals of the project, 2. description of the subject matter, 3. explanation of its relevance to your interests and area of study, 4. description of your proposed research methodology, 5. a preliminary bibliography, and 6. information on the form and length of the final report.

Title of Proposal:

Semester:	# of Credits (1-3 credits only):
COMM # (e.g., COMM 396/Lec 1, COMM 396/Lec 20):	Class Number (Schedule #):

APPROVED BY:

Student's Signature:	Date:
Faculty Sponsor's Signature:	
Director of Undergraduate Advising's signature:	
Chair's signature:	

For Office Use Only:	Course Added to Student's Schedule:
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