

Independent Study

What is independent study?

Independent study is an opportunity to work with a School of Information Systems & Management (SISM) professor or Ph.D. student on a research project. It may help you learn something new that we don't get to cover in class, and it also helps in rounding off your total credit hours (after 1-credit internships and such) to 33 credit hours that is needed for the BAIS degree. This option may be particularly helpful if you are considering doing a Ph.D. in BAIS and you want to get a flavor of what research is like. In addition, many tech employers like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and Facebook are increasingly preferring job candidates with conference or journal publications, and an independent study is a great opportunity to do something new and different and publishing it in academic journals or conferences. One or more publications make your resume stand out in a sea of applications that don't have any such publications, and greatly enhances your credibility among tech practitioners.

The department is starting a new series "USF ISDS Research Reports." The papers written by students during their independent study will go through a rigorous review process by the ISDS department faculty. If the review committee is satisfied, the paper will be accepted as a USF ISDS Research Report and will be posted on the web site. The format of the Research Report will be available soon.

How does independent study work?

At the start of every semester, SISM professors who want to recruit independent study students send a brief description of their projects to Anna, along with the skill sets that they are seeking. Anna e-mails these projects to all students. If you have an interest in any of these projects and the skill sets that the professor wants, contact the professor via e-mail, and if the professor likes your skill sets, he/she may invite you to work with him/her.

Alternatively, if you are interested in working with a specific professor, you can approach him/her and discuss the possibility of an independent study projects and can come to a mutual understanding of the project in which you will work and your specific role and responsibility in that project.

If you are participating in an independent study, you will have to register in the ISM 6905 (Independent Study) course for 1 or 2 credits (as needed to round off your total credit hours to 33) and pay tuition for that course. If you are very valuable, the professor may even allow you to work with him/her without registering in a formal independent study project, by mutual consent.

Note that you don't have to do independent study at all. You can take 33 credit hours in courses plus 1 or 2 credits in internships, for a total of 34-35 credits and still get the BAIS degree.

You are not eligible to do an independent study if you are on academic probation. Independent study courses are graded on an S/U basis and will therefore not help you improve your GPA, which you will need to do to get off academic probation.

What are the requirements for an independent study?

1. After your independent study request is accepted by a professor, complete and submit the ISM 6905 (Independent Study) form to Dr. Anol Bhattacharjee (form available on the Modules page of this course). Dr. B will have to approve this request and Dr. Han Reichgelt will have to give you a permit to register for this class.
2. Meet with your professor weekly or as agreed and complete the deliverables of the project.
3. Write a brief report (1-2 pages, single spaced) on what you did in the project. Alternatively, if you wrote a paper as part of that project, you can submit a copy of that paper.
4. At the end of the semester, you will be assigned a S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) grade for the course. You need a S grade for the course to count toward your 33 credit degree requirement.