Independent Studies: A Crash Course

Turn your interest into a class!

By: Sabrina Bajwa & Eleni Gkini
Agenda

I. Independent Studies @ Brown: Exploring your options
II. What is a (G)ISP/AI/DISP?
III. How do you create a (G)ISP/AI/DISP?
IV. Where can you get help on creating your (G)ISP/AI/DISP?
V. Important dates
What are all of your options?
Independent Study Options

- **Independent Study Project (ISP):** A single individual taking a self-created course. Approved by CRC.
- **Group Independent Study Project (GISP):** A group of students taking a self-created course. Approved by CRC.
- **Academic Internship (AI):** A student combines an unpaid work experience with an independent study for course credit. Approved by CRC.
- **Global Independent Study Project (GLISP):** Study your course for credit while abroad *coordinated by the Office of International Programs*
- **Departamental Independent Study Projects (DISP):** Independent study courses (group or individual) which run through the department they are based in (faculty advisor). No approval from CRC needed.
Why do Independent Studies?
Opportunities for Learning & Growth

- Explore areas of interests not addressed by available courses
- Learn how to work with others
- Take ownership of your own education!
- Gain insight into the behind the scenes of your education—learn how your professors write and develop syllabi
- Become a better active reader and writer!
- Get the opportunity to delve into a specific topic in great depth
- Turn a meaningful work experience towards a cause you care about into a credit-bearing course
What's a DISP?
DISP 101

- **A DISP** is an independent study course facilitated **directly** through an academic department
- **General guidelines:**
  - A DISP is specific to each department
  - *Not* coordinated through the CRC directly BUT we can still help with ideas & syllabus development
  - It’s important to find a faculty sponsor first. Be respectful to their time, too.
  - Can be used for internships if you missed the AI deadline
How to enroll in a DISP

- **How to enroll:**
  1. Go to Courses @ Brown
  2. Select “Include Independent Study Courses”
  3. Search the department you’re interested in
  4. The course is usually titled “Independent Research” (or something similar)
  5. Request an override
  6. Register as you would in any other course

- **Deadline:** Last day of shopping period (without a fee)
  - 4th week of classes (with a fee)
Course Search

neur

Fall 2019

Undergraduate and Graduate

Courses I Can Take

Don't Allow Overlap With Courses In Cart

Include Independent Study Courses

FIND COURSES

Found 21 courses

Depth Analysis of One Brain Area

NEUR 1970 Independent Study

NEUR 2010 Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience

NEUR 2030 Advanced Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology I

NEUR 2050 Advanced Systems Neuroscience

NEUR 2970 Preliminary Examination Preparation

NEUR 2980 Graduate Independent Study

https://cab.brown.edu/
What’s an AI?
AI 101

- **An AI** is a combination of an unpaid work experience with independent study or research during the fall or spring semester.

- **General Guidelines:**
  - The student is responsible for coordinating and carrying out the AI
  - The student works with both:
    - A sponsor agency/organization
    - A Brown faculty sponsor
  - The internship and academic portion have to happen co-currently
How to Plan an AI

- Consult the AI planning sheets that the CRC offers
- Find a faculty sponsor
  - Do this as early as possible!
- To find an organization:
  - Ask your faculty sponsor for ideas
  - Visit BrownEngage, the Swearer Center community engagement tool to find a community-based agency that aligns with your interests
    - Visit the Swearer Center to discuss your ideas
- Consult the CRC Database to look at past AIs & their syllabi
- Apply!
  - Fill out the Independent Studies Application
  - Faculty Sponsor Statement
  - Complete the AI Supplement
So, how does a (G)ISP work?
The absolute basics:

1. A Faculty Sponsor
2. A Group
3. An Idea!
SO YOU WANT TO MAKE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY?

HERE'S HOW:

1. THE SPARK
   - Coursework & Classes
   - Discuss with Friends
   - Outside Interests

2. FIND A TEAM*
   - Reach out to classmates
   - Correct with extra-curriculars
   - Advertise on morning mail

3. BRAINSTORM
   - Discuss with teammates
   - Outline your ideas
   - Explore existing courses

4. GET FEEDBACK
   - Come to the CRC for Help & Advice
   - Discuss with trusted faculty
   - Read the applications of past SP4

5. FIND AN SPONSOR
   - Explore department websites
   - Search who sponsors
   - Talk with professors you like

6. DRAFT A PROPOSAL
   - Find the app at brown.edu/soes
   - Check with SP sponsors for edits

7. APPLY
   - 1 deadline each semester
   - Sponsor must submit statement

DONE!

* Non-group SP's skip step 2

VISIT BROWN.EDU/SP4 FOR MORE INFORMATION

DESIGN BY ANNA STACY
Finding Faculty Sponsors

- Visit Researchers@Brown to find a professor whose research interests align with yours.
- Search the (G)ISP Database: Past Faculty Sponsors to find out which professors have sponsored (G)ISPs in the past.
  - Come by the CRC for old GISPs that are not in the database.
- Talk to professors from previous classes you’ve taken or who teach classes you are interested in.

CRC database!
Step 1: Go to Researchers @ Brown (vivo.brown.edu)

Step 2: Search for areas you’re interested in (e.g. genetics)

Step 3: Explore different professors with your interests and see what research they’ve done!
Getting a Group Together

- Find people with common interests!
- Invite others: word of mouth, Facebook
- Advertise on Today@Brown
- Email department listservs (or DUGs)
- Email professors in a related course to ask them to email their classes
- Let students shop your GISP during shopping period
  - GISP student coordinator needs to submit this petition during first week of semester

Note: Your GISP should include no more than 20 people (max. 20 can register for a GISP); you can add 5 people to a wait list.
Completing the Application: An overview

Find the Application Online & complete it!

● First, you must schedule a meeting with a coordinator

● Overview of the Application
  ○ Foundations: Course Title, Student Coordinator, Faculty Sponsor
  ○ What
  ○ Why
  ○ How: Evaluation, Meeting times, Syllabus
  ○ Faculty Sponsor Statement
Submission Deadlines:
Application deadline for Spring 2020 courses:
Application deadline for Fall 2020 courses:

Submission Instructions:
Before submitting an Independent Study Application, please read thoroughly the Frequently Asked Questions. We also recommend giving your intended faculty sponsor the Faculty Info Sheet for more information about being a (G)ISP/AI sponsor.

All GISPs, ISPs, and AIs need to submit the Independent Study Application and a Faculty Sponsor statement, along with any appropriate supplements in the list below. Submission instructions are within the documents.

- The completed Independent Study Application (Revised Fall 2017)
- The Faculty Sponsor Statement.
- If a co-sponsor is not a member of Brown faculty, they should complete the Instructor Sponsor Statement.
- If this is a language Independent Study, complete the Language IS Supplement.
- If this is an Academic Internship, complete the AI Supplement. AIs are during the academic year only.
- If students will be taking any field trips, each student must submit the Request for Release and Waiver.

Application must be submitted to Independent_Study@brown.edu by the deadline.
Completing the Application: What

- What are you studying?
  - What are your guiding questions?
  - What themes/topics will you be studying?
  - What is the “scholarly context” of this niche?
  - How does your proposal fit into this context?
- What are your learning goals?
  - Review Brown’s LLE goals on ASK for inspiration!
  - Why is this course suitable for your curricular goals?
- Basic structure of your course
  - Meeting hours & assignments
Completing the Application: Why

- Why is your (G)ISP important?
  - Why does it matter to the larger world?
  - Why is it important to you?

- Why is your course different from others offered?
  - Make your case! Frame it as your own
  - A good way to think about this is not only what your course can offer but also what other courses lack
Completing the Application: How

● Syllabus
  ○ Week-by-week reading lists with entry annotations (100-150 pages/week)
  ○ Guiding questions should be clearly stated for each week
    ■ *Helpful Tip: Can have a discussion leader each week to facilitate discussions
  ○ You can use a variety of material (books, articles, research papers, documentaries, etc.)

● Meeting Time & Place
  ○ Decide with the rest of the group and the faculty sponsor

● Evaluation
  ○ Describe assignments & how they align with your learning objectives
  ○ Explain the course requirements: include %s & due dates

● Bibliography
  ○ Can be subject to change :)
Submission Deadlines:
Application deadline for Spring 2017 courses: Friday, November 4, 2016 @ 5pm
Application deadline for Fall 2017 courses: Friday, April 7, 2017 @ 5pm

Submission Instructions:
Before submitting an Independent Study Application, please read thoroughly the Frequently Asked Questions. We also recommend giving your intended faculty sponsor the Faculty Info Sheet for more information about being a (G)ISP/Al sponsor.

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Where can I get (G)ISP/AI help?
Help with (G)ISPs/AIs Proposals

- Ask professors in departments you’re interested in for readings suggestions
- Look at the CRC database to see how previous (G)ISPs have structured their syllabi & assignments
- Attend our syllabus writing workshops
- Come to the Sheridan Center workshop
- You’re always welcome at the CRC!
SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION BY:
NOVEMBER 8, 2019

DON’T MISS THIS -- THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS
Questions?

How to contact us:

independent_study@brown.edu

Office Hours:

Eleni: Mondays and Fridays, 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Sabrina: Wednesdays 2 - 5pm, Fridays 9AM - 12:30PM

CRC is @ Faunce, 2nd Floor