

Criteria for Undergraduate Independent Study COM 495

UNLV Department of Communication Studies, revised January 4, 2022

COM 495-Independent Study: Supervised study and practical experience in subjects and projects to be determined in consultation with a Communication Studies faculty member. Students wishing to register for this course must consult with the faculty member prior to registration. May be repeated to a maximum of six credits.

Credits: 1-3

Repeatable: May be repeated to a maximum of six credits. Please verify that all credits will apply towards your degree.

Prerequisites: Minimum grade of C- in either COM 211 or COM 212 or [COM 101 and COM 102 and COM 216].

COM 495-Independent Study is an option for students who wish to conduct a specific research project that falls outside the scope of existing course offerings. Independent studies are overseen and directed by a Communication Studies faculty member and completed fully in one semester, or over the course of a full summer. The following criteria should guide the independent study:

- Students must identify a member of the Communication Studies faculty who is willing and able to direct their independent study. Students must contact that faculty member and obtain their consent to direct and supervise the independent study.
- Students typically propose their own original research projects, but in some circumstances, students may work collaboratively with a faculty member on a research project originally conceived by the faculty member. Regardless of the nature of the project, it should begin with a written proposal that must be approved by both the directing faculty member and the Undergraduate Curriculum Coordinator for the Department of Communication Studies.
- Proposals to engage in Independent Study for credit are due by Monday of the final week of the semester, prior to the term in which the student proposes to complete the project.
- Independent Study projects in the summer will receive credit only in the final three-week session, but the work is expected to be completed over the course of the entire summer. Thus, proposals for summer Independent Studies must be completed and approved in the last week of the spring semester.
- Students may earn from one to three credits for an Independent Study project. A three credit Independent Study is the norm.
- Proposals must be submitted first to the faculty member directing the independent study and then to the undergraduate curriculum coordinator. Submission to the undergraduate curriculum coordinator must occur using the Department's online petition form. To access that form, please see the [Department's undergraduate program webpage](#) and click the "appeal/petition" dropdown button. The [petition form itself is located here](#) online.

- Petitions must include the following information:
 - The instructor with whom the student intends to work,
 - The number of credit hours (1-to-3) the student seeks to complete,
 - A bibliography of key sources the student intends to draw from in their research project,
 - A 2-4-page narrative that addresses such matters as:
 - The research question that the study seeks to answer,
 - The communication phenomenon or object that the study will investigate,
 - A description or review of the communication theory, methodology, or relevant literature the study plans to engage,
 - A hypothesis about what the study expects to find.
- The student and faculty member who is supervising the study should jointly determine a schedule of key dates to facilitate the timely completion of the project. The final due date will be determined by the faculty member supervising the study. It should be no later than the final week of the semester (prior to finals week).
- COM 495-Independent study is repeatable up to a maximum of six credits. Permission to participate in more than one Independent Study course will be rare and requires serious extenuating circumstances. Projects for each separate Independent Study course must be completely different from one another.