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INDEPENDENT STUDY

To provide students opportunities to pursue self-directed learning, the school offers a rich program of independent study. Following our belief that students learn best when they become architects of their own education, the program encourages students to pursue independent study by awarding transcript credit for a variety of self-initiated projects. A committee comprised of teachers across the disciplines oversees the approval process for these projects.

Students who wish to apply for an independent study should first enlist the sponsorship of a UHS faculty member or, in some cases, the supervision of an adult off-campus. Students should indicate their interest in pursuing independent study on the program planning form and then develop their proposals with their sponsors. In most cases, a student will meet with a sponsor at least twice prior to submitting an independent study proposal, once to discuss the general idea for the independent study and once to review and refine the written independent study proposal.

Students may apply for full-semester credit for projects that will require at least four hours of work per week, and for half-semester credit for projects that will require at least two hours per week. Students will discuss with their faculty sponsor whether the independent study will receive a letter grade or credit only, and will designate on the application the option on which the student and sponsor have agreed.

While faculty sponsors will develop their own specific criteria for evaluating the independent studies they sponsor, all graded independent studies will include evaluation of the following: consistency of the student's preparation and attendance; depth and sophistication of the student's engagement; and some kind of culminating project, which could take the form of a paper, a performance, a presentation, or some other form of sharing what the student has learned with the school community. Independent studies receiving credit only will be assessed based on the consistency of preparation and attendance.

Applications *must be submitted on time* and are usually due on the Friday following the grace period of either semester. First semester students who wish to continue an independent study during the second semester must re-apply.

Each independent study proposal must include a "Milestone," which serves as a safety measure to protect students from overcommitting themselves. Students must complete their milestone goals by a date specified by the independent study committee, usually the Friday preceding the end of the 1st quarter in the fall or the 3rd quarter in the spring. If the student does not complete the milestone goal, the independent study is removed from his or her schedule. Once the proposal is approved and the milestone is successfully completed, the student is responsible for finishing the independent study.

FOLLOWING IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE CATEGORIES AVAILABLE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY:

PROJECTS

This category encompasses all projects for which the student has designed the curriculum, including research, performances, studio work, and the teaching responsibility for student seminars. Students should do the research, planning, and organization for the project prior to the semester in which they plan to undertake it.

SEMINAR

This category includes all independent work in which the curriculum is set by someone other than the student. This would include participation in a student production, the creation of a one-time elective course of study with a teacher, and enrollment in a seminar led by another student.

OFF-CAMPUS COURSEWORK

This program enables students to receive credit for approved courses taken at another institution during the normal school year. The student must provide a course description, an accounting of the work to be accomplished, and an agreement by the instructor to write progress reports and provide grades, when applicable.

ONLINE COURSES

Exciting new learning opportunities proliferate on the internet, and assessing their quality can be difficult. Therefore, any student wishing to propose an independent study via an online course must first have the course approved by the academic dean, who will also provide guidance about whether the online course should be a project or a seminar. In most cases, students will take these courses for credit only.

CAREER INTERNSHIP

This program allows students to explore career opportunities in professional fields beyond the school, including law, medicine, politics, business, architecture, community work, etc. An internship involves the close supervision by a sponsor who is a qualified professional and may not result in compensation of any kind. Students may enroll in a Career Internship on a credit or no credit basis only.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

At minimum, TAs are expected to attend all classes and, with the direction of the teacher, design a job description that will bring value to the students in the course and develop the teaching assistant's own knowledge and skills within the discipline.

SENIOR PROJECT

This category includes "projects" undertaken by seniors in their eighth semester which 1) pursue a long-term interest or talent which has been the subject of a previous class or study; and 2) result in a final exhibition of significant stature that is shared with the community. Senior projects may count as one course in the normal five-course requirement and must be sponsored by a UHS faculty or staff member.