**University of Wisconsin-Whitewater**

College of Letters & Science

*Department of Social Work*

**General Guidelines for**

**Course # 498 and 498-R**

**Independent Study in Social Work (Undergraduate)**

**Overview:** Independent study in Social Work for undergraduate students is an opportunity to pursue a topic or project with the guidance of a Social Work faculty member. The student enrolled in the independent study course is expected to assume the primary responsibility for learning. The faculty member’s role is to challenge and guide the student in intellectual efforts.

**Procedure:** Prior to registration, mutual agreement is necessary between the student and the faculty member in terms of the topic, objectives, and evaluation criteria for the independent study. The course plan must be appropriate for the content and the credit (1-3 credits). As a general guideline, the contact hour allocation per credit in undergraduate courses is:

* 1 contact hour per credit hour in lecture/seminar
  + For example, if the student plans to craft the independent study to mirror an online or traditional class, which might include readings, videos, lecture, and projects (e.g., interview with social workers), they can expect to work 16 hours for every 1 credit enrolled (e.g. 1 credit: 1 hour x 16 weeks = requires 16 hours; 2 credits: 2 hours x 16 weeks = requires 32 hours; 3 credits: 3 hours x 16 weeks = requires 48 hours)
* 2 contact hours per credit hour in volunteer position/practicum
  + For example, if the student plans to craft the independent study to include volunteer work or practicum experience, they can expect to work 32 hours for every 1 credit enrolled (e.g., 1 credit: 2 hours x 16 weeks = requires 32 volunteer hours; 2 credits: 4 hours x 16 weeks = requires 64 volunteer hours; 3 credits: 6 hours x 16 weeks = requires 96 volunteer hours)

In addition to the total hours required per credit, the student should expect to spend an additional 1 hour per credit working in the independent study. Whether the student chooses a lecture/seminar or volunteer position/practicum format, they can expect to work 16 additional hours for 1 credit; 32 additional hours for 2 credits; and 48 additional hours for 3 credits. This additional time may be spent reading, writing, or researching relevant materials.

To facilitate the independent study, the student is expected to complete the following *Independent Study Agreement Form* that requires the student to:

1. Identify the title of the study
2. State the objectives
3. Outline the plan of action
4. Proposed basis for evaluation at two time points: (1) mid-semester and (2) end of semester

**Student Responsibilities:** The student is expected to:

1. Follow the plan outlined in the *Independent Study Agreement Form*
2. Schedule regular meeting(s) with the faculty member
3. Complete the work within the semester

**Faculty Responsibilities:** The faculty member will:

1. Approve the student topic area, objectives, and evaluation plan
2. Assure learning experiences through: (1) individual meetings, (2) challenging questions, comments, and feedback, and (3) promote critical thinking

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**Date:**       **Course #:**

**Student Name:**       **Student #:**

**Semester:**       **# of Credits:**

**Faculty Member:**

**Topic of Interest**

**(e.g., research, social gerontology, family caregiving, social policy related to aging):**

**Title of Independent Study:**

**Objectives (e.g., what the student wants to learn, please be specific):**

**Format of Independent Study**

**(e.g., lecture, seminar, volunteerism, or combination):**

**Specific Plan for Meeting Objectives**

**(e.g., list readings, volunteer positions, videos, research, etc.):**

**Evaluation at mid-semester (e.g., paper, literature review, research):**

The student and faculty member have reviewed the proposed plan and agree to the goals and objective outlined herein.

**Student Signature: Date:**

**Faculty Member Signature:**  **Date:**