



School of Public Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER**

SPA GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

Independent study courses allow students the opportunity to explore content beyond the current curriculum that closely relates to student interests. The student is guided and monitored by a faculty mentor during the independent study. Independent studies are available in all of SPA's degree programs under the following course numbers:

- BACJ – CRJU 4840
- BAPS – PUAD 4840
- MPA – PUAD 6840
- MCJ – CRJU 6840
- PhD – PUAD 8840

To be eligible for a SPA independent study, the student must:

- Be enrolled as a SPA student, or, if the student is enrolled in another CU Denver unit, have the written permission of the other unit;
- For SPA students, have successfully completed at least three SPA courses (this requirement may be waived with program director approval);
- Have earned at least a 2.5 GPA for undergraduate students or a 3.0 GPA for graduate students in their studies so far; and
- Have the permission of the faculty member who will be supervising the independent study.

Faculty requirements for supervising an independent study are:

- SPA appointment as a tenured, tenure-track, clinical teaching track, research track, instructor, or senior instructor status;
- SPA appointment as a lecturer or other faculty category, with the permission of the program director; and
- Capacity and intent to provide direct oversight of the independent study to ensure that it warrants academic credit

The subject of the independent study should meet the following requirements:

- Address content that falls within the discipline of public affairs or criminal justice and that is not covered by a regularly scheduled course in the program; and
- Require the student to engage in a course of study equivalent to a regular course in the program in terms of academic rigor and work required.

The student and the faculty member should agree in advance on meeting times, readings and other assignments, the amount of time the student is expected to put in per week (typically 8-10 hours per three credits), the expected product/s (such as one or more papers or other projects), and grading criteria. Independent study expectations must be confirmed in a written syllabus for the independent study and in the Special Processing Form described below. Depending on the difficulty and complexity of the project, the faculty may determine that the independent study warrants anywhere from one to six credits, although three is typical.

CU Denver requires students to complete a Special Processing Form before they can enroll in independent study courses. This form is available from SPA advisors, and must be submitted before the semester add/drop deadline. The Special Processing Form, which must be signed by the participating faculty member, must contain a description of the project, the expectations for a paper or other project outcome, and the number of hours to be devoted to the independent study by the student each week. It is expected that the information contained in the Special Processing Form and in the syllabus for the independent study will be consistent.

No more than six graduate credit hours of Independent Study may be applied toward a graduate degree, and no more than three undergraduate credit hours of Independent Study may be applied toward an undergraduate degree.

Supervision of independent studies generally does not warrant additional compensation for regular faculty, although exceptions may be made under unusual circumstances requiring a significant amount of additional work by the supervising faculty member. Lecturers who agree to supervise an independent study may receive an honorarium.

Adopted by Faculty Council 11/10/17