



Information for Students and Instructors Independent Study Courses at St. Stephen's College

Context

St. Stephen's College is a graduate theology school and an Affiliated College of The University of Alberta in Edmonton. The mission of St. Stephen's College is to be an interfaith community that offers sacred spaces for learning and transformation. The College is open to people from all world views, faith traditions and spiritual expressions. For the past century, St. Stephen's has been recognized not only for its commitment to academic excellence, but also for its creative and non-traditional styles of learning: we value flexibility, innovation, collegiality, self-directed learning, and the integration of the arts with theology. St. Stephen's College is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools. The Art Therapy programs at St. Stephen's College meet the Educational Standards of the Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA). St. Stephen's College is committed to an adult education model of teaching which ensures that the teaching/learning process occurs when both teacher and student share responsibility, according to their respective roles, for the direction, approach, and content of the subject matter being studied. The following description of the independent study course will assist prospective instructors and students.

Independent Study Course Content and Guidelines

The independent study course should be offered in such a way that the student is able to gain a basic understanding, appropriate to their program, of the general principles of the subject matter being studied, as well as providing an opportunity for an in-depth reflection on aspects that support the student's chosen research topic or area of interest. Independent Study courses:

- must be taken for credit and cannot be audited
- normally cover topics/content that is not covered in existing St. Stephen's College course offerings
- are restricted to students enrolled in a degree, diploma or certificate program at St. Stephen's College
- must not involve research with human subjects

Academic standards and guidelines for quality and quantity of academic work for Doctoral and Master level courses are Appendix 2 of the [Faculty Handbook for Instructors](#).

Responsibilities of the Instructor

It is important that the student and instructor negotiate a work plan. The instructor's responsibilities are to:

- Provide a syllabus that indicates the general objectives of the course and a basic bibliography. The syllabus must be formatted according to the SSC syllabus template (which is available in Appendix 4 of the [Faculty Handbook for Instructors](#)).
- Indicate required reading (include several basic resources as well as supplementary materials).
- Consult with the student and communicate in writing timelines, ways of communicating, assignments and evaluation methods. This information should also be in the syllabus.
- Provide adequate feedback to the student in a reasonable amount of time.
- Record scores or grades achieved by the student for all components of the course that count towards the final grade. All graded course components should be assessed using rubrics that are properly suited to each assignment (see sample grading rubric, Appendix 3 of the [Faculty Handbook for Instructors](#)). Instructors are to make rubrics available to the student, and when assessing a student's work, instructors must document their assessment of each assignment using the rubric. When assessing the final, major assignment, the details contained in the documentation must enable the instructor (or the College on the instructor's behalf) to reconstruct the student's final grade where the necessity arises.
- Submit the following to the Office of the Registrar (st.stephens@ualberta.ca) one month after the final assignment due date: (i) a grade sheet that includes the final course grade (in percentage format) together with grades for each course component that counts towards the student's final grade, (ii) a copy of the student's major assignment (normally the final assignment), or final examination, containing any evaluative comments, and (iii) a marked-up copy of the rubric used to determine the grade of the final assignment. A copy of the final assignment is retained for one year and deleted after deadlines for grade appeals have passed. Student privacy is maintained by keeping the papers in a password-protected file which is accessible only by the Registrar's Office, and accessed only in the event of a grade appeal. Final course grades are approved by the Dean, and distributed to students by the Registrar's Office within two weeks. Instructors are permitted to share the unofficial final grade with the student, with the proviso that the official final grade comes from the College.

Upon receipt of the final grade, the Registrar's Office will forward to the instructor the current instructional fee of \$425Cdn. In the event that the instructional relationship is terminated, the instructor shall advise the Registrar's Office and the fee will be pro-rated.

Responsibilities of the Student

It is important that the student and instructor negotiate a work plan. The student's responsibilities are to:

- Submit the *Instructor's Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal* to the Chair of the Department for approval; the syllabus, including objectives, content, and bibliography must be attached and the *Instructors Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal* must be signed by the proposed instructor.
- Once course is approved, register for the course [online](#).
- Ensure that there is sufficient access to the basic resources as well as to supplementary resources required for the comprehension of the course as well as specific assignments; consult with the instructor and establish in writing the timelines, ways of communicating, assignments, and evaluation methods. This information should also be in the syllabus.
- Keep in regular contact with the instructor, and apart from exceptional circumstances, ensure that assignments are completed on time.
- Submit the final assignment to the instructor, so that evaluative comments and grade can be submitted to the Registrar's Office.
- [Request](#) a transcript if desired.

Duration

Independent Studies should not exceed four months in length (unless approved by the Chair). Extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances (refer to Academic Policies, page 3 of these guidelines). The final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office within one month of the course end date.

Appointment of Instructors

Students take the initiative to seek out suitable instructors for their independent study course. Students must explore, with the individual under consideration as instructor, the feasibility of doing the independent study course with them, and receive assurances of their willingness to teach. Potential instructors must provide brief biographical and professional information, and a *curriculum vitae*, using the form accompanying this document. Independent Study Instructors will normally possess a doctoral degree in the field in which the student proposes to work. In certain circumstances – for Master's-level Independent Study courses – other advanced credentials may be deemed acceptable (e.g. a thesis-based Master's degree with demonstrated experience in the field). Students forward this information to the Chair of their Department, along with the proposed syllabus. The Chair will signify approval by signing the form, and the Registrar's Office will advise the student of course approval. The student then registers and pays for the course and commences course work.

Forms of Communication

There are several ways that the communication required for an independent study course can take place. Students and instructors can communicate through a combination of email, phone, video-conferencing or mail. Students residing in the same community as the instructor may arrange face-to-face meetings as well as using the other forms of communication noted above.

Number of Meetings between Student and Instructor

There must be a minimum of four meetings, using the agreed upon form(s) of communication:

- (1) an initial meeting where the course outline is given, and timelines are determined,
- (2) a second meeting to ensure that the student has gained a sufficient understanding of the general aspects of the course through the required reading; an assignment can be required beforehand,
- (3) a third meeting where the student and instructor agree on the focus of the major assignment topic, review general content of the assignment, and resources,
- (4) a fourth meeting where the student receives feedback with respect to assignments and final grade (the grading rubric is used as written documentation of this evaluation); alternatively, a final take-home exam may be assigned.

Authority and Accountability

The instructor is considered associate faculty of the College during the course. The instructor therefore has a dual accountability: to the student for the terms negotiated, and to the College through the Chair of the student's department or the Dean. In the sensitive matter of evaluation of the quality of the student's work, the primary accountability of the instructor must be to the College and its published standards. Such primary accountability is meant to enhance the instructional relationship.

Evaluation Standards and Grading System

Grading and evaluation must be in accordance with the standards and system outlined in the [Academic Calendar](#), which is also outlined in the syllabus template in Appendix 4 of the [Faculty Handbook for Instructors](#).

Course Completion

Students are expected to submit assignments to instructors by the deadlines described in the syllabus. For Independent Study courses, final assignments are due the last day of the course. All un-submitted assignments will receive a grade of zero, and the final course grade will be assessed based on all marks recorded for the course (including marks of zero for failed or incomplete assignments).

Course Extensions or Withdrawal

Students who wish to withdraw from a course must submit a [Withdrawal-Course or Program](#) form to the Registrar's Office (st.stephens@ualberta.ca). Refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for policies about course extensions, withdrawal deadlines, and refunds.

St. Stephen's College Instructor Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal

STEPS REQUIRED TO ENROLL IN AND COMPLETE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE

1. This form, **with course syllabus attached**, is signed by instructor and submitted to the Chair of the Department of student's program, for approval/signature.
2. Registrar's Office notifies student of course approval.
3. Student registers and pays for course (pays course fee in effect on start date of course).
4. Student and instructor start course.
5. Instructor submits to Registrar's Office at st.stephens@ualberta.ca: (i) complete grade record and marking rubric (including all assignment grades, and final course grade in percentage format), and (ii) copy of student's major assignment or examination, containing any evaluative comments
6. Instructional fee is paid to instructor.

Persons considering serving as Instructors of Independent Study courses are asked to provide the following information, as well as a **curriculum vitae**, for the purpose of evaluating suitability in regard to the student's proposed course.

STUDENT INFORMATION	
Student Name	
Student Email	
Student Program (DMin, MPS, PMATD, MTS, BTS, Grad Certificate)	

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION	
Instructor Name	
Instructor Mailing Address	
Social Insurance Number	<i>Associate Faculty who receive payment for teaching or supervising students are asked to provide their SIN to the College by phoning 780-439-7311 or 1-800-661-4956 [ask for Assistant Registrar]. Confidential information is kept in a secure location at the College.</i>
Instructor Email	
Instructor Phone	
Position Held Currently	
University Degree Attained	
Theological Degree Attained	
Other Professional Training	
Professional Experience (responsibilities assigned in last five years relevant to course)	
Other Comments (anything else that would help us recognize the appropriateness of your appointment as Instructor for this student)	

PROPOSED COURSE AND DATES			
Title of Course (titles over 25 characters will be abbreviated on transcript)			
Brief Course Description (attach detailed course outline/work plan)			
Course Level	Doctoral (700-level)	Master (500-level)	
Proposed Start and End Dates (four month session, unless approved by the Chair)	Start Date:	End Date:	
		<i>Month-Day-Year</i>	<i>Month-Day-Year</i>
Which program requirement are you planning to satisfy with this course? (i.e., elective, theology, etc.)			

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE	
In signing, I am indicating my availability and interest in serving as an Independent Study Course Instructor, and my willingness to consult with the Chair of the Department for the student's program, as well as abide by St. Stephen's College academic policies and rules of confidentiality. Signing also signifies acceptance of the terms of the instructional fee (\$425CAD).	
Signature	
Date	

APPROVALS: INSTRUCTOR APPOINTMENT AND COURSE CONTENT	
Approval is based on suitability of instructor, and suitability of course content/method for student's program.	
Department Chair Signature	
Date	
Department Chair to choose subject category of course from choices below, so that course number can be assigned.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Methodology (570 or 770)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice or Other (530 or 730)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pastoral Psychotherapy/Therapy/Applied Practice (580 or 780)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sacred History (520 or 720)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sacred Text (500 or 700)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Issues/Religious Diversity (540 or 740)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spirituality (550 or 750)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Theology or Ethics (510 or 710)
Course prefix will be assigned as follows: PPSYC, ARTST, or SSC.	
DEPT CHAIR FORWARD FORM/SYLLABUS TO REGISTRAR'S OFFICE. REGISTRAR'S OFFICE NOTIFIES STUDENT VIA EMAIL WHEN COURSE IS APPROVED SO THAT STUDENT CAN REGISTER.	

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE USE ONLY		
	Initial	Date
Student notified of approval [A/Registrar]		
Student registered; Instructor entered in database		
Grade entered, forwarded to student file		
Instructor paid		