

NORTHAMPTON AREA HIGH SCHOOL



INDEPENDENT STUDY SEMINAR

Board Approval Date: August 10, 2020



Northampton Area High School

Independent Study Seminar Guidelines

Overview

- The *Independent Study Seminar* is intended to provide you with the opportunity to receive credit for developing, planning, organizing, and completing a self-generated project under the guidance and supervision of a committee of teachers, hereafter referred to as the committee. Throughout the course of the semester you may be meeting with an individual teacher designated for you, or with the collective committee, to review your on-going work. After your proposal has been approved, you should expect to meet approximately every two weeks throughout each marking period. Furthermore, you are responsible for completing the Independent Study Reflection Log every two weeks and completing a Semester Paper. Finally, it is stressed that as an Independent Study Seminar, these guidelines do not preclude modification by the Committee to meet individual needs.

Credit

- On the attached template that will accompany your proposal, you will indicate if you are seeking Advanced Placement (AP), Honors, or General/CP credit. ***It is understood by both the student and the committee, that the base credit will be Honors weight unless otherwise approved by both the committee and an administrator for either AP or General/CP credit.*** Regardless, the student will meet the attached rubric criteria, as well as complete periodic/culminating self-assessments/reflections.
- For AP weighted credit, the student's independent study must be pursuant of an AP course, and the student must register and pay to take the corresponding AP Exam through College Board. Please note: the AP option is only available if the class is not in the NAHS Program of Studies, is not running, or an upper-class student has had unique difficulties in scheduling.
- General/CP credit would only be given if an *upper-class* student were pursuing the Independent Study of a General/CP course that had not otherwise fit into the student's schedule. However, with extra criteria being preapproved and met, Honors weight may also be earned.
- It is also understood by the student that, regardless of the above GPA weighting, all Independent Study credit will be *elective*. In order to be counted as *subject area* credit (English, Social Studies, Humanities, etc.), the student is responsible to secure a sponsoring subject area teacher as part of the proposal approval process. This is only necessary if a teacher on the committee cannot assume that role. Current committee teachers are certified in Social Studies, Business, and Music.

Proposal

- The student will submit a proposal utilizing the attached *Independent Study Seminar Proposal Form*. While the Independent Study Seminar lends itself to flexibility in design and subject, the student acknowledges that his/her proposal is just that—a proposal. The proposal is not actionable, nor credit eligible, until approved by both the Committee, and an administrator.
- The subjects/projects/topics are chosen for reasons, or needs, that are uniquely individual to you the student. However, it is stressed that your proposal is to be something “new.” Absolutely no “double dipping” of recycled work that you may have already done (or, are doing) for other activities you are involved in (e.g., DECA, Debate team, Music/Art courses, etc.) will be accepted.

Assignments

- In tandem with the regular coursework and the culminating project associated with the Independent Study Seminar, the student is required to complete two additional assignments during the course of the semester/year. The assignments and criteria are as follows:

1. Independent Study Journal Reflection Log

- a. The purpose of the Independent Study Reflection Log will be to reflect on your learning experiences during the course of your Independent Study Seminar.
- b. The log will be ongoing throughout the semester.
- c. One entry will be due every two weeks and will be reviewed during your instructor check-ins.
- d. The grading will follow the Independent Study Grading Rubric.

2. Semester Paper

- a. The purpose of the semester paper will be to reflect upon what you learned during the course of the semester.
- b. The semester paper must be typed with a word processor using 12 point Times New Roman font.
- c. The instructions are to write a detailed description, without exceeding 500 words, of
 - i. three items you have learned
 - ii. two items you did not understand
 - iii. one item you want to learn more about
- d. The semester paper is due the final week of the semester
- e. The grading will follow the Independent Study Grading Rubric



Independent Study Seminar Proposal Form

Student Name _____ ID# _____ Grade _____
Student Email (regularly checked) _____

Credit

- Are you seeking 0 elective or 0 subject area credit?
 1. If subject area, who is the sponsoring teacher? (print) _____
 2. Teacher's signature verifying acceptance of role: (sign) _____
- Are you seeking 0 semester or 0 full-year credit?
- Are you seeking 0 AP 0 Honors or 0 General/CP GPA weight?

Proposal

- Please prepare and submit a proposal of your intended Independent Study.
- Your proposal must be typed with a word processor using 12 point Times New Roman font.
- This form must be included as your cover-sheet. Do not staple should revision to your proposal be necessary after committee review.
- Please include the following information in your proposal:
 1. Topic of study.
 2. Explain why you wish to pursue this as an Independent Study.
 - a. Personal interest; career exploration/preparation; not otherwise offered at NAHS; other.
 3. Materials to be used:
 - a. Textbook(s); computer programs; Internet resources; equipment; instruments/supplies; other.
 - b. This does not need to be all-inclusive, as your research/needs may expand, but what do you need to get started. Specific text is required for all AP, and most subject area credit. These may need to be purchased at student expense.
 4. Timeline/Progression roadmap anticipated for the semester/year.

Post-approval signatures (to be signed *after* any revisions and approval). Date _____

Student Name _____	Signature _____
Committee Name _____	Signature _____
Name _____	Signature _____
Name _____	Signature _____
Administrator Name _____	Signature _____
Guidance Counselor _____	Signature _____
Parent Name _____	Signature _____

Independent Study Seminar Reflection Log

Instructions: Please use this log to reflect on your learning experiences. Please include your thoughts on what you are learning, progress towards your proposed goals, any problems you encounter along the way, and possible solutions to those problems. Please attach evidence of your research.

Date	Activity	Reflection	Evidence

Independent Study Seminar Grading Rubric

Element	4	3	2	1	0
Independence of Learning ____/4 points	Student demonstrated strong initiative and worked independently on the project, requiring only a minimal amount of guidance.	Student demonstrated good initiative and worked mostly independently on the project, requiring an appropriate amount of guidance.	Student did not show much initiative and required a great deal of direction and guidance.	Student did not show initiative and required copious amounts of direction and guidance.	Student demonstrated no initiative and showed no interest in completing the project.
Commitment to Subject ____/4 points	Student explored the subject in depth and generated and pursued opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Student adequately explored the subject and identified and pursued opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Student explored the subject and minimally pursued opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Student minimally explored the subject and made a cursory attempt to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Student did not explore the subject or attempt to expand knowledge, skills, or abilities.
Mastery of Subject ____/4 points	Student demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the subject and answered probing questions on the content.	Student demonstrated an excellent understanding of the subject and answered questions on the content.	Student demonstrated some understanding of the subject and had difficulty answering questions on the content.	Student demonstrated little understanding of the subject and had difficulty answering questions on the content.	Student demonstrated no understanding of the subject and was unable to answer questions on the content.
Depth, Accuracy and Organization of Investigation ____/4 points	Student's investigation was highly organized, containing a superb amount of depth and accuracy.	Student's investigation was organized, containing an excellent amount of depth and accuracy.	Student's investigation was organized, containing limited depth and/or inaccuracies.	Student's investigation was unorganized, containing limited depth and/or inaccuracies.	Student's investigation was unorganized, limited, and filled with inaccuracies.
Use of Resources ____/4 points	Student effectively used a wide variety of appropriate, advanced level resources.	Student effectively used a variety of appropriate resources.	Student used a limited amount of appropriate resources.	Student used a limited amount of basic-level resources.	Student used little or no resources.

Independent Study Seminar Grading Rubric

Element	4	3	2	1	0
Problem Solving ____/4 points	Student showed a great deal of flexibility and creativity when encountering a problem. Evaluation of solutions showed a deep comprehension of the problem relative to the subject.	Student showed flexibility and creativity when encountering a problem. Evaluation of solutions showed a comprehension of the problem relative to the subject.	Student showed limited flexibility and creativity when encountering a problem. Evaluation of solutions showed a limited comprehension of the problem relative to the subject.	Student used basic solutions when encountering a problem and demonstrated very little comprehension of the problem relative to the subject.	Student gave up when encountering a problem.
Attendance ____/4 points	Student attended all scheduled meetings and was proactive if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.	Student attended almost all scheduled meetings and was willing to reschedule if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.	Student attended some scheduled meetings but was unwilling to reschedule missed meetings.	Student attended very few scheduled meetings and was unwilling to reschedule missed meetings.	Student made no effort to attend meetings.
Assignment Deadlines ____/4 points	Student met all deadlines and completed all assignments in a timely manner.	Student met most deadlines and completed most assignments in a timely manner.	Student met some deadlines and completed some assignments in a timely manner.	Student met very few deadlines and completed very few assignments in a timely manner.	Student did not meet any deadlines and did not complete assignments in a timely manner.
Final Paper, Product, or Presentation ____/4 points	Student presented an organized, in-depth item containing very few, if any, mistakes, in which all components were clearly relevant to the subject. Content is thoughtful and purposeful.	Student presented an organized item containing a few mistakes, in which most components were clearly relevant to the subject. Content is somewhat thoughtful and purposeful.	Student presented a disorganized item that contains numerous mistakes and is only somewhat relevant to the subject. Content is adequate.	Student presented a weak, disorganized item that contains numerous mistakes and is not relevant to the subject. Content is inadequate.	Student presented no final paper, product or presentation.

Independent Study Seminar Student Checklist

- _____ Project Proposal/Timeline - to be completed _____
- _____ Check-in Dates / Meetings - to be scheduled _____
- _____ Reflection Log - to be completed at least once every two weeks
- _____ Semester Paper - to be completed at the end of each semester
- _____ Grading Rubric - used by the panel at the end of each marking
_____ period End of Course - Final Product, Presentation, or Paper
- _____ Other: _____
- _____ Other: _____
- _____ Other: _____

I understand the requirements and responsibilities regarding the successful completion of the Independent Study Seminar.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____