

# ***LIBERAL STUDIES HANDBOOK***

***FOR STUDENTS  
2007***



Prepared for Liberal Studies students for use in LIS 301, LIS 499, LIS 380, and LIS 451.

Updated 12/07

## Forward

This Handbook was compiled by Jan Droegkamp from documents written by Holly McCracken for the Credit for Prior Learning and Individual Option Programs, program materials written by Ron Ettinger, the UIS catalog, and an “Introduction to Liberal Studies” written by Ed Cell. Much of the general framework for the baccalaureate degree is based on a comprehensive study of American higher education conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published in Ernest L. Boyer’s *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America (1986)*.

This handbook serves as a roadmap for navigating the LIS process. An Online version of this is available through the LIS 301 course. We encourage all students and faculty to have a print version of this material.

Thank you to the artist Lars Gaydos at UIS for creating the beautiful images for the Boyer Categories that originally came from our 1995 recruitment brochure. Thank you to Lula Lester, LIS secretary and friend to all LIS and INO students, who worked to produce this document. Much appreciation goes to Annette Van Dyke, Mary Addison-Lamb, and Peter Boltuc for reading over these materials and giving suggestions on the content and format.

*1998; updated 2004,05,06,07*

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**You have come here to find what you already have.**

**A Buddhist Aphorism  
(Steinem, 1992)**

## **Chapter 1:**

### **OBTAINING YOUR BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN LIS AT UIS**

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield is built on more than 35 years of experience with self-designed degrees through the Individual Option at Sangamon State University. This LIS program, created in 1995, continues to offer an opportunity for mature students to design their own degrees; however, the general framework for the baccalaureate degree is based on Ernest Boyer's comprehensive study of higher education conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published in *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (1986). The Liberal Studies Online degree, begun in 1999, offers access to a high quality public education through online delivery methods.

The wheel on the front of this Handbook serves as a model for the liberal studies BA. Seven of the categories are taken from Boyer's organizational scheme for general education. We added the Tools and Skills to include those areas of study that offer the tools and skills necessary for survival in the twenty-first century. Liberal Studies students have the opportunity to design their own degrees within this general framework. The well-rounded liberal studies degree contains "a program of general education that introduces students not only to essential knowledge, but also to connections across disciplines, and in the end, to the applications of knowledge to life beyond the campus." (Boyer, p. 91)

#### **HOW DOES UIS DEFINE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE?**

A student with a bachelor's degree should be able to comprehend written and spoken communications --from simple narrative to scholarly exposition, novels, and poetry--and should be able to use and apply abstractions, principles, ideas, or theories to concrete situations. Content as well as form is important to a baccalaureate education. The student should have broad familiarity with the social sciences, humanities, sciences, mathematics and English. In addition UIS mandates a special understanding of public affairs in the broadest and most humanistic sense.

The student receiving a bachelor's degree will

1. Be able to recognize significant terminology, facts, theories, issues, findings, abstractions, universals, principles, and generalizations within a discipline; as well as have familiarity with ways

of organizing, studying, judging, and criticizing relevant knowledge in a chosen field, including methods of inquiry, patterns of organizations, and standards of judgment;

2. Be able to use the relevant knowledge within a discipline, through reading, interpreting, and evaluating the appropriate literature, analyzing data, understanding implications, and formulating and defending conclusions; and
3. Demonstrate a mastery of appropriate skills with a chosen discipline and an ability to apply such knowledge and skills, and demonstrate an ability to apply abstractions in concrete situations.

### **LIBERAL STUDIES MISSION STATEMENT**

The Liberal Studies Program is designed to help students develop and plan a course of study that enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, inspires living as an engaged and responsible citizen, instills a habit of considering the ethics and consequences of actions, and brings familiarity with a broad and integrated core of knowledge.

#### *Goals for Students*

UIS Liberal Studies Program Faculty developed the following goals to that governments, corporations, the private sector, and academia value.

- Learn the tenets of critical thinking, of communicating, and of reconciling disparate points of view and making decisions together.
- Be engaged citizens who will fulfill their obligation to work in their communities in ways that sustain a democratic and representative form of government that protects citizens' rights and freedoms.
- Be responsible contributors to life who evaluate the consequences of actions, maintain high ethical standards in employment and personal lives, seek ways to open paths to personal and social development, and work in personal and public relationships to create sustainable and harmonious relationships.
- Deepen their understanding and awareness of the world through study of language, art, heritage, institutions, nature, work, identity, and applied skills (tools).
- Learn to integrate learning into a coherent and unified whole, deepen self understanding, and improve problem-solving skills.

Adopted at INO/LIS program meeting 3/7/07

## **THE LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE**

Liberal Studies offers you the opportunity to design a bachelor's degree consistent with your own educational goals and with institutional goals and resources. To design your degree you select learning activities that use a variety of disciplines to explore answers to life questions. These questions grow out of several themes universal to the human experience. These themes include: connecting with each other through language, art, work and institutions; understanding the present in historical context; discerning all forms of life as interlocked; and achieving a meaningful individual and social identity.

You will be assisted in the selection of appropriate courses in these areas to meet your learning objectives. Given the accelerating rate of change characterizing modern society, program faculty believe that self-directed, life long learning skills are essential to survival in the future.

In designing an individualized curriculum, you will develop skills that promote critical thinking and promote significant learning. You will assume responsibility for integrating your own learning activities and for evaluating and revising your own curricular design. Program faculty facilitate this learning process and promote the autonomy that necessarily ensues.

The LIS Program is based on the assumption that, as an undergraduate degree candidate at the University of Illinois at Springfield, you have acquired previous fundamental knowledge and skills and that you are able to apply these competencies in a liberal studies curricular framework. Such advanced study is typified by the ability to pursue and generate complex levels of knowledge, to engage in self-directed and original inquiry, and to think critically about yourself and your surroundings.

## **ADMISSIONS**

The Liberal Studies Program formally begins with LIS 301 Self-directed Learning, which should be taken during the first semester of a student's junior year. Prior to this, students should work with the advisers to ensure that they have completed the required general education curriculum and the prerequisites required of the upper-level courses they plan to take.

**CAMPUS-BASED STUDENTS** must complete the general education curriculum before receiving permission to enroll in LIS 301. To receive this permission, they must submit a written request to the program office.

The request should be approximately two pages in length and should reflect junior-level writing skills. The request should include:

A clear, concise statement of your academic and/or professional goals.

Why you believe that a non-traditional, interdisciplinary program is the pathway to these goals.  
A discussion of things you have taught yourself outside of an academic environment.

Whenever possible, students should include details and examples to illustrate their ideas. Any problems in previous academic work should be addressed. A full explanation of the problem, as well as a description of the steps taken to correct it, should be included.

## **ONLINE STUDENTS**

Entrance to the Liberal Studies online program is selective and the number of students admitted each semester is limited. The program has posted priority dates for completing the application process. If space remains after the priority date, applications will continue to be reviewed on a monthly basis. If you have any questions about availability, please contact the program coordinator.

Before we can make an admission decision, you must complete the application process:

Fill out the UIS admissions application, including signature sheet and application fee.

Send transcripts from each of your past colleges or universities.

Provide the written statement described below.

Ensure that your equipment meets the university's Computer Requirements (listed below).

The online program does not support lower-level coursework. For this reason, an applicant must be prepared to enter at the junior level. Those who have not yet completed lower-level coursework are encouraged to do so at another college or university of their choice, and then transfer into our program.

The program will consider all of the information provided by the applicant, but pay particular attention to the applicant's written statement and background in general education courses. Applicants must have completed Composition I and II to be admitted to the online program.

Students who are not accepted will be notified as quickly as possible so that they can consider alternatives. In some cases, the program may be willing to admit an applicant for a future semester if he/she is willing to address areas of concern noted in the program review. In these cases, the program will work with the applicant as closely as necessary to assist them.

## **Academic Standards**

### **Academic Load**

**Note: Faculty at UIS plan courses according to this standard: A typical 4-credit-hour**

**course meets 3 ½ hours per week for 16 weeks (56 hours). A typical student spends 2 hours outside of class reading, preparing for exams, writing, etc., for every hour in class (112 hours). So, if you're a typical student, you'll devote 168 hours to a typical 4-credit-hour course. Consider your responsibilities to your family and work to arrive at a reasonable course load.**

For purposes of tuition and fees, a student enrolled for 12 or more semester hours of course work during the fall or spring semesters or six semester hours of course work in the summer term is considered a full-time student. Students enrolled for fewer hours are considered part-time. Most courses at UIS earn three to four semester hours of credit. The normal course load for a full-time undergraduate is four or five courses or 14-16 semester hours. The normal course load for part-time students is one or two courses, or four to eight semester hours.

An undergraduate student who wishes to enroll for more than 18 semester hours during fall or spring semesters or more than eight semester hours during the summer terms must submit a Student Petition form (available <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms/index.html> or from the Records office on campus) for approval to your LIS advisor and to the LIS Program Director.

### **Grade-point Average**

Undergraduate students must achieve an UIS cumulative grade-point average of at least 2.0 to receive the bachelor's degree.

### **Academic Probation**

At the end of any semester in which an undergraduate student has a UIS cumulative grade-point average of less than 2.0, s(he) is placed on academic probation; courses taken for credit/no credit do not count in calculating this average. In addition, students who accumulate 12 hours or more of "incomplete" (signifying that work for a specific course has not been completed within the designated time frame, usually one semester) are subject to probation.

Students on probation may enroll for up to 12 hours credit in the subsequent semester (six hours in the summer term), provided an Academic Probation Registration form is completed with appropriate signatures. Students placed on academic probation for two successive semesters will be suspended from the university and must wait two semesters before petitioning for re-admission. Students with exceptional circumstances may appeal immediately to the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

### **Repeating Courses**

Students may repeat course work although some academic programs may have restrictions on the number of times a particular course may be repeated. The grade and hours earned when the course is

repeated will appear on your transcript. The first grade entry will be deleted from the transcript and will not count in determining the grade-point average. Subsequent repeats can only be recorded as audits, which bear no hours or grade points.

### **General University and Program Requirements**

To be awarded a bachelor's degree through the Liberal Studies Program from UIS, you must fulfill the following requirements:

- **Earn a total of 120 hours** (combining transfer hours and a minimum of 30 hours at UIS). At least 48 credit hours must be earned at the upper division level.

NOTE: A student may include as many as 72 lower division hours in the degree if a petition (Student Petition form can be found at: <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms>) is approved by the LIS advisor and the program *at the time of contracting the degree plan* to include lower division courses above 60 hours (previously earned credits or future coursework). To be considered, the petition must include:

1. a rationale as to how the lower division course(s) could be considered Junior/Senior level coursework (Building upon previous learning and including a level of critical thinking and sophistication expected at the upper division level;) and,
  2. a rationale as to how the coursework complements the student's learning needs and meets LIS degree requirements.
- Satisfy general education requirements (see UIS catalogue).
  - Satisfy University Requirements as follows:

**Incoming Freshmen:** Complete ECCE coursework according to the General Education requirements.

**Transfer students entering summer 2007 semester and prior:** UIS requires 12 semester hours of courses focusing on public affairs and services topics. These can be chosen from two of the following three types of course areas:

*Liberal Studies Colloquia (LSC)* – multidisciplinary courses that engage important issues having significance beyond a single discipline. Each semester, a number of different colloquia are offered. There are no prerequisites for any of these.

*Public Affairs Colloquia (PAC)* – each semester a number of different PAC courses are offered to provide interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary public issues. There are no prerequisites for any of the colloquia.

*Applied Study and Experiential Learning Term (AST)* – Similar to an internship, the applied study term teaches students to learn from experience, acquire skills characteristic of lifelong learners, and develop abilities to apply academic learning to practical problems.

**Transfer students entering fall 2007 semester and beyond** may take LSC and PAC courses as electives but will not be required to complete the 12 hours of credits listed above. Instead, these students will be required to complete the following list of Engaged Citizen Common Experience (ECCE) requirements:

**U.S Communities (3 hours)** – courses should broaden a students’ knowledge about substantial, distinctive, and complex aspects of the history, society, politics, and culture of United States communities.

**Global Awareness (3 hours)** – courses should help students understand and function in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing environment and to develop an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

**Engagement Experience (3 hours)** – courses provide structured opportunities for students to integrate knowledge, practice, and reflection in the context of engaged citizenship. Opportunities include Applied Studies Term, Credit for Prior Learning, service-learning courses, research projects, and study abroad.

**ECCE Elective (3 hours)**

**ECCE Speakers Series (1 hour)**

- Receive certification of adequacy of communications skills from the LIS program (certification is awarded upon satisfactory completion of LIS 301).
- Complete LIS 301, LIS 451 and a minimum of four hours of LIS elective courses.
- Complete course work with a cumulative UIS grade point average of at least 2.0
- Complete your degree contract proposal and a liberal and integrative studies paper, which must be approved by the LIS Director.

- Complete the Graduation Contract (See <http://www.uis.edu/graduation> for deadlines) and receive approval from LIS advisor and LIS Director.
- Pay a graduation fee of \$25 (subject to change)

### **Waivers**

It is possible to obtain waivers for program requirements. If you feel that you qualify for a course waiver, or are in an exceptional circumstance, consult your LIS advisor.

### **Grading Option: Credit / No Credit**

The Liberal Studies Program allows students to choose a traditional grading scale or a credit/no credit option for each course except LIS 301, LIS 342, LIS 380, LIS 499, and LIS 451, offered on a credit/no credit basis only.

Students may select the credit/no credit ("CR/NC") grading option when they register. They may also register such intent with the Office of Admissions and Records before the course is three-fourths completed, or on or before the last day to withdraw; no changes are acceptable after this designated date.

Credit is awarded under the credit/no credit grading option when the undergraduate student's work represents a grade of "C" or better. When a student's work is not equivalent to the relevant grade, a grade of "NC" is recorded on the transcript.

Courses taken under the credit/no credit grading option are not included in the calculation of the grade-point average. For courses taken under this option, the symbols "CR," "NC," and "W" are recorded on transcripts as appropriate.

## **FAQs**

### **Can I change my academic advisor?**

In most cases, a student's LIS 301 instructor is assigned as their academic advisor. This does not insure that a student and their advisor will be personally compatible or that the advisor's academic discipline will coincide with the student's interests. For these reasons, you are free to change your academic advisor although we do ask that you postpone such a change until your LIS 301 degree plan has been approved. For a full list of possible academic advisors, please refer to the faculty information on the LIS program website. You should contact the faculty member to make sure that they are able to take on additional advisees. If they are agreeable, you should complete the Undergraduate Selection/Change of Major/Minor and/or Adviser Form which you can find on the registration website under the R and R Online Forms link.

### **How do I change my major?**

If you should decide to change your major, you may do so by completing the Undergraduate Selection/Change of Major/Minor and/or Adviser Form which you can find on the registration website under the R and R Online Forms link. You should contact your new program's office to arrange advisement before registering in future courses.

### **How do I drop a class?**

Before you drop a class, it is a good idea to contact your instructor to discuss your concerns since it may be possible to resolve these issues without dropping the course. If you decide that dropping the course is your best option, you may do so using the same system that you used to register. Dropping a class may have a negative impact on your financial aid. If you are receiving financial aid or scholarships, you should contact the financial aid office before dropping a class.

### **Is there a deadline for dropping a class?**

Yes. You should consult Drop/Withdrawal Policy which is published every semester. If you wish to completely withdraw from a semester, without being responsible for tuition or fees, you must drop before the first day of the semester. You may withdraw from all courses once the semester begins, but you will be charged a percentage of your tuition and fees. This percentage increases each week until the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, at which point you will owe full tuition and fees. The absolute final day to drop a class is the Friday of the 13<sup>th</sup> week of the semester – the exact date is published each semester in the Drop Withdrawal Policy. As long as you remain enrolled, you may also add ad/or drop classes for the first two weeks of a semester. Your final tuition will be based upon your enrollment at the end of that two week period.

### **Is there a deadline for changing my grading option from a letter grade to credit/no credit?**

Yes, the final day to change your grading option is the Friday of the 13<sup>th</sup> week of the semester – the exact date is published each semester in the Drop Withdrawal Policy. It is worth noting that it is not always possible to change your grading option. Some programs will not allow a student to take their offerings with the credit/no credit option. Conversely, some classes may only be taken under the credit/no credit option.

### **What are the pros and cons of the credit/no credit option?**

Credit/no credit courses are not included in the grade point average calculation so this option may be helpful if you are having trouble in a course and trying to preserve a high GPA. On the other

hand, to earn credit in a credit/no credit course, you must earn a higher grade than you would need in a traditionally graded course – you could earn credit with a D- in a traditionally graded course but you would need at least a C to earn credit in a credit/no credit course. While the LIS program allows you to take all of your courses credit/no credit, you should consider this option carefully, particularly if you are considering a graduate degree or would like to graduate with honors.

When you apply to a graduate program, that program will want to assess your academic skills and will likely rely upon your GPA as a major factor in this process. Having too many credit/no credit courses on your transcript may make it difficult for a future program to adequately assess your skills, so you should use this option sparingly. You must have at least 30 graded UIS hours to earn graduation honors. You must have at least 8 graded hours in a given semester to be considered for the Dean's list.

### **For More Information**

For more information about specific UIS policies or procedures, contact:

- ▶ Admissions                      217-206-4847, University Hall Building, Rm. 1080
- ▶ Registration                    217-206-6174, University Hall Building, Rm. 1094
- ▶ LIS Program                    217-206-6962, University Hall Building, Rm. 3038
- ▶ Dean of Liberal Arts/Sciences   217-206-6512, University Hall Building, Rm. 3000

All offices can be contacted through the UIS homepage at [www.uis.edu](http://www.uis.edu)

The UIS mailing address is: Liberal Studies Program, University Hall Building, Rm. 3038, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703-5407.

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Office: UHB 3038

LIS Graduate Assistant  
217-206-8352 [lis-ga@uis.edu](mailto:lis-ga@uis.edu)  
Office: UHB 3043

## **Other important resources**

Technical Support 217-206-7357 [techsupport@uis.edu](mailto:techsupport@uis.edu)  
Office: HSB 127

Illinois Virtual Campus 217-244-9531 [ivc@uillinois.edu](mailto:ivc@uillinois.edu)

LIS Website [www.uis.edu/liberalstudies](http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies)

**"A [person] who had studied at many metaphysical schools came to Nasrudin. 'I hope you will help me,' s(he) said, 'because I have spent so much time studying at these schools.'"**

**" 'Alas!', said Nasrudin, 'you have studied the teachers and the teachings. What should have happened is that the teachers and their teachings should have studied you!' "**

*Sufi Wisdom from The Pleasantries  
of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin  
(Steinem, 1992)*

## **Chapter 2:**

### **THE LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW**

You have decided to participate in the Liberal Studies program (LIS) because, through discussion with faculty and advisers, you concluded that a non-traditional degree program would be the most rewarding and valuable way for you to obtain an academic degree. Consider your decision to proceed thoughtfully and understand thoroughly the nature of the task you face, the commitment it requires, and what you can expect to learn in the process. It is a major undertaking, which requires a commitment of time, and intellectual and emotional energy to integrate and synthesize personal and professional experiences, and academic and professional goals into a self-designed academic program.

#### **Learning and the Liberal Studies Program**

Adults share certain expectations in order to consider an educational experience legitimate and rewarding. As learners we need to feel that there are purposes to our educational pursuits and that the skills or knowledge we've acquired through participation in degree programs will be useful to us in practical ways. We've built our lives around experiences from which we've learned and want to feel that these experiences will be validated and valued in academic settings. (Knowles, 1987) And, as we have acted as sources of information for others, we want to know that we can be learning resources for others in educational settings. Finally, we generally believe that how we've learned is as important as what we've learned. (Rogers, 1980)

Various educators have theorized about the variety of ways in which people learn. For example, some theorize that an individual's learning style is directly related to her/his cognitive style and

development. (Knox, 1987) Others suppose that one's learning style evolves from her/his ethnic, class or gender experiences. (Belenky, et al., 1985) A central theme on which many of these authors and educators appear to agree is that one's range and depth of experiences shape the ways in which s(he) feels comfortable and confident to learn. The experiences that we've had in our world impact directly upon the ways we integrate information, that is, how we've learned what we know.

For example, some of us may have an affinity for abstract philosophical thought, while others of us prefer to learn through analyzing concrete data. Some of us may prefer to actively apply our learning in new circumstances, while others feel more comfortable observing and reflecting upon situations before actively participating in them. (Knox, 1987) Others of us may rely upon feelings and intuitions to guide our learning processes, while some rely on a carefully-planned, objective presentation of facts; still others may depend upon directly experimenting with and participating in learning opportunities. Although each of us may favor one learning style, we may also use a combination of styles with which to integrate information. For example, we may be able to acquire job skills in a classroom setting in which we are auditorially and visually exposed to new information, as well as in an on-the-job training program where we are required to directly apply our newly-found knowledge.

Because we are constantly confronted with new and changing information and circumstances, an awareness of the ways in which we learn is very valuable. For example, if you are assigned to learn a new skill or piece of information, how do you proceed? Do you ask someone to explain the information to you, and then reflect on its application? Do you jump in, actively experimenting with the new information? Your learning style influences the kinds of instruction or teaching methods that will best support your learning process.

An awareness of the variety of ways in which people learn can also facilitate an understanding of others' learning styles. For example, have you ever been in a class in which the other class members constantly talked to each other? If you are someone who learns from the visual presentation of an instructor, you may have found his or her conversations very distracting. However, it may be that these people shared a learning style that differed from the one with which you felt comfortable; that is, perhaps they learned more from interactive discussion, or from an auditory presentation or exchange. Knowledge of a variety of learning styles can help you understand that people as learners have a range of needs, skills, and styles. This knowledge can also empower you to broaden your own repertoire of skills, accessing a range of abilities to use in individual learning opportunities, as well as in groups.

### **The Capacity for Experiential Learning and the LIS Program**

The assessment and application of experiential learning is essential to designing significant

learning opportunities. The phrase "experiential learning" refers to learning that is derived from situations in which you have experimented with new information and/or skills and directed your own learning process by applying them to new challenges. Dr. Edward Cell (1984, p. 60) notes that, "experiential learning occurs when direct interaction with our world or ourselves results in a change in behavior, interpretation, autonomy or creativity." These learning experiences may focus upon career, family, volunteer, and/or interpersonal areas, or may encompass other areas of specific interest to you. Learning how to learn and acknowledging your learning process are prerequisites to solving new kinds of problems throughout your life and are essential to future decision-making and problem solving. Once you are able to reflect upon your life's experiences, you will be able to use the information and insights you've achieved to design new experiences. In early consultation with members of the LIS faculty, you will discuss the role experiential learning can play in meeting your particular learning needs and goals.

### **Program Overview**

The Liberal Studies program at University of Illinois at Springfield is designed for those students who have clear but unique goals that cannot be met in traditional degree programs. LIS provides the flexibility often demanded by adult learners who want to integrate continuing education with their responsibilities on the job, at home and in their communities. The LIS program allows you to design a course of study that is consistent with your particular goals and needs.

In designing an individualized curriculum, you will develop skills that promote critical thinking by developing and participating in unique and meaningful learning experiences. You will be responsible for choosing and integrating your own learning activities, and for evaluating and revising your own curricular design. Program faculty facilitate and support this learning process, promoting growth in personal autonomy and decision-making.

Individualized self-assessment, independent study, credit for prior learning and participation in decisions about requirements are all program features. LIS faculty strongly believe that it is important for you to make the decisions that will affect your future; although expert advice plays an important role in those decisions, you are responsible for carefully weighing this advice. As an LIS student, you may draw upon the resources of the entire university in selecting courses and faculty guidance.

### **What Problems Have People Encountered?**

An awareness of some of the difficulties experienced by previous learners might be useful to you in making a decision whether or not to pursue a non-traditional academic degree. Because most of us have been educated in the traditions that place the teacher as the center of authority, we may have difficulty assuming responsibility for our own learning to become self-directed, autonomous learners;

these assumptions about learning comprise the philosophical foundation of non-traditional learning processes, such as participation in the Liberal Studies program.

Depending upon your choice of possible learning options available to students in the Liberal Studies program, such as independent studies, tutorials, or participation in the Credit for Prior Learning Program, some learners may find working in an unstructured or ambiguous academic environment especially challenging.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarizing means presenting someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions as your own. The UIS catalog states that plagiarism is usually done without proper acknowledgement in one of the following three forms:

- ▶ the inclusion of another person's writing in one's own essay;
- ▶ paraphrasing of another person's work; and/or,
- ▶ presentation of another person's original theories, or views.

If an allegation of plagiarism exists, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated and carried out within the academic program of the teaching faculty in which the alleged offense occurred. In the case that a student is alleged to have committed plagiarism, an instructor may refuse to grade the assignment and record it as no credit. Penalties may include no credit (i.e., failure) in the course as well as recommendation for disciplinary probation, suspension or dismissal from the class, program or the university.

### **Important Resources**

As you develop your degree program plan, there are two very important resources that previous LIS students have found invaluable to their work.

The Center for Teaching and Learning, located on the 4th floor in Brookens on the main campus and at [www.uis.edu/ctl](http://www.uis.edu/ctl), is an academic support service which offers students assistance with math, writing, and English as a second language, at no cost. In addition, student tutors are available to help with a range of subjects. Although the "Center" is helpful to learners who want to improve their current skills and abilities, it is also an important resource for assisting them in editing. We strongly encourage you to become familiar with this important and useful resource.

The library, also located in Brookens on the UIS campus and online at [www.uis.edu/library](http://www.uis.edu/library) has a large collection of materials for use. If you are uncertain as to how to locate particular topics or authors in the library, stop or email someone at the Information Desk; they will be happy to help with specific

questions, or provide you with general information and a tour, if needed.

Feedback we have obtained from students who have previously participated in the Liberal Studies program indicates that it is quite a challenging and growth-producing process. It asks you to use and/or develop writing, editing and proofreading skills; abilities to be introspective and reflective, and to evaluate strengths and weaknesses; verbal communication skills; and diplomacy and negotiation skills.

We hope that you find the process exciting, and thought-provoking. If, at any time, you have questions about the any aspect of the program, contact one of LIS faculty members.

**"One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time."**

Andre Gide  
(Kehl, 1983)

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

The degree contract plan is a statement of your academic goals and learning needs; it reflects the range of research activities you will undertake and the academic subjects you will study. Designing your degree contract is a developmental process, which demonstrates the acquisition of new learning while building on past competencies. You will complete your degree contract plan as the major written product of LIS 301, "Self-directed Learning."

As we have previously discussed, in a traditional program the faculty alone designs the curriculum; however, in the LIS program you initiate the design process in conjunction with your adviser. During your initial semester in the program, you should establish a relationship with your faculty adviser (generally the LIS 301 instructor) who will work with you throughout your academic program. You will work with your LIS 301 instructor to design a curriculum, unique to your educational, career, and personal goals.

**You have the option to revise your original degree proposal in light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities. These revisions require the approval of your LIS adviser.**

#### **Components of the Contract**

The degree contract contains an autobiographical account of your past achievements, a statement of your educational goals and learning needs, a resource inventory, and your proposed curriculum. The components that constitute your curriculum reflect the range of your learning skills and activities; the design of the degree contract must include the acquisition of new undergraduate learning and any previous coursework you wish to be part of your 60-hour LIS degree.

The areas of a degree contract that you will work on in LIS 301 are the

1. Learning Autobiography
2. Goals Statement
3. Personal Philosophy of Education
4. Learning Needs Statement

5. Narrative Curriculum, describing each course to be included:
  - ◆ Course Title and Description from the Catalog(s)
  - ◆ Brief Rationale for Inclusion in the Degree Program
  - ◆ Amount of Credit Hours for Each Course
  - ◆ Curriculum Summary Schedule/Timeline
6. Inventory of Learning Resources
7. A Writing Sample and Degree Contract Plan signed by your LIS 301 instructor, yourself and the LIS Director.

- **The Role of Your LIS Adviser**

Following admission to the university, you will be advised to enroll in LIS 301. The instructor of your section will most likely be assigned as your faculty adviser. Your adviser is available to help you interpret LIS procedures, such as allocating credits or planning the experiential aspects of your degree proposal. All administrative procedures in connection with your work are the responsibility of your LIS adviser. He/she is responsible for the overall supervision of your program and your progress; however, questions of academic quality may be referred to academic specialists in a particular department. **Send all written communications and documents related to your degree proposal and program to your LIS 301 instructor.** After completing LIS 301, you can depend on your LIS adviser for clarification and advice on procedures, policies and academic decisions. At any time you may change advisers by completing a "Selection of Faculty Adviser" form with the newly selected LIS faculty member. You can obtain these forms from the Registrar, or online at <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms>.

It's up to you to take the initiative in the academic advising process. You may want to arrange appointments with your LIS adviser prior to each registration, and maintain contact with her/him throughout your academic studies. It is especially important to consult with your LIS adviser prior to participating in any alternative educational activities, such as the Credit for Prior Learning program, tutorials, independent field projects, etc. Be sure to contact your LIS adviser or LIS staff prior to your final term of study to review graduate requirements.

### **Additional Academic Resources**

Using a variety of academic resources provides the breadth of viewpoint and expertise appropriate to undergraduate study. Therefore, academic resource people may be added as deemed

necessary by your LIS adviser as consultants or instructors for tutorials or independent studies.

### **General Program Guidelines**

- 1. In a program such as the Liberal Studies Program, you must take responsibility for defining your educational goals, for designing the program of study, and for selecting resources appropriate to your program. While LIS advisers may suggest ways and means to identify and select potential resource persons and tutors, the decision is yours.**
- 2. While the degree plan is your responsibility, we know that all students need direction in designing this plan. Outside resources can provide advice about generally accepted standards of professional competence for academic focus areas. Specific faculty also can advise on current research methodologies and research strategies. They might take an active role in the development and assessment of your degree plan if you desire.**

### **Phases in Completing the LIS Bachelor of Arts**

#### **Phase One:**

- a. Develop your degree contract plan (as previously discussed).**
- b. Submit your degree plan to your LIS 301 teacher when you are satisfied that it represents a feasible and academically sound program of study. Your LIS 301 teacher will see that your approved writing sample and degree plan are submitted to the LIS Program for further review by the date grades are due for the semester in which you took the course. You will receive notification when your materials have been accepted by the LIS Program.**

**If for some reason, you are not able to complete the course and submit your degree plan to the Program by the fourth week of the second semester after initial enrollment in LIS 301, the Program will put a hold on your registration. By the beginning of the third semester including summer, you will receive a letter indicating that you are no longer a LIS major. For any of these eventualities, you need to keep in close contact with your LIS 301 instructor/advisor.**

#### **Phase Two:**

- a. After you submit your plan to the LIS Program, proceed with your chosen learning plans and activities.**
- b. During the course of your academic program, you should feel free to contact your adviser from time to time.**
- c. You always have the option, in the light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities to revise your original degree plan. Such revisions require the approval of your LIS adviser. You submit a revised plan noting the courses being deleted and the substitutes with a brief explanation.**

**Phase Three:**

- a. In the last semester of coursework you will write a major paper, summarizing your learning and the ways it reflects the original goals of your degree proposal in LIS 451, Senior Seminar. Save all your papers, required texts, and other class materials.**
- b. You may choose to write an Honors Thesis as a culminating activity of your undergraduate study. A proposal will be written, shared and approved by your adviser before registering for the course credits.**

**"Only the dreamer can change the dream."**

John Logan  
(Kehl, 1983)

## Chapter 4

### THE CURRICULUM



As faculty teaching in the Liberal Studies Program, our goal is to assist you as you plan and implement a degree program within a non-traditional academic framework. We view self-responsibility for learning as a legitimate and exciting process that emphasizes directing your own educational process. We rely heavily on your participation as an adult learner with important and valid life experiences, knowledge, opinions and values.

#### **The Integrated Core: Boyer Categories**

The categories that provide the framework for your degree is based on those offered by Ernest Boyer in *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Courses that best fit the overall objectives of a liberal studies degree often overlap into several categories. A self-designed liberal studies degree does not impose distribution requirements; the objective is to build a well-rounded baccalaureate degree that takes into account all previous college-level learning, including lower-division courses and relevant life experience. "General education is not a single set of courses. It is a program with a clear objective, one that can be achieved in a variety of ways." (Boyer, p. 101)

Examples of course that meet each of these categories can be found at the LIS website under <http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies/curriculum/index.html>

### ***IDENTITY: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING***

Ultimately, the aim of common learning is the understanding of oneself and a capacity for sound judgment. Knowledge is significant when it shows us who we are as individuals and citizens, and touches the hopes and fears that makes each of us both unique beings and a part of corporate humanity. Sound judgment at its best brings purpose and meaning to human lives. Who am I? What is the purpose of life? What are my obligations to others; what are theirs to me? The answers to these questions are notoriously elusive but the questions are impossible to avoid. They are an essential part of the search for identity and the quest for meaning. (Boyer, p. 98)

### ***LANGUAGE: THE CRUCIAL CONNECTION***

The sending and receiving of sophisticated messages set human beings apart from all other forms of life. As humans, we take infinite pains to reflect on and interpret our experiences. We capture feelings and ideas with symbols and send them on to others through a process we call language. Language, in its many manifestations, is at the heart of understanding who we are and what we might become. What are the theories of the origins of language? How do symbol systems shape the values of culture? How has language, through great literature, enriched our lives and enlarged our vision? Where are the possibilities and problems introduced by the information revolution? Learning about the power of language in human experience and becoming proficient in more than one language are, we believe, essential aspects of the integrated core. (Boyer, p. 92-93)

### ***WORK: THE VALUE OF VOCATION***

Except for a handful of individuals, no one can choose not to work. Everything we know about a society suggests that work choices are exceedingly important in shaping the values and social relations of a time. The characteristics of a culture can, in fact, be defined by looking at work: who works; what work is valued; how is it rewarded; how do people use their leisure time? It is important for colleges to help students to consider the universal experiences of producing and consuming, and put their work in larger context. (Boyer, p. 97-98)

### ***HERITAGE: THE LIVING PAST***

The human species uniquely has the capacity to recall the past and anticipate the future. Through these remembrances and anticipations today's reality is shaped. In an age when planned obsolescence seems to make everything but the fleeting moment remote and irrelevant, the study of

history can strengthen awareness of tradition, of heritage, of meaning beyond the present, without which there is no culture. It is imperative that all students learn about the women and men and the events that have contributed consequentially to our own history and to other cultures, too. (Boyer, p. 94)

### ***NATURE: ECOLOGY OF THE PLANET***

All forms of life on the planet Earth are interlocked. No core of learning is complete without introducing students to the ordered yet symbiotic nature of the universe. For this discovery, science is the key. It is through science that students explore the elegant underlying patterns of the natural world and begin to understand that all elements of nature are related. Beyond the processes of nature, common learning also must include a study of how science and technology are joined, and consider the ethical and social issues that have resulted from this merger. (Boyer, p. 96)

### ***ART: THE ESTHETIC DIMENSION***

There are human experiences that defy the power of words to describe them. To express our most intimate, most profoundly moving feelings and ideas we use a more sensitive, more subtle language we call the arts. Music, dance, and the visual arts are no longer just desirable, they are essential. And the integrated core should reveal how these symbol systems have, in the past, affirmed our humanity and illustrate how they remain relevant today. Students need to understand the unique ability of the arts to affirm and dignify our lives and remain the means by which the quality of a civilization can be measured. (Boyer, p. 93-94)

### ***INSTITUTIONS: THE SOCIAL WEB***

Institutions make up the social fabric of life. We are born into institutions, we pass much of our lives in them, and institutions are involved when we die. No integrated core has been successful if it has not acquainted students with the major institutions--the family, the church, legislative and judicial bodies, for example--that make up our world. The curriculum we have in mind would look at the characteristics of institutions: how they came into being, grow strong, become oppressive or weak, and sometimes fail. The successful approach will always ask what institutions have to do with us, how are we influenced by them, and how we can direct our institutions toward constructive ends. (Boyer, p. 95).

### ***TOOLS AND SKILLS***

The Tools and Skills category is not one of the seven areas suggested by Boyer. We have

included it because certain baccalaureate-level learning needs do not easily fit into an interdisciplinary model of general education. Courses and other learning experiences involving math, statistics, research methods, computer skills and library research fall into this group.

## **THE MAJOR**

*The Liberal Studies program requires the following structure for all degree plans:*

- ▶ 10 hours Liberal Studies core courses
- ▶ 38 hours focused elective coursework
- ▶ Freshmen/Transfer Course Requirements

### **Liberal Studies Core Courses**

In response to the demands of self-directed learning, the Liberal Studies program requires a sequence of colloquia and courses that focuses on the learning process and on the skills and understanding needed for autonomous learning. The purposes of these course requirements are both to guarantee a continuing dialogue between you and your adviser to provide opportunities for you to engage in activities essential to autonomy, namely, integration of learning and assessment of the learning process. The following course descriptions, taken from the current UIS catalog, represent the Liberal Studies program curriculum.

#### *LIS 301: Self-directed Learning (4 hours) Required*

Serves as an introduction to the Liberal Studies program and focuses on the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to become a self-directed, autonomous learner. Topics include an examination of collegiate education philosophy, theory and practice; dynamics of power; self-assessment; goal setting; designing effective learning experiences; documenting and evaluating independent learning; organizing learning resources; and designing a liberal studies curriculum. Students design a draft of a degree proposal.

#### *LIS 342 Conducting Liberal Studies Research (2 hours)*

This course is designed for the Liberal Studies student who wants to develop skills in critical thinking by conducting web-based scholarly research. The topic will be chosen by the student and will relate to the learning needs identified in the student's degree proposal.

Although a research paper will not be expected as the outcome of this course, the course is structured to prepare you for writing a scholarly research paper.

*LIS 360 & 460-Special Topics in Liberal Studies (4 hours)*

This course serves as an exploration of general liberal studies topics and topics will vary. For example: Themes in Western Culture was taught summer 2005 and provided an overview of notable themes and thinkers in western culture. Fall of 2007, the course, Stress Public Health and You was offered. Course serves as an LIS elective.

*LIS 380: Exploration of Learning Resources (1-6 hours)*

This is an independent study exploring a topic within liberal studies or directly related to the student's degree plan. A Journal of exploration process, comprehensive resources inventory, and demonstration of learning (a major product) may be required. This may be repeated for a maximum of 8 hours. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student must complete an **Independent Study Learning contract** with a faculty supervisor. Can be taken once the degree proposal has been accepted. Offered in the fall, summer and spring.

*LIS 499 Independent Study: Tutorial (1-6 hours)*

This option involves readings or research on trends and current issues in the student's area of study. In consultation with faculty, students define topics integral to satisfying their learning needs. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student must complete an **Independent Study Learning contract** with a faculty supervisor. This can be taken once the degree proposal has been accepted. Offered spring, summer or fall.

*LIS 451: Senior Seminar (2 hours) Required*

The capstone course uses the principles of integration to reflect on degree learning experiences. Students prepare a Liberal and Integrative Studies paper as the final product. Students choosing to do an Honor's Thesis complete their proposal at this time. This is the final course in the LIS degree process. Offered fall, spring and summer online.

*LIS 471 Honors Thesis (2 hours)*

Student must complete an Honor's Thesis Proposal prior to enrollment. This paper demonstrates learning and research in at least 2 of the Boyer categories. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student's LIS adviser must approve the thesis proposal. Must be completed during term of expected graduation. Offered spring, summer and fall.

**See the LIS Website for additional classes to meet this requirement.**

### *38 hours of focused elective coursework*

Students must choose 38 hours of elective courses that focus on the Boyer Categories. Possible courses that may meet the requirements of these categories include the following:

Online students can review courses that have been taught online at UIS by looking at the **Online Course History** on the LIS website. Since not all classes at UIS are taught every semester, this .pdf file can give you a historical basis for anticipating when courses may be taught. You may need to download Adobe Acrobat Reader to view it.

**Self designed themes** – you may design their electives around goals for the future. For example, students who plan to continue their education in a graduate program, may use their electives to meet prerequisite course work or learning deficits. Career professionals may wish to enhance their current career with selections that meet their learning needs.

**Minor Concentrations** – You may choose courses to comprise a minor concentration from a number of minors offered, including Women's Studies, African-American Studies, or International Studies. Check individual program websites to determine the number of hours and courses required.

**Teacher Education Preparation**--Students wishing to pursue certification from the State of Illinois to become elementary teachers should seek the advice of the UIS TEP program. LIS students have been able to complete the required certification as a minor in the degree contract. The TEP program has its own admissions procedures and deadlines. To obtain more information [www.uis.edu/tep](http://www.uis.edu/tep) or call 217-206-6682.

**Multidisciplinary Courses** – UIS offers multidisciplinary courses that provide a thematic integration across disciplines. Offered each semester, these are compatible with the general goals of a Liberal Studies Online degree.

**Credit for Prior Learning** – The Credit for Prior Learning Program offers a course to assist in the development of materials used to assess experiential learning. Through the process of completing AST 301, the Assessment of Experiential Learning gained through extensive work or volunteer experiences, students prepare a written portfolio that includes a series of written essays and documentation.

AST 301 assists students in preparing a detailed portfolio that describes and documents the learning to be assessed for credit. In preparing portfolios, students plan their proposed courses of study in the context of previous learning experiences and attempt to develop awarenesses of their strengths as learners. In addition to classroom work, students consult individually with appropriate faculty members. Through established procedures, faculty members assess portfolios, evaluating requests for academic credit in individual areas of expertise. A university-wide faculty committee monitors the entire CPL process.

The maximum CPL credits that students can bring to the degree are 12 hours. Please make sure you consult with your LIS adviser on how CPL credits will fit into your degree. The program reserves the right to limit the number of CPL credits allowable within the degree and looks for a balance of Boyer categories in the degree plan.

**Independent Studies/Tutorials** –LIS 499 "Independent Study: Tutorial," & LIS 380, "Exploration of Learning Resources "

As one expression of the university's commitment to the individual student, faculty members occasionally supervise independent studies in the form of tutorials, LIS 499 and LIS 380. These independent studies are intended to supplement, not supplant, regular course offerings. Students desiring to structure one-to-one learning experiences not regularly available but nevertheless relevant to their programs of study must complete an Independent Study Proposal (see Chapter 13 on details) and secure the consent of a faculty member prior to registration. You can choose this option only after the LIS Program has approved your degree plan.

### ***Freshmen/Transfer Course Requirements***

Incoming Freshmen: Complete ECCE coursework according to the General Education requirements.

**Transfer students entering summer 2007 semester and prior:** UIS requires 12 semester hours of courses focusing on public affairs and services topics. These can be chosen from two of the following three types of course areas:

Liberal Studies Colloquia (LSC) – multidisciplinary courses that engage important issues having significance beyond a single discipline. Each semester, a number of different colloquia are offered. There are no prerequisites for any of these.

Public Affairs Colloquia (PAC) – each semester a number of different PAC courses are offered to provide interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary public issues. There are no prerequisites for any of the colloquia.

Applied Study and Experiential Learning Term (AST) – Similar to an internship, the applied study term teaches students to learn from experience, acquire skills characteristic of lifelong learners, and develop abilities to apply academic learning to practical problems.

**Transfer students entering fall 2007 semester and beyond** may take LSC and PAC courses as electives but will not be required to complete the 12 hours of credits listed above. Instead, these students will be required to complete the following list of Engaged Citizen Common Experience (ECCE) requirements:

Engaged Citizenship Common Experience (ECCE)

**U.S Communities (3 hours)** – courses should broaden a students’ knowledge about substantial, distinctive, and complex aspects of the history, society, politics, and culture of United States communities.

**Global Awareness (3 hours)** – courses should help students understand and function in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing environment and to develop an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

**Engagement Experience (3 hours)** – courses provide structured opportunities for students to integrate knowledge, practice, and reflection in the context of engaged citizenship. Opportunities include Applied Studies Term, Credit for Prior Learning, service-learning courses, research projects, and study abroad.

**ECCE Elective (3 hours)**

**ECCE Speakers Series (1 hour)**

NOTE: In some instances, the interdisciplinary nature of the student’s program will suggest the need for educational experiences that total more than the required minimum number of credit hours. The final number of credit hours for the degree must be negotiated between the student and the LIS 301 instructor at the time the degree plan is approved.

**Don't be satisfied with stories,  
How things have gone for others.  
Unfold your own myth.**

**Rummy  
(Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989)**

## **Chapter 5:**

### **THE LEARNING AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

The learning autobiography, written in LIS 301, is a reflective document that provides an overview of significant aspects of your educational, personal, and professional life. It demonstrates your ability to integrate the experiences of your life into a lifelong learning process; that is, it represents the ways you've assigned meaning to your own life's story. Your learning autobiography provides you with valuable information as you develop your academic plans. This will demonstrate to the LIS program that you are a unique human being with a history of accomplishments, competencies, needs and goals which require more than a “one size fits all” approach to education.

When completed, your learning autobiography (generally 8-10 pages in length) demonstrates how well you have acquired critical and analytical thinking skills and writing skills at the core of a self directed learning process. The paper can be written in a variety of styles. Often a theme ties your ideas together. A special quotation or words to a special song can form a focus for your story.

Most LIS students use a chronological order to describe their lives, beginning at birth, presenting some of the highlights of early childhood, and focusing upon significant learning experiences from adolescence through the present. Often students choose to put their own stories into a wider historical (or herstorical) context by explaining what was happening in the world when they were growing up. The depth of your analysis is your call. Some students choose to go into more depth than others. If you remember that the emphasis is on the learning that may help guide how you will approach the task. The LIS program does not require that you bare your soul and secrets to others. It does require that you focus on the learning experiences that have been the foundation for the LIS learning journey known as your BA degree.

Writing your autobiography is a unique opportunity for you to re-tell significant life learning experiences and analyze them at the same time. Focus on the uniqueness of your life to discover central themes that are essential to you. Be uniquely creative and thoughtful as you proceed through your writing process. The suggestions and exercises provided in *Your Mythic Journey* (by Sam Keen and Anne Valley-Fox) may be helpful as you create your story. Select the questions and strategies that are most interesting and useful to you. As you begin to develop your learning autobiography, focus on basic

markers or turning points in your life that were particularly significant to you.

Because you will undoubtedly have a wealth of material to work with as you prepare your autobiography, you will need to be quite selective. Your goal for this piece is to develop a creative analysis of your life's experiences, not simply a narrative resume. When you have identified those experiences that have been of greatest significance to you in your life, you have a framework from which to select appropriate details and organize your reflections. Your major focus should involve your college-level learning history; however, it is also important to consider the overall context of your life experience as you lay the foundation for the academic choices you are about to make.

As you reflect upon your childhood and family, it is important is that you convey your understanding of how key childhood and familial experiences have shaped the person you have become. As you are aware, the LIS degree contract focuses on your academic plan; in your autobiography include reflections upon who you are as a learner. Thinking about your early school experiences and the people who influenced you may assist you in clarifying how you see education and learning in your life. Strive to increase your understanding of how you developed into the learner you are today and those skills and strengths that contributed to your effectiveness as a learner. If traditional approaches to learning have been important to you (e.g., reading books, taking classes, consulting experts) include these in your autobiography.

If work has been the primary focus of your adult life, it may be tempting to make your autobiography a descriptive resume. However, it is important to show how you see your work in the context of your life as a whole. Explore the broader meanings of work in your life to understand how work is related to other components of your life. What have you learned from work that is important to your short and long term goals?

You alone decide what information becomes part of your autobiography. As you reflect on your life, you may consider the full range of personal experiences that you need to explore, but you may decide to keep certain aspects of your history private. Use the experience of writing your autobiography as the context for looking at those questions that seem important to you at this point in your life. As you develop a draft, you will be in a better position to decide what facets of your personal life to disclose.

You will undoubtedly gather more material than you can use in your autobiography. Allow yourself plenty of time to think about your past experiences and explore various ways of organizing the material into a coherent story that conveys your individuality. Consult with family, friends, others writing autobiographies, and instructors to assist you in recalling memories and analyzing their meanings. Photograph albums and other family documents may be valuable resources as you proceed.

As you develop a draft of your autobiography, present a balanced view of yourself, discussing events from a variety of aspects of your life. Pay attention to various components of your experiences (e.g., learning and education, work and career, family and community, and leisure activities), and the ways they are interrelated and have shaped you.

### **Some Final Thoughts About Writing the Learning Autobiography**

Many learners have found the learning autobiography challenging to write. By the time you have reached adulthood you probably have not had the luxury of reflecting on the meaning of your life and your choices; maybe you have not had the inclination to self reflect on memories that may be bitter or painful. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by writing this particular piece, discuss your feelings in class or speak to your LIS 301 instructor; you certainly aren't the first person who has felt this way, and chances are others in your class have similar feelings. As a group you will be able to brainstorm about ideas for completing this piece, and to obtain support for your own writing process.

Remember that you control what you choose to include in this document. Note that instructors aren't necessarily looking for "glittering success stories;" although those are valuable experiences, we realize that important life lessons are not often learned easily or without cost. Instructors do not review your autobiography to make judgments about the choices you've made; they read to find examples of learning and the ways you've thought about and applied those learnings to new and different life situations.

Although challenging, many learners find composing this piece a very important experience, valuable long after the class has ended. After all, it isn't every day that you're asked, "how have you lived; what has it all meant; what has your hero's/heroine's journey been?"

**[Wo]man is not the sum total of what [s]he  
has already, but rather the sum of what [s]he  
does not yet have, of what [s]he could have.**

**Jean Paul Sartre  
(Kehl, 1983)**

## **Chapter 6:**

### **THE GOALS STATEMENT**

Now that you have analyzed your past, it is time to consider your future. The development of a goals statement focuses on both the medium- and long-term goals which grow out of your discussion of the experiences, beliefs, values and assumptions presented in your autobiography.

The paper is generally 2-3 pages in length. The goals statement helps you plan your degree program, providing a foundation for deciding on specific courses to include. This section presents the overall context of your vision, aspirations, dreams and/or life goals, even if they don't have direct implications for the degree that you are seeking. Include brief discussions of the social trends and projections of experts in your field(s) of interest.

As a first step in the process of developing a goals statement reflect on your current interests in undertaking new learning activities. Why are you considering undertaking college work at this point in your life? What expectations do you bring to this process? People attend college for a variety of reasons; becoming clear on your most important needs, hopes, and expectations will enable you to use the learning resources the university has to offer as effectively as possible. Articulating and presenting your assumptions and expectations about the future may help you detect erroneous assumptions about the relationship between a particular course of study and potential career opportunities.

Your statement of goals should focus on medium and long range goals (e.g. to complete a LIS degree to be a freelance writer, or a BA degree to move from a clerical to a professional position). Shorter-term goals as they pertain to specific courses and learning needs will be discussed in the section on Learning Needs Statement.

A typical Goals Statement contains three parts:

- 1) What educational goals have you achieved in the past? This will provide a context for the present and the future. You might write about achieving your dream of an Associates Degree, becoming trained as a registered nurse, being certified as an insurance specialist, completing army training with college courses, or the like.
- 2) Why are you in school now? What is your motivation for returning to get your BA degree? Are you at UIS for personal satisfaction, to gain a specific career position, to learn new things?

- 3) What are your future goals? What medium range goals do you have that might be connected to your BA degree? What long term goals do you have that might require more education?

Conclude the statement with a description of the kind of degree you would like to pursue within a liberal studies context. Review your goals statements as you continue developing your degree proposal and make revisions as necessary. Consult your LIS advisor or the UIS Career Service Office for help with educational planning ([www.uis.edu/career](http://www.uis.edu/career)).

**"It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail. "**

**Albert Einstein  
(Rogers, 1994)**

## **Chapter 7:**

### **PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

For a person about to embark on the journey toward a self-designed degree, this paper helps you consolidate your general thoughts about education and more specifically the learning processes that best suit you at this point in your undergraduate education. Based on your own assessment of past learning, comment on those experiences which have led to significant learning. Consider the conditions and teaching styles that seem to have worked well for you given the variety of learning objectives and subject matter that you have experienced.

Consider and discuss the implications for your approach to learning contained in some of the assigned readings for LIS 301. You will want to include a discussion of your learning style and how that fits into your philosophy of learning. Generally this section is 2-3 pages in length.

Carl Rogers described conventional education as having the following characteristics:

1. *The teachers are the possessors of knowledge, the students the expected recipients.* The teachers are the experts; they know their fields. The students sit with poised pencil and notebook, waiting for the words of wisdom. There is a great difference in the status level between the instructors and the students.
2. *The lecture, or some means of verbal instruction, is the major means of getting knowledge into the recipients. The examination measures the extent to which the students have received it. These are the central elements of this kind of education.* Why the lecture is regarded as the major means of instruction is a mystery to me. Lectures made sense before books were published, but their current rationale is almost never explained. The increasing stress on the examination is also mysterious. Certainly its importance in the United States has increased enormously in the last couple of decades.
3. *The teachers are the possessors of power, the students the ones who obey.* (Administrators are also possessors of power, and both teachers and students are the ones who obey.) Control is always exercised downward.
4. *Rule by authority is the accepted policy in the classroom.* New teachers are often advised, "Be sure you get control of your students on the very first day." The authority figure--the

instructor--is very much the central figure in education. He or she may be greatly admired as a fountain of knowledge, or may be despised, but the teacher is always the center.

5. *Trust is at a minimum.* Most notable is the teachers' distrust of the students. The students cannot be expected to work satisfactorily without the teacher constantly supervising and checking on them. The students' distrust of the teacher is more diffuse--a lack of trust in the teacher's motives, honesty, fairness, competence. There may be a real rapport between an entertaining lecturer and those who are being entertained; there may be admiration for the instructor, but mutual trust is not a noticeable ingredient.

6. *The subjects (the students) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear.* Today, there is not much physical punishment, but public criticism and ridicule and the students' constant fear of failure are even more potent. In my experience this state of fear appears to increase as we go up the educational ladder, because the student has more to lose. In elementary school, the individual may be an object of scorn or be regarded as a dolt. In high school there is added to this the fear of failure to graduate, with its vocational, economic, and educational disadvantages. In college, all these consequences are magnified and intensified. In graduate school, sponsorship by one professor offers even greater opportunities for extreme punishment due to some autocratic whim. Many graduate students have failed to receive their degrees because they have refused to obey, or to conform to every wish of, their major professor. Their position is analogous to that of a slave, subject to the life-and-death power of the master.

7. *Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice.* Students do not participate in choosing their individual goals, curricula, or manner of working. They are chosen for them. Students have no part in the choice of teaching personnel nor any voice in educational policy. Likewise, the teachers often have no choice in choosing their administrative officers. Teachers, too, often have no participation in forming educational policy. All this is in striking contrast to all the teaching *about* the virtues of democracy, the importance of the "free world," and the like. The political practices of the school are in the most striking contrast to what is taught. While being taught that freedom and responsibility are the glorious features of "democracy," the students are experiencing themselves as powerless, as having little freedom, and as having almost no opportunity to exercise choice or carry responsibility.

8. *There is no place for whole persons in the educational system, only for their intellects.* In elementary school, the bursting curiosity and the excess of physical energy characteristic of the normal child are curbed and, if possible, stifled. In junior high and high school, the one overriding interest of all the students--sex and the emotional and physical relationships it involves--is almost totally ignored, and certainly not regarded as a major area for learning. There is very little place for emotions in the secondary school. In college, the situation is even more extreme--it is *only the mind* that is welcomed. (Rogers, 1980)

Although the other texts may be somewhat less explicit in their criticism of traditional approaches to education, you may have discovered advice that was helpful or, on the other hand, you may have encountered ideas that are incompatible with your own philosophy. Comment on such ideas in this

section. Finally, you may wish to explore the relationship between your philosophy of undergraduate education and the choices that you are about to consider when defining your needs and learning strategies.

**"I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."**

**W.B. Yeats  
(Kehl, 1983)**

## **Chapter 8:**

### **THE LEARNING NEEDS STATEMENT**

As previously discussed, the goals statement is grounded in your significant learnings and accomplishments from the past providing your vision of the future and your personal goals, and academic program as one aspect of those goals. In contrast, the learning needs statement focuses upon specific short-term goals of your academic study that are implied by those academic goals. It builds upon information introduced in the goals statement, and specifically discusses those areas of proficiency common to others engaged in an undergraduate study of the liberal arts weighing those against the skills and knowledge that you already possess; now that you have expressed your goals, what do you need to learn to obtain them? Consider learning needs to be those areas in which you need additional skills, knowledge or experiences, and includes a discussion, of the learning needs implied by the Boyer Model.

#### **Developing An Awareness of Your Learning Needs**

After you have discussed the goals for your academic experience, identify those aspects of your degree and specialization(s) that you need and/or want to learn about. Break your educational goals into more specific objectives, smaller and achievable components (or courses) that compose your degree proposal. For example, if the primary emphasis in your degree proposal is women's studies, what are those academic areas that someone who has an undergraduate emphasis in women's studies should know about and be able to discuss? If one of your areas of interest includes women's history, what are the more specific areas in which you need to focus your degree? What do you need to learn? Move beyond your own speculation and consult with experts in the fields relevant to your goals.

Secondly identify your strengths and weaknesses and experiences in the eight areas of the Boyer Model. What courses did you take in the first two years of college and how do they meet the needs of Heritage or Nature? Did you have experiences that gave you insights and experiences equivalent to taking a college course? What areas are missing as you look at the balance across a 120 credit degree? To further articulate a perspective on the knowledge and skills you need, inventory those that you already possess. This awareness will enable you to weigh your current knowledge.

With this knowledge you can determine those aspects of learning which you want to develop

and/or refine. What areas of knowledge and skills do you need to develop to refine your degree program? In your search to determine your learning needs, note which of the areas of knowledge and skills need moderate development, and which ones need extensive development, or which skills you already possess.

Gather any and all relevant information, advice and expertise on areas that you have chosen to pursue. Consult with faculty members and other experts who have some familiarity with the area. Consult other college catalogs and professional accrediting bodies which may exist in related areas.

The learning needs statement should include a summary of your exploration and a discussion of your findings, including any contradictory advice. Add your opinions and decisions about appropriate learning objectives within the context of your current competencies and deficiencies. A summary listing of learning needs associated with the degree along with those that have been met should complete this section.

**"Include the knower in the known."**

**Julian Jaynes  
(Kehl, 1983)**

## **Chapter 9:**

### **THE INVENTORY OF LEARNING RESOURCES**

Before you enrolled in LIS you probably explored the UIS catalog and other resources available to augment your learning process. As a component of the degree proposal, the inventory of learning resources identifies those people, organizations, associations, books/articles or activities (e.g., participating in conferences) that you consider potentially useful in the development of a comprehensive academic curriculum.

The purpose of the inventory is to help you clarify for yourself and to inform your adviser about those resources that will support and strengthen your developing knowledge and skills as you progress through your degree program. While your initial list may be general, your inventory should grow and become more specialized as you become aware of additional opportunities statewide, nationally or internationally. If you are uncertain where to start in compiling your inventory, speak to your adviser or other students and faculty members who share your interests and specializations and who may have awarenesses of prominent spokespeople, significant scholarly works, or major professional organizations in your field.

Your inventory should name each entry by its title, address, phone number(s), contact person(s), and your rationale for including it. Previous LIS students have included such resources as individuals, professional organizations, libraries, research facilities, or other universities in their inventories. In addition, many students have included a "core" bibliography of books, journals, internet-based resources and professional newsletters.

As previously mentioned, it is expected that your inventory will grow and/or change throughout your degree program. Although there are no minimum or maximum numbers of resources to include, you should generally include a variety of resources, and a reasonable selection. Names of UIS faculty should be listed with a brief description of their relevancy for your degree. You should also provide brief titles and/or descriptions of relevant qualifications of other persons listed.

**"Sit, walk or run, but don't wobble."**

**Zen (Kehl, 1983)**

## **Chapter 10:**

### **NARRATIVE CURRICULUM/LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The narrative curriculum describes all courses (e.g., credit for prior learning, independent field projects, tutorials, courses transferred from other universities, etc.) that you plan to include as part of your 60 credit degree contract. There are two components to the narrative curriculum.

Part One: Courses and Rationale

- **Course number and Course title:**

Use the title of the course listed in the UIS catalog or a catalog of another university. In the event that you are taking an independent study or tutorial, name the emphasis of your study in title format.

- **Your Rationale:**

Use the description of the course listed in the UIS catalog, and be sure to add your rationale for including the course in your degree proposal. As stated above, if you are taking an independent study course or tutorial, describe the emphasis of your study.

- **Number of credit hours:**

Include the number of credit hours for each of the courses that you will be taking.

- **Boyer categories assigned:**

**NOTE:** Many interdisciplinary courses can fall into more than one category. List the primary category first.

Use this format in describing all courses that you are including in your degree proposal, including:

- ◆ university requirements;
- ◆ LIS program requirements;
- ◆ program electives;
- ◆ minor requirements (where applicable); and
- ◆ if you have general education deficiencies these must be accounted for in your degree proposal.

## **Part Two: Summary Degree Contract Plan**

When you have completed a detailed presentation of your curriculum and rationale, summarize the information on the degree contract plan. The summary curriculum list presents a concrete picture of your time frames for completing your degree. Simply list the courses (course numbers and titles only) and number of hours and totals that you plan to take according to a tentative calendar and Boyer category. Try to obtain information about those courses which are offered on a cyclical basis (e.g. every Spring, every three years, etc.) in order to anticipate appropriate sequencing and availability. NOTE: See the LIS Website for a Online History File that includes all courses, descriptions and history of when it has been offered.

By presenting your degree curriculum in an organized, narrative manner you will be able to stay focused and directed during your degree program. Further, you will let your adviser know that you are proceeding through your program in a thoughtful and methodical way. It is not unusual to revise your degree plan one, or several times during your academic program as you become aware of additional resources and/or opportunities. Revisions to courses should be approved by your academic advisor by submitting a revised contract noting courses deleted and their replacements with an explanation. Revised time frames do not need approval. Careful and thoughtful planning at the onset allows these types of transitions to occur smoothly and thoughtfully.

*“The difference between the right word and the almost right word  
is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”*

**Mark Twain  
(Kehl, 1983)**

## **Chapter 11:**

### **THE LIBERAL AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES SENIOR PAPER**

As we've discussed, the self-designed degree process at UIS promotes reflection and integration. The degree contract requires that you plan an integrated curriculum, describing your rationale for each course and learning project you propose. The liberal and integrative studies project (LISP) asks you to make a retrospective assessment of your learning experiences. This will be developed in LIS 451, Senior Seminar in the final semester of your course work.

Developing the liberal and integrative studies project paper is completed within the context of LIS 451, "Senior Seminar;" as such, it is completed at the end of your degree program. To enroll you must have completed LIS 301, have a writing sample and an approved degree plan on file in the Program office and be in the final semester of your coursework.

The liberal and integrative studies project paper should add a "scholarly dimension" to your degree proposal; that is, this paper should attest to the intellectual depth you've developed as a result of participation in your academic program. As you reflect upon your learning:

- describe the courses you've taken;
- discuss your educational philosophy and how that was implemented or demonstrated in your degree journey;
- mention the books you have read;
- quote from writers who have had the most profound impact upon your learning;
- discuss the contradictions you have discovered;
- indicate common threads that may help integrate the different ideas, approaches, theories, etc.;
- discuss the implications of your learning in terms of insight, discoveries, and modifications of your degree plan;
- discuss what you have learned in each of the Boyer categories; and,
- attach a bibliography listing those sources which formed the basis of your discussion.

#### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions may further assist you as you develop your liberal and integrative studies project paper.

- Work closely with LIS 451 instructor.
- Don't rely upon your memory of your academic experiences as your only resource.
- Review relevant course materials, such as books, papers, or notes, and use them as references while you're writing.
- Remember to name the sources you've referenced in the text of your paper.

## **Chapter 12:**

### **THE HONORS THESIS**

This is an optional requirement for LIS students and is undertaken in your final semester for two hours credit. The closure project is not simply a tutorial or independent study (e.g. LIS 499 or LIS 380). Its content must be central to your entire curriculum. This means that it must build on some of your core course work and/or independent study. Ask yourself "What is the most advanced and important understanding or ability with which I want my curriculum to end?" In other words, "What do I want as the culmination of the personal and academic growth I will have sought in pursuing my curriculum?" By designing your closure project as an answer to either form of this question you will make it central in the intended sense.

Before your last semester of coursework and entry into LIS 451, contact your LIS faculty advisor about your intention to do an honors thesis. Your advisor will assess your ability to carry out this project on the basis of your G.P.A. (3.5 or above), your writing ability (submit a sample to your advisor), and the centralness of your proposed project to your LIS degree. Once you have been given the okay by your LIS advisor, you must submit a proposal to your LIS advisor and negotiate with a UIS faculty member with expertise in your chosen area outlining your objectives, rationale, resources, work plan and timeline. See guidelines for independent studies for procedures for registration. Once this has been approved, you may carry out your project concurrently with LIS 451 and under direction of your UIS faculty member with expertise in your area of study.

## Chapter 13:

### GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDIES OR TUTORIALS

LIS 380 and LIS 499 are course numbers for independent study projects. All are offered for variable credit, ranging from 1 – 8 credit hours. Credit for a course at UIS is based on the assumption that a typical 4-credit course meets 3 ½ hours a week for 16 weeks (56 hours) and that typical student spends 2 hours of outside preparation time for every hour in class (112 hours).  $56 + 112 = 168$  hours.

For each independent study you conduct under the LIS prefix, you must develop an independent study proposal. These forms are available in the LIS office or online at the LIS website. A draft of your independent study must be completed at the time you contract the degree. Final forms must be completed prior to registration for the term in which the project is to be conducted.

An “Independent Study Proposal” form indicates a proposed title, topic, method of study, amount of instructor-student contact and means of evaluation, as well as the level of study and the hours of credit sought. With this proposal you will describe what you want to learn, how you intend to learn it, and how your learning will be evaluated. If the faculty member accepts the proposal, s(he) signs a “With Permission of Dean” (WPD) form that also must be approved by the appropriate dean and submitted to the Registrar’s office

The Independent Study Proposal Form asks you to draw on skills you have utilized in creating your degree proposal. Specifically, it directs your attention to the following questions:

1. What do you want to learn? (Objectives)
2. Why do you want to learn it? (Rationale)
3. What resources are available for you to draw on? (Resources)
4. How do you plan to use the resources to meet the objectives? (Work Plan)
5. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your work? How will you document your learning? (Evaluation/Documentation)
6. When will you accomplish this learning? (Tentative Schedule)

Choose your UIS faculty sponsor on the basis of her/his expertise in the topic of your independent study. You may also choose an external resource person to work with a LIS faculty member who will turn in your grade. You might also choose a faculty sponsor who might work best with you to stimulate your learning. For example, if you tend to procrastinate, find a sponsor who will work with you on overcoming this.

Consult your sponsoring faculty member to obtain assistance in clarifying these components of your study. If a resource person outside the university will be involved in your study, s/he should also participate in the planning process.

## **SPECIFICS: HOW TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL**

### **Objectives**

The goal is to write objectives that are clear, understandable, and realistic. Can you state clearly and in detail what you want to learn? To formulate your learning objectives, ask yourself: Which learning needs from my LIS degree proposal can I meet in this project? What information and understanding do I want to acquire? What skills do I want to learn or improve? Why? To clarify further your objectives, continue by asking yourself: What attitudes do I want to develop or change? Why? How and where will I use this information, skill, or attitude? How much of it do I need? How will I behave differently or what will be changed when I am finished? What do I want to be able to do when the project is finished? How many learning objectives do I want to set? How much time do I really have?

Learning objectives may be stated in a variety of ways. Some can refer to specific skills and levels of competence. Others may be more general, and exploratory, perhaps becoming clearer as you proceed. Many behaviorist approaches require that objectives be stated in terms of specific, measurable, behavioral outcomes. It may be helpful to think of learning objectives in terms of the discrepancy between where you are now and where you would like to be in the future with respect to a particular competence or ability or level of understanding. Precise outcomes may or may not be useful to you.

Objectives are often written in the form of observable activities that you will be able **to** do at the project's completion. Describe what you intend to learn using verbs such as identify, distinguish, compare, contrast, solve, differentiate, write, construct, apply, describe, demonstrate, communicate, draw, role play, list, critique, etc. Not all learning needs can be described adequately in this way, as the totality of that experience is more than information, skills, and attitudes.

### **Rationale:**

When you have completed the objectives section, ask yourself, "Why do I want to learn this?" Your answer should place the objectives within the larger context of your educational goals. How do your objectives relate to your overall degree plan? Refer to your Autobiography, Goals, and Learning Needs from your LIS degree proposal.

Which Learning Needs are you meeting within the framework of this independent study? Why do you need to acquire this information/skill/attitude? How is your Independent Study Proposal congruent with some component of the larger picture presented in your degree proposal?

**Resources:**

What relevant resources (people, books, films, laboratories, agencies, etc.) do you have available? You may find it helpful (a) to identify some of these resources by thinking of specific activities you will engage in to accomplish your learning and then (b) to ask what resources each activity makes use of. Attach lists of relevant materials (bibliography, film lists, etc.) to your Proposal.

**Work Plan and Tentative Schedule:**

How do you plan to use the resources and facilities to meet your learning objectives? Each learning objective should be addressed by one or more learning activities. Each activity should correspond to one or more of your stated learning objectives. Traditional approaches include attending lectures, participating in small group discussions, reading and expressing your reactions on paper or in discussion groups, examination, laboratory experiments, painting, photography, etc. Non-traditional approaches might include travel and discussion, film or videotape production, “hands-on” experience, writing a book or manual, building or creating something, keeping a journal, organizing a conference, etc.

When you have a tentative plan, consider a time frame. Try to stay within the framework of the university semester. Under “Tentative Schedule” indicate when the various activities of your plans will take place and when you will complete work on the concrete components of the plan. Schedule may be daily, weekly, and/or monthly task completion dates and/or specific deadline or performance dates. Include the frequency of contact with your faculty sponsor and the proposed completion dates for various stages of the project.

The work plan should reflect your thinking about how you are actually going to carry out your learning project. What logical sequence will you follow? What step-by-step procedure will you develop to complete your study?

**Evaluation/Documentation:**

What evidence will you produce to demonstrate to yourself and others that you have achieved your objectives? Documentation will largely consist of the products you have created as a result of your learning activities. These products may include research papers, copies of surveys, transcripts of interviews, video or audio tapes, maps, reports, letters sent and received, samples of work, products of artistic activity, records of experiments, performances, journals, etc. Discuss documentation methods with your faculty sponsor.

What criteria will be used to evaluate each piece of evidence? Criteria may differ for each learning objective and for each piece of evidence. Some criteria traditionally used in evaluating academic work include scholarliness and comprehensiveness of a written work, frequency and substance of journal entries, relevance of research completed, correctness of grammar or math, presence or absence of specified qualities in a performance, number of survey forms completed, usefulness of study, notes, etc.

If you experience difficulty in selecting criteria, ask yourself what aspects, traits, or characteristics of this piece of evidence are most important or meaningful and are most likely to clearly demonstrate that you achieved your learning objective?

Having selected criteria, what standards will you apply as you look at them? Standards imply judgment in terms of the criteria along a scale of values in order to determine the quality of that which is being judged. To set standards, ask what quantity or what degree of the specified criteria must be present (or absent) in the evidence in order to determine attainment of the learning objective. Ask: what level, how close to the ideal, how many, how few, how frequent, how fast, how clear, how graceful, how much, how long, etc.? Confer with your project evaluators about criteria and standards early in your study.

Your faculty sponsor usually will be the person to evaluate the evidence of your learning. You may also choose an external resource person (non-UIS faculty) with an expertise in your area of interest. In that case, the external resource person would be involved in the planning and would communicate your grade for the course to your UIS faculty sponsor. Usually, your LIS faculty advisor or another LIS faculty would agree to do this for you. Note that there is a signature space on the form for an external resource person should you be using one. It is helpful to include information about your external resource person's expertise and contact information with your proposal. Grading for independent studies and explorations is CR/NC. Your faculty sponsor will take your criteria and documentation into consideration in order to assign a grade for the course.

As you progress in your learning, you may wish to make changes in your Independent Study Proposal. Very often our ideas change as we work on a project. Simply consult with your faculty sponsor (and any other key resource persons) when you need to modify your description of the work you intend. Substantial departures from your original proposal must be negotiated with all parties involved. Amended proposals may have to be submitted.

## HELPFUL HINTS

LIS faculty strongly recommend that you and your faculty sponsor schedule a series of conferences to pace your reading or research, to set deadlines, and to commit yourself to a time frame.

Be realistic about how many hours you have to spend on your project. What other demands on your time are there? Are you trying to do more than you have time or energy for? How much can you reasonably accomplish in the time available? Students planning an independent study for the first time often try to do too much. Determine what is central to your goals and what, however relevant, is peripheral and focus your initial efforts on the central. Then, if time permits and it still seems appropriate, you can turn to some of your less important concerns. Of course, you will want to avoid the other extreme of making your project so narrow that it achieves only part of what you most wanted to do.

Then, too, your project need not be overly conventional. You may find it helpful to engage in fantasy as a means of stimulating thoughts and ideas:

The more fully we are conscious of dreams, daydreams, fantasies – i.e., free associations – the more likely we are to be in touch with what our total organism desires ....  
**Potent action arises when the organism is in touch with fullness of its desire, has explored in imagination and fantasy the probable results of alternative acts, and has taken the risk of decision and commitment to one among many possibilities.** (Sam Keen, To a Dancing God)

Independent study should be a learning experience in which you challenge yourself, grow, and develop new skills and ideas. Then, too, while your resource people will be concerned to keep you mindful of appropriate standards, you can generally count on them as wanting most of all to be helpful and supportive. Do not be afraid to be adventuresome.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS TO REGISTER FOR LIS INDEPENDENT STUDY**

1. Before proceeding make sure you have an approved LIS degree proposal. This independent study should be listed in the degree contract.
2. Draft an initial outline using categories from the LIS Independent Study Proposal.
3. Identify a faculty sponsor for your project who has expertise in your content area. Identifying an external resource may also be appropriate. Contact your faculty sponsor using the draft outline as a starting point.
4. When you and your sponsor have agreed on the nature of your project, complete the final version of the proposal and have the sponsor sign the LIS Independent Study Proposal form. A WPD

form (With Permission of Dean form) will be initiated by the liberal studies program secretary who initiates the permission to register process.

5. Your faculty sponsor will forward the WPD, with faculty signature, to the LIS Director with the Independent Study Proposal form both signed. You and your sponsor may each want to keep a copy of the proposal for your records.
6. The LIS director will forward the WPD and copy of the LIS Independent Study Proposal to the Dean of the college of your faculty sponsor for this project. The Dean's office will sign off on the WPD form and return both the WPD and Independent Study Proposal to the LIS Program Office where the course can then be entered in the computer system to the Office of Admissions and Records.
7. You will be notified of the reference number of your independent study in order so that you may register for the course.
8. Plan ahead. It is not easy to get all of these signatures at the last minute. Begin to work on your proposal in the semester before you plan to actually register.

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