***LIBERAL STUDIES HANDBOOK***

 

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

Updated 06/15

**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.

*1998; updated 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2013 & 2015*

**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 43 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. The seven categories are taken from Boyer’s organizational scheme for general education. 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 oral and written communication elements that provide a strong liberal arts foundation. 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.

It is possible to think of these three elements of the liberal arts foundation as: 1) significant breadth and depth of disciplinary *knowledge*; 2) ability to *apply* knowledge to problem-solving; and 3) mastery of disciplinary *skills*. You may want to keep these elements in mind as you consider what you are studying and why you are studying it.

In the area of **Discovery of Knowledge**:

UIS graduates should be information and communication technology literate, exhibiting a strong proficiency in locating, reflectively comprehending, and synthesizing appropriate college-level readings, toward the goal of knowledge creation.

Competencies include:

* Reading baccalaureate-level materials effectively, reflecting comprehension and synthesis;
* Exhibiting a knowledge of and ability to effectively locate, evaluate, interpret, and use information; and
* Exhibiting a knowledge of and ability to use information and communication technologies.

In the area of **Integration of Knowledge**:

UIS graduates should be able to evaluate and integrate information and concepts from multiple disciplines and perspectives.

Competencies include:

* Engaging in critical thinking by analyzing, evaluating, and articulating a range of perspectives to solve problems through informed, rational, decision-making; and
* Differentiating the approaches that underlie the search for knowledge in the arts, humanities, natural sciences, history, or social and behavioral sciences.

In the area of **Application of Knowledge:**

UIS graduates should be able to apply knowledge to address meaningful problems and issues in the real world.

Competencies include:

* Exhibiting a knowledge of and ability to use contemporary technologies;
* Identifying, interpreting, and analyzing quantitatively presented material and solve mathematical problems; and
* Constructing intellectual projects independently and work effectively in collaboration with others.

In the area of **Communication of Knowledge:**

UIS graduates should be able to communicate knowledge and ideas effectively both orally and in writing.

Competencies include:

* Expressing ideas, facts, and arguments in a written format that depicts competency in the use of syntax, organization, and style appropriate to the audience; and
* Exhibiting effective oral communication skills, paying attention to content and audience.

In the area of **Engaged Citizenship:**

UIS graduates should be able to engage in questioning and critical thinking that leads them to explore peoples, systems, values, and perspectives that are beyond their usual boundaries. Students should engage in active and integrative learning to become ethical, responsible, and engaged citizens in a democracy.

Competencies include:

* Recognizing the social responsibility of the individual within a larger community;
* Practicing awareness of and respect for the diversity of cultures and peoples in this country and in the world;
* Reflecting on the ways involvement, leadership, and respect for community occur at the local, regional, national, or international levels;
* Identifying how economic, political, and social systems operate now and have operated in the past;
* Engaging in informed, rational, and ethical decision-making and action; and
* Distinguishing the possibilities and limitations of social change.

**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.

***Liberal Studies Program 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

**Diagram of influences shaping your LIS Degree**

The diagram on the following page illustrates the elements that shape a degree in the Liberal Studies Program. On the left are the institutional constraints and influences from state, university, and campus policies and objectives. The standards set by these institutions reflect the opinions of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, the Faculty Senate at the University of Illinois in Springfield, and the University Curriculum Committee and Undergraduate Education Council. Ultimately, these institutions are shaped by the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly, who answer to the people of Illinois; so, at the roots, these constraints are put on your degree by the people of Illinois. In the lower left are the constraints put on your degree by our Liberal and Integrative Studies Department. At the bottom of the diagram are some of the ideological, philosophical, and scientific influences shaping your degree and the LIS Program’s approach to education. On the right are your personal influences on your degree, including a large red arrow showing that the primary determination of what you study ought to be your self-assessed learning needs—those things you must know in order to reach your life goals. Also on the right are the constraints related to our campus and faculty.

Note that there are over 200 faculty at UIS, but at any given semester some are on sabbatical, and some may be too busy to work with you, so in any given semester there probably are about 120 potential sponsors for independent studies.

**Influences on your LIS Degree**



**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 believes 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 *Self-Directed Learning* (LIS 301), which should be taken during the first semester of a student’s junior year, or even the second semester of the sophomore year. Prior to this, students should work with the advisors to ensure that they have completed the required general education curriculum and the prerequisites required of the upper-level courses they plan to take.

There is no special process to be admitted into LIS; anyone admitted to the UIS as an undergraduate student simply declares that liberal studies is their major and they will be admitted into our program. However, before a student decides to pursue a degree in the LIS program, they ought to consider and write out their ideas about why they want to pursue a general education degree or a specialized self-designed focused major through LIS. The process of writing will help students clarify their thinking about whether LIS is really the right degree for them.

Every student considering an LIS degree ought to address the following points, at least in thought, if not in writing:

* 1) What are your academic and/or professional goals? Can you express these in a clear, concise statement?
* 2) Why you believe that a non-traditional, interdisciplinary program is the pathway to these goals.
* 3) What things have you taught yourself outside of an academic environment?
* 4) Are you self-motivated and self-directed in a way that would allow you to work more

independently than other students?

**Academic Standards**

Academic Load

Note: Faculty at UIS plan courses according to this standard: A typical 4-credit-hour course meets 3½ 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. 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.

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. Students must take at least 6 credit-hours to be considered half-time (in spring and fall semesters). 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 three to eight semester hours.

The Office of Financial Assistance has a guide to financial aid available at <http://www.uis.edu/financialaid/guide/documents/UISStudentGuidetoFinancialAid.pdf>.

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 LNT Department Chair.

**Grade-point Average**

Undergraduate students must achieve an UIS grade point average and cumulative grade point average (including transfer courses) 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, they are placed on academic probation. Courses taken for credit/no credit do not count in calculating this average (thus, they cannot help or harm you in terms of your GPA). 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). 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.

**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. When a student repeats a course in which a grade was earned, the second grade will appear on the transcript; the first grade will be replaced with an “R” (repeat) designation and will not count in determining a grade point average. Grades for subsequent repeats will appear on the transcript and will be used in calculating the GPA.

**Requirements of Earning a Liberal Studies Degree**

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. The 120 hours must include at least 48 hours of upper-division credit. At least 30 of these 48 hours of upper-division credit must be earned at UIS. The LIS Program encourages students to complete 60 hours of upper-division, and this is preferred, although 48-hours of upper-division is sufficient.
* Satisfy general education requirements (see UIS catalog) or website for General Education at http://www.uis.edu/generaleducation/curriculum/requirements/.
* Satisfy ECCE Requirements. There are 3 types of ECCE courses: U.S. Communities, Global Awareness, and Engagement Experience. You must complete 3 courses (at least 9 hours) and must have courses in at least two of the other three categories. In addition to these 3 courses, you must also complete UNI 301 Speaker Series. This 1-hour course may be repeated one time for additional credit.

* Receive certification of adequacy of communications skills from the LIS program (certification is awarded upon satisfactory completion of LIS 301).
* Complete at least 3 upper-division hours in each of the 7 Boyer categories. For options, refer to the program website <http://www.uis.edu/liberalstudies/boyer-category-course-options/>
* Complete LIS 301, LIS 451 **and** a minimum of 12 additional hours of courses with the LIS prefix. The 12 additional hours of LIS-prefix course may be part of the ECCE or Boyer category courses.
* Complete course work with a UIS grade point average of at least 2.0. You must also earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0
* Complete your degree proposal (in LIS-301) and a liberal and integrative studies paper (in LIS-451), which must be approved by the Chair of the LNT Department.
* Complete the Graduation Application Signature Form and the online graduation application (See http://www.uis.edu/registration/graduation/index.html for deadlines) and receive approval from LIS advisor and LIS Director.
* Pay a graduation fee of $55 (subject to change, $55 was the published fee for 2015 undergraduate graduation applications)

**Waivers**

You will need formal approval to apply a transferred upper-division course, or UIS courses not included on the program’s list of options, toward a Boyer category. You must use the UIS Student Petition Form, which you can find on the Registration and Records website under the link FORMS. The type of request is “Exception: Program Requirement.” You may include more than one course approval on a signature petition form, but write a clear request. For example, “Apply HIS 455 toward the heritage Boyer category requirement.”

You must receive formal approval to substitute a Boyer category course **BEFORE** starting the course. (This requirement does not apply to transfer courses you complete prior to entering UIS.)

**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, and LIS 451, offered on a credit/no credit basis only. LIS-499 *Independent Study: Tutorial* may be taken for a traditional grade.

Students may select the credit/no credit (CR/NC) grading option *when they register*. Grading options may also be changed in the Enterprise System 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**

**How do I change my major?**

If you should decide to change your major, you may do so by completing the Change of Curriculum Form, which you can find on the Registration and Records website under link FORMS. 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 Enterprise 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 Office of Financial Assistance (217-206-6724) before dropping a class.

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

Yes. You should consult Drop/Withdrawal Policy, which is published every semester (in recent years, the URL has been http://www.uis.edu/registration/registration/index.html). 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 you tuition and fees. This percentage increases each week until the 10th 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 13th 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 add/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 13th 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. There are two most typical situations for seeking a credit/no credit grading option: 1) the student doesn’t like grades; and 2) the student is trying to keep a very high GPA, perhaps above 3.5, and they are likely to get a C or C+ or B- in a course if they choose the letter grade option.

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 if you may intend to apply for admission to the sort of graduate program that prefers to see grades on your transcript. 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

The LIS program mailing address is:

Liberal Studies Program,

University Hall Building, Rm. 3038,

University of Illinois at Springfield,

One University Plaza,

Springfield, IL 62703-5407.

**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 Pleasentries 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 advisors, you concluded that a non-traditional degree program would be the most rewarding and valuable way for you to obtain an academic degree. Thoughtfully consider your decision to proceed 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, as well as 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 thosedecisions, 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 (by taking EXL-305 ECCE: *Prior Learning Portfolio Development*), 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. You must understand UIS policies concerning plagiarism. You can find details here <http://www.uis.edu/academicintegrity/students/plagiarism/>

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.

You can avoid plagiarizing by putting quotation marks around short passages taken from someone else’s work, and then citing the source and page number of the quoted passage. With longer passages of someone else’s work, you may use block quotations within your paper, citing the source and page number(s) from which you took the material. When paraphrasing someone else’s work, cite your source. Those who quote and paraphrase the work of others typically write better papers than those who don’t, but they *must cite* *their sources*.

**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 Learning Hub, located on the 4th floor in Brookens on the main campus and at www.uis.edu/thelearninghub, is an academic support service, which offers students assistance with math, writing, and English as a second language, at no cost (actually, you’ve already pre-paid for Hub services with your tuition and fees). In addition, student tutors are available to help with a range of subjects. Although the Hub 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 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. Online students should be aware that they can check out books (Brookens Library will mail books to them). Also, the University of Illinois library system has access to all the largest academic article databases, meaning you can access and download articles from EBSCO, Web of Knowledge (Thomson Reuters), JSTOR, LexisNexis, ProQuest, and SpringerLink, and many other sources. There are librarians dedicated to helping online students use the library, and you can contact them at 217-206-6605 or by e-mail at libref@uis.edu. Note that there is no specific guide for liberal studies students among the discipline-specific library guides at http://libguides.uis.edu/. More information for online students using the library is available at http://libguides.uis.edu/online and http://www.youtube.com/user/UISlibrary (look for the link to *Tutorials*).

**“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 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 plan is a developmental process, which demonstrates the acquisition of new learning while building on past competencies. You will complete your degree 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 advisor. During your initial semester in the program, you should establish a relationship with your faculty advisor (generally the LIS 301 *Self Directed Learning* 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.

Ideally, you will create a degree plan in *Self-Directed Learning* that you can follow, or at least approximately follow, in the proceeding semesters. In LIS-451 *Senior Seminar*, you will need to demonstrate that you understand how your actual education has conformed to concepts you learned in LIS 301, and how it has addressed your learning needs and helped you toward your goals. You will need to compare your final actual undergraduate experience to the plan you proposed in *Self Directed Learning*, but the program does not require that you actually follow your original plan, so long as you can convincingly argue that your actual degree has met standards of quality in your liberal and integrative paper (due in the *Senior Seminar*), and so long as you have met the University and Program requirements (e.g., at least 3-credit hours in each of 7 categories).

You have the option to revise your original degree proposal in light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities. These revisions must still fit into a course of study that meets quality standards, and you must be able to justify your degree in your liberal and integrative studies paper written in LIS 451 Senior Seminar.

**Components of the Degree Plan**

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

* 1. Presentation of Self (Autobiographical presentation of who you are as a learner)
	2. Goals Statement
	3. Learning Needs Inventory
	4. Narrative Curriculum, describing each course to be included:
		+ Course Title and Description from the Catalog(s)
		+ Brief Rationale for Inclusion in your Degree Program
		+ Amount of Credit Hours for Each Course
		+ Curriculum Summary Schedule/Timeline (Summary Degree Plan)
		+ Checklist of degree requirements
	5. Inventory of Learning Resources

**The Role of Your Faculty Advisor**

Following admission to the university, you will be advised to enroll in LIS 301 *Self Directed Learning*.The instructor of your section will most likely be assigned as your faculty advisor. Your advisor 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 your responsibility, but your college advisor and the LNT Department Chair are responsible for handling our program’s side of the administrative procedures. Your faculty advisor 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 you college advisor and yourfaculty advisor for clarification and advice on procedures, policies, and academic decisions.

It’s up to you to take the initiative in the academic advising process. You may want to arrange appointments with your advisor prior to each registration, and maintain contact with her/him throughout your academic studies. It is especially important to consult with your faculty advisor prior to participating in any alternative educational activities, such as the Prior Learning program (EXL 305), tutorials (LIS 499), independent field projects (LIS 380), etc. Be sure to contact your college advisor prior to your final term of study to review graduation requirements, but please do this after you have studied a DARS report (<https://www.uis.edu/registration/graduation/degreeaudits/>) on your progress and consulted the information at the graduation page of the Registrar (<https://www.uis.edu/registration/graduation/>)**.**

**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 advisor as consultants or instructors for tutorials or independent studies.

**General Program Guidelines**

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 your advisors may suggest ways and means to identify and select potential resource persons and tutors, the decision is yours.

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:

1. Develop your degree plan (as previously discussed).
2. Submit your degree plan to your *Self-Directed Learning* (LIS 301) facilitator when you are satisfied that it represents a feasible and academically sound program of study. Your *Self-Directed Learning* facilitator will see that your approved degree plan is submitted to the LIS Program for the LNT Department Chair’s further review by the date grades are due for the semester in which you took the course.

Phase Two:

1. After you submit your plan to the LIS Program, proceed with your chosen learning plans and activities.
2. During the course of your academic program, you should feel free to contact your advisor from time to time.
3. You always have the option, in the light of new knowledge, experience, or opportunities to revise your original degree plan. Just make sure that you are still meeting the requirements of the program and university.

Phase Three:

1. Before the last semester of your coursework, determine whether you want to do an honors thesis, and if you do want to do an honors thesis, ensure that you have a sufficiently high grade point average. If so, go ahead and prepare a proposal and find a sponsor for your honors thesis. The process is very much like an independent study; you write the proposal, share it with your advisor and honors thesis sponsor, and gain their approval before registering for the course credits. You can do the 2-credit-hour honors thesis in your final semester of course work, the same semester in which you take LIS 451  *Senior Seminar*.
2. In the last semester of coursework you will take LIS 451 *Senior Seminar*. In that class you will write a major paper (liberal & integrative paper), summarizing your learning and the ways it embodies models of quality undergraduate education and fits with your own learning needs. Save all of your papers, required texts, and other class materials so you can refer to them or quote them in your liberal & integrative paper.
3. You may choose to write an honors thesis as a culminating activity of your undergraduate study, or you may simply use the capstone *Senior Seminar* as the culminating activity. Completing *Senior Seminar* and submitting an acceptable liberal & integrative paper (that is, one that successfully presents your education as one that meets standards of quality in some model of valuable undergraduate education while also addressing your personal needs) marks the completion of your degree.

**“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. Most of this chapter assumes that students will follow the Boyer Categories (Boyer Model) in designing their degree. At the end of the chapter this handbook presents alternative approaches to general liberal arts education or individualized focused majors.

**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* (1987).

*I D E N T I T Y : T H E S E A R C H F O R M E A N I N G*

The first category you will explore will be identity. This will also help you prepare your presentation of self for your degree plan:

“Ultimately, the aim of common learning is the understanding of oneself and a capacity for sound judgment. Knowledge is significant when is 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)

*L A N G U A G E : T H E C R U C I A L C O N N E C T I O N*

Most theorists who have created models of undergraduate education emphasize communication skills. The Boyer Category of language (along with the category of art) will encompass much of what you will need to gain in your knowledge of communication.

“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)

*W O R K : T H E V A L U E O F V O C A T I O N*

Many human resource experts who write articles about valuable college degrees and how college learning ought to connect to the needs of private companies stress that liberal arts degrees are most valuable when the student with a degree in the liberal arts has some understanding of business, economics, and the workings of private for-profit companies. Courses in economics and business often fit into the category Boyer described as work, but so do some other courses (e.g., in applied studies, English, liberal studies, sociology, etc.):

“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)

*H E R I T A G E : T H E L I V I N G P A S T*

Humans are endowed with intellect, and we therefore can gain from the experiences of others; for example, through fiction and story-telling, paying attention to current events, or studying history. In a sense, the experience of everyone who has lived before the present can belong to us.

“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)

*N A T U R E : E C O L O G Y O F T H E P L A N E T*

In preparing for a sustainable future, humans are vexed by swelling human populations, our appetites for energy and food to support our economies and lifestyles, and the threats we face from disease, pollution, and natural (or anthropogenic) disasters. We also consider the value, rights, and needs of non-human life. Thus, everyone who claims to be educated needs to be familiar with nature and science.

“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)

*A R T : T H E E S T H E T I C D I M E N S I O N*

While humans are not unique in having a sense of aesthetics (some great apes, elephants, and bowerbirds also can create art and have some sort of non-human appreciation for it), we do use art far more extensively than other beings. Some people claim that art joins our human abilities in language, rational reasoning, moral impulses, and the drive for self-improvement as one of the traits that makes us human. Thus, no one who is educated should neglect their artistic and aesthetic development.

“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)

*I N S T I T U T I O N S : T H E S O C I A L W E B*

To make sense of the chaos of our sensory perceptions and the world outside of our intimate surroundings, we depend on abstractions, habits, and expectations embedded in culture, tradition, and law. These give us regular patterns for organizing and interpreting our experiences. Institutions provide predictable opportunities to participate in social experiences, thus allowing us to flourish with support or diminish with oppression.

“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).

**Liberal Studies Courses**

LIS 107 - Globalization and Power

The history of world cultures with a focus on marginalized groups on the periphery of civilization. The course is broken into four units: (1) The Inuit, (2) The Faroe Islands, (3) South Africa, and (4) Uncontacted Tribes.

LIS 211 - Liberty Studies

What is liberty and why would we want it? This course is an examination of the meanings and foundations of liberty. Philosophical and economic methods are used to differentiate different types of liberty and the implications these have for addressing current issues and events.

LIS 244 - Literary Heroines

This course will examine the literary works which have as main characters female personalities such as Medea, Antigone, Anna Karenina, Eva Luna, Isabelle Archer and others.

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 315 - Individualism and Self-Reliance in America

This course examines the nature of American individualism and self-reliance. Students will think about the relationship of the individual to society, and whether such ideals as "frontier individualism" or Jeffersonian self-reliance are applicable today. Topics include republicanism, the Industrial revolution, mass society, big business, and the growth of government.

LIS 319 - Philosophy of Business

What you believe about business affects both your choice of career path and your opinion on business ethics and regulation. Taking a multi-disciplinary approach and examining business in history, philosophy, management theory, and literature, this course is meant for both business majors interested in humanities related to their discipline, and humanities majors wishing to learn more about business.

LIS 342 Conducting Liberal Studies Research (3 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 325 - ECCE: Latina/o USA

Introduction to the study of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, and Central/South American communities in the U.S. Main themes are immigration, identity, gender and racial constructions, labor, education, and activism. Other topics include demographic trends, political participation, and relations with origin communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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 362 - ECCE: Interdisciplinary Study of Work

This course is a study of how work determines culture and individual identity.

LIS 366 - ECCE: European Cinema

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the art of European cinema and its variety. Students will watch and examine a variety of European films - French, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Chinese and Turkish made by Chinese and Turkish directors who live in France and Italy respectively - and will study them from a variety of artistic, literary, and technical perspective. The majority of the films touch on general issues of human existence - love, hate, death, meaning of life - even when the films are of historical or comical nature. All films are in foreign languages with sub-titles.

LIS 411 - Liberty Struggles

The liberty struggles examines social movements and armed conflicts that have included, as part of their stated aims, the increase or enhancement of liberty and freedom for an oppressed population. The course uses a community organizing framework to understand historical and current liberty struggles. Topics covered include peasant revolts, revolutions in the Americas and France, the abolitionist movement, the civil rights movement, ant-communism, and anti-imperialism.

LIS 417 - Free Market Philosophies

We examine arguments for laissez faire capitalism and how different philosophical foundations lead to different public policy recommendations. Arguments between different free market theories are critically examined. Issues include government legitimacy, the nature of the market, morality and selfishness, and the private provision of what are typically considered government services.

LIS 421 - Baseball: An Interdisciplinary Approach

This course looks at baseball in the United States through an interdisciplinary approach that will include economics, history, politics, technology, and culture. Rather than trying to provide a sweeping historical analysis, specific turning points in baseball as a commercialized business will be studied and used to generate the approach.

LIS 424 - ECCE: Ancient Sport and Spectacle

This course will study the beginnings of sport in the Greco-Roman world and its transformation throughout the centuries to our days. It will also examine how sport became a vehicle for the ideological and political expression, was associated with class, gender, violence, nationalism, and ethnicity, and how it has been appropriated and reinterpreted in modern times.

LIS 431 - The Beatles: Popular Music and Society

The purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of not only the Beatles and their musical accomplishments, but also the impact they had and are having on popular music and society. Toward that end, we will listen to their music, watch videos of their work and hear their comments on that work, as well as read some of the best writing on the Beatles.

LIS 432 - ECCE: Expatriate Paris

This course will introduce you to artists, writers, and poets who created their works away from their homeland and you will see how their works influenced or did not influence the culture of the country in which they lived and created. You will learn to look at works of art and see them as well as to be able to read a literary work and to understand its depth and complexity, as well as improve your analytical and writing abilities and research and writing skills.

LIS 442 - ECCE: International Women Writers

This course examines literary works written by women writers, poets, literary critics and philosophers from around the world.

LIS 447 - ECCE: Symbolist Movement in Europe: 1850 – 1920

To study a movement in art and literature, spanning the latter part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Different in its national emphasis on artistic and literary issues, the movement was internationally anchored in similar philosophical precepts. This course will foreground the predominant themes informing such diverse works as those by the English Pre-Raphaelites, the French Symbolists and Decadents, German, Scandinavian, Turkish and Russian artists and writers. This course is of a comparative and interdisciplinary nature.

LIS 458 - ECCE: Memoirs Across Cultures

This is a course about reading, analyzing, writing, and redefining memoirs. The autobiographical writings on the reading list look at the inner life of the authors as well as the outer events. We will examine how historical context, socio-political climate, cultural memories, and identities are represented in these personal narratives, and in the process redefine the genre of memoirs.

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 (3 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 two of the Boyer categories. There are no formal classes associated with this. A student’s LIS advisor must approve the thesis proposal. Must be completed during term of expected graduation. Offered spring, summer and fall.

**MINORS**

The Liberal Studies program hosts the Liberty Studies Minor*.* The Liberty Studies minor is a course of study focusing on the foundations, meanings, and implications of what it is to be free. It poses the fundamental question of "What can I do with my life?" It questions the power of institutions and the legitimacy of the constraints they impose. It explores freedom and liberty from multiple perspectives, including minorities and women in our own culture, and indigenous peoples of other times and places. Liberty Studies examines the costs and benefits of free human interaction, the need of naturally social animals to be left alone, and ultimately wrestles with the questions of what freedom and liberty are and should be.

Students in the Liberty Studies minor will understand how different theories of liberty address economics, authority, and culture. To this end, the Liberty Studies minor will approach the study of liberty in relation to three discernible spheres commonly addressed in the literature: cultural influences, economic activity, and formal authority. The study of these three areas is integrated both in how individual courses relate to each other individually and as tied together by the required courses. This minor can be taken on campus or online.

**Coursework**

**Required Courses & Formats):**

LIS 211 *Liberty Studies* (Online, Lecture) 3 hrs. (Gen ed.)

PHI 440 *Ethics* or PHI 441 *Moral Theory* (Online, Lecture) 2 hrs.

**Choose 1 from each of the following groups:**

**I. Liberty and Commerce**

PHI 447 *Rationality and Moral Choice* (online, lecture) 3 hrs.

LIS 419 *Philosophy of Business* (online, lecture) 4 hrs.

**II. Liberty and Authority**

LIS 411 *Liberty Struggles* (online, lecture) 4 hrs.

PHI 485 *Social Philosophy* (online, lecture) 4 hrs.

**III. Liberty and Culture**

SOA 222 *American Society* (online, lecture) 3 hrs. (Gen ed.)

ENG 335 *Early American Literature* (online, lecture) 4 hrs. (Gen ed.)

Total: 15 – 17 credit hours

Other UIS minors include:

Accountancy

African American Studies

Anthropology

Biology

Business Administration

Chemistry

Communication

Computer Science

Criminal Justice

Economics

English

Environmental Studies

History

International Studies

Management

Management Information Systems\*

Marketing

Math\*

Modern Language (Spanish)

Philosophy\*

Political Science\*

Pre-medical

Psychology

Public Health

Sociology

Teacher Education

Theater

Women and Gender Studies

\* also available to online majors.

For more information on these minors, consult the UIS catalog <http://catalog.uis.edu/degreesoffered/>

**Don’t be satisfied with stories,**

**How things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth,**

**without complicated explanation,**

**so everyone will understand the passage,**

**We have opened you .**

Jalal al-Din Rumi

(Ghazal 598, verse 12, Coleman Barks translation)

**Chapter 5:**

**PRESENTATION OF SELF**

The presentation of self, written in *Self-Directed Learning* LIS 301, is a reflective document that provides an overview of significant aspects of your life and motivations. It is an opportunity for you to review a few of the most significant aspects of your educational, personal, and professional life. You will also be able to review the books, beliefs, thinkers, ideas, theories, values, educators, and learning experiences that have been most significant to you. You must also share some of your self-knowledge, commenting on aspects of who you are, including potentially your character strengths, preferred learning style, personal priorities and values, career and vocational interests, hobbies, interpersonal connections & significant relationships, and sources of inspiration and motivation toward personal development. The presentation of self 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 presentation of self 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 presentation of self (generally 4-8 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. Some students approach the task through the writing of a learning-oriented autobiography, tracing major intellectual developments and mental breakthroughs, including the key influences on your worldview and approaches to education.

With an autobiographical approach, most 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.

Students who prefer to present their self without an autobiography may divide the presentation of self into sections. One section might be about beliefs, ideas, and ideologies that have been part of your life, and that seem significant to you now. As our students are drawn mostly from the Midwestern United States, quite a few students will discuss Christianity, Democratic and Republican (or conservative-liberal) political ideologies. Most students will want to share the especially important lessons they have taken from mentors, family elders, or influential books. A student might include a list of the most significant lessons they have learned so far in their lives. Such lessons ought to include academic or skills lessons, but may also include some “life lessons” in which students gained wisdom about relationships or self-knowledge.

Another section might be about the things you are most passionate about, which for most students will include family (lifetime partners, parents, children, etc.). Students may offer a paragraph or two describing hobbies or service activities. Students might use lists, offering a list of most influential books they have read, the films, songs, plays, paintings, or sculptures that have meant the most to them, the best courses or classes they have taken, the best teachers they have encountered, the best ideas they have embraced, or the most desired goals they have for their lives.

Students will take a character strengths inventory early in *Self Directed Learning*, and a discussion of these character strengths would be a useful section of a presentation of self. Students should also take a career interest survey, a learning style assessment, a life goals assessment, and a survey of their situation related to the goals of the liberal studies program. Other standardized assessments students may take include personality tests, self-directed learning skills assessments, and a writing approaches self-assessment tool. All these assessments and tests provide useful information that many students should want to share in their presentation of self.

Writing your presentation of self is a unique opportunity for you to re-tell significant life learning experiences and analyze them at the same time. This is also an opportunity to consider your roots, where you are now, and where you want to go with your life. The presentation of self assignment should force you to take a look at who you are, and how others might see you, and consider what you want to change about yourself and what you like about who you are. Focus on the uniqueness of your life and identity 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 consider how to present yourself or write an autobiography. Select the questions and strategies that are most interesting and useful to you. As you begin to develop your presentation of self, focus on basic elements of your life that are particularly significant to you, whether you are writing an autobiography examining turning points and markers in your past, or a series of sections looking at various aspects of who you are now.

Because you will undoubtedly have a wealth of material to work with as you prepare your presentation of self, you will need to be quite selective. Your goal for this piece is to develop a creative analysis of yourself, not simply a narrative resume. When you have identified those experiences and aspects of your life and personhood that seem to hold the greatest significance in the formation of your identity, you have a framework from which to select appropriate details and organize your reflections. Your major focus should involve your college-level learning, your intellectual interests and abilities, and your values and goals; 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.

If 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 plan focuses on your *academic* plan; in your presentation of self 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, but be sure to focus on how you see *education* and *learning*, and use anecdotes about people and early life experiences to illustrate how you have come to your current approach to education and learning. Strive to increase your understanding of how you developed into the learner you are today. Try to inventory 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 presentation of self.

If work has been the primary focus of your adult life, it may be tempting to make your presentation of self 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-term and long-term goals?

You alone decide what information becomes part of your presentation of self. As you reflect on your life, you may consider the full range of personal experiences and qualities that you need to explore, but you may decide to keep certain aspects of your history and self private. Use the experience of writing your presentation of self 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 presentation of self. Allow yourself plenty of time to think about your past experiences and current life, and then explore various ways of organizing the material into a coherent presentation that conveys your individuality. Consult with family, friends, classmates, 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. The perceptions others have of you (that they are willing to share with you) are also likely to be quite useful in writing about how others perceive you.

As you develop a draft of your presentation of self, present a balanced view of yourself, discussing aspects or events from a variety of dimensions 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.

Sharing a presentation of self is an act that will make you vulnerable. Search on the Internet for the talks by Brené Brown about vulnerability being the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change. You want to be honest and fair, and you want to share things that are important to you. This may require you to put forth ideas and values that will conflict with the values and ideas of your readers (classmates, course facilitators, family members and friends who read drafts for you). Everyone has different backgrounds, and some students might be intimidated by the experiences of their classmates, or feel inadequate in their own ideas and experiences when compared to others. Try to get past such feelings if you have them, and realize that many students in LIS are using college as an opportunity to catch up and avoid/cease being left behind. The facilitators and classmates will, when they read your presentation of self to give you feedback, focus on the work of crafting a good presentation of self that seems authentic and helpful. Reviewers and readers within the class may offer some supportive comments about content or offer favorable evaluations of your values, interests, or behaviors, but they should mainly be helping you organize and write well, as that is something they may be able to do, whereas they really have almost no power to change you in any substantial way to make you more like what they think you should be.

You should not be confessional and write details about private life or emotional events unless you desire to do that. You are welcome to share your deepest secrets and traumas, but that is not what the presentation of self is about; you should mainly focus on your mental growth and activity. On the other hand, the best presentation of mental life must connect the intellect to the heart, so you may need to share some types of personal details in order to make your presentation of self readable and enjoyable, rather than a dry list of facts, accomplishments, abilities, and interests.

Note that the target length is four to eight pages.

**Some Final Thoughts About Writing the Presentation of Self**

Many learners have found it challenging to write the presentation of self. 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 *Self Directed Learning* 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 presentation of self 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 learned skills/knowledge/values 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, “who are you, how have you lived; what has your life meant, and what has influenced and guided you through your life?”

**“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 6:**

**PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

**The personal philosophy of education is no longer included as a separate required section of your liberal arts degree plan**. It may,*optionally*, be included*as a section in your presentation of self*. It isrequired that you construct a personal philosophy of education and write about it in the discussion board for session 13 of *Self Directed Learning* (or share it orally in class discussion in the on-ground LIS 301 *Self* *Directed Learning*). That discussion board (or classroom discussion) personal philosophy of education shouldbe presented in two parts: 1) a part describing your personal philosophy of education as you want to experience college education; and 2) a part describing your opinion about what college education generally ought to be for college students—the ideal role of university education in our society.

For a person about to embark on the journey toward a self-designed degree, the formulation of a personal philosophy of education 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 that 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 *Self Directed Learning*. You should probably include a discussion of your learning style and how that fits into your philosophy of learning. Generally, a philosophy of education can be expressed in 500 words or less.

In the thirteenth session discussion board (of the online LIS 301 course) the discussion prompts for your personal philosophy of education are:

1. Give your personal philosophy of education as you want to experience college or university education. That is, quite apart from theories about the role of the university in society or the proper products of university educations, explain what you personally prefer in terms of assignments, classroom instruction, relationships with peers and faculty, experiential learning, grading, and so forth. What do you like best about the formal education experience at a university or college? What works for you?
2. What should education be? Share your philosophy of university education. What is the proper role of university education in society? What are the duties of public institutions of higher learning?

Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, and one of the thinkers providing the ideological basis for programs such as LIS, disparagingly described conventional education as having the following characteristics:

1. *The teachers are the possessors of knowledge, the students the expected recipients*. The teachers are theexperts; 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. Lecturesmade 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 possessorsof 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 youget 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 cannotbe 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 theirindividual 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. Engage with and comment upon such ideas in your philosophy of education. 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.

**[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 7:**

**THE GOALS STATEMENT**

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

The goals statement 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 Assessment.

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 associate 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 to 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 (e.g., some students will focus their courses in a sort of self-designed major on top of the Boyer category requirements; others will follow the Boyer model to pursue interests in a variety of fields so they graduate with a broad, general liberal arts degree, perhaps excluding a focus because they already have a disciplinary focus through life/work experiences or they intend to gain a disciplinary focus in a graduate program). Review you 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).

Remember that the goals statement is not about the courses you want to take. Rather, it is about your record of success in achieving past goals (especially goals related to education and learning), and your life goals in terms of personal life, economic life, career, spiritual and emotional life, and so forth. In particular, you should share the life goals that college education may help you achieve. It almost goes without saying that everyone has a goal of earning a bachelor’s degree, but you must explain what goals have inspired you to seek that degree. If the goal is to gain an advantage in finding rewarding employment and earning more money, then you ought to write about the sort of employment and income goals you have, and explain how those goals influence your obvious medium-term goal of completing your degree.

Remember also that although you will write about career goals and life goals, including personal goals and spiritual/emotional goals, these should be presented in a way that supports a central thrust of your goals statement placed on your academic goals. That is, your goals statement must give readers an understanding of what you want to know and be able to do.

For example, if a student has “wealth” as a central goal, they might write about an ultimate goal of having an income approximately double of what the average year-round worker earns (in 2014, the median year-round full-time worker earned an annual salary a bit lower than $45,000, so a person aspiring to wealth might desire a salary of about $90,000 or higher). They would write about what they would do with their higher income, or the goals that motivate the goal of wealth (Do they want a better house? Why? Do they want to live in an expensive place like San Francisco or Manhattan? Why? Do they want to indulge in expensive tastes in travel, food, clothing, and cars? Why?). They would write about the sort of careers that appeal to them because of the combination of higher salaries and work tasks. They would write about the skills, experiences, and knowledge they would need to rise in those appealing careers.

For example, in order to be a successful lawyer who earns over $100,000 per year, what sort of lawyer would one need to be, and where would one find work? What talents and knowledge would one need to possess? A well thought-out goals statement doesn’t just state, “I want to be rich” or even, “I want to be a professional who becomes rich”. Rather, the goals statement needs to help the student consider exactly what they must accomplish to achieve a specific pathway toward their ultimate goal. So, a student might write: “I want to be a successful trial lawyer who helps people who have suffered from injustices to sue the wealthy and powerful people or institutions that have harmed them,” or “I want to be a successful trial lawyer who helps professionals and companies defend themselves from greedy, querulous persons who make unfair accusations and claims.” Such a goal is superior to the rather vague goal of “I want to be rich” or “I want to be a wealthy lawyer”. A good goals statement will then explore the goals that are necessarily associated with that central career ambition, perhaps by writing: “therefore, I want to be a person who can win arguments and gather persuasive facts and evidence, and I want to be an expert on liability law, and I want to pass the bar exam, and gain experience in liability lawsuits.” That sort of detail helps a student consider what knowledge, skills, and values they should try to address in their undergraduate degree, while vague goals such as, “I want to be a successful and wealthy professional” are not specific enough to help a student plan their degree.

 **“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 ASSESSMENT**

As previously discussed, the goals statement is grounded in your significant learning and accomplishments from the past providing your vision of the future and your personal goals, and successfully engaging with and completing your 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, which you will address by your choices of courses and learning experiences 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.* At the very least, seek out lists of knowledge-skills-valuesassociated with success in a field you want to enter.

Secondly identify your strengths and weaknesses and experiences in the seven areas of the Boyer Model. What courses did you take in the first two years (or 60 credit hours) 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.

The key point of the learning needs assessment is that you must come up with a list of things you ought to know well, or be able to do well, or be able to think about with the values and perspectives that will make you good at something you want to be able to do well. Then, you must explain your current state of competency, knowledge, ability, and outlook for each item on the list, and compare your current state to a desired state you think you will need to attain in order to reach your goals. Some faculty might even have you prepare a needs assessment as a list of skills, knowledge, and values, with ratings of your current levels and desired levels, with little or no narrative commentary.

With the Boyer Model, you would presumably have seven short lists of knowledge-skills-values of greatest significance to you, one for each of the Boyer Categories used in LIS. You may even need an eighth list of knowledge-skills-values specific to your personal goals.

Once you have lists of your learning needs, and can compare the levels you are at now to the levels where you need to be in order to achieve your goals, you can use this knowledge of your learning needs to 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.

Thus, the ideal learning needs assessment would begin with a paragraph about your goals and what bodies of knowledge or set of skills or types of values are associated with persons who accomplish goals such as yours. This would be followed by a few paragraphs describing the process of finding expert insights into the types of knowledge-skills-values that lead toward your academic goals. With whom did you speak, and what did you read, and what did you find, and what did people tell you? What sources were helpful? This would be followed by a paragraph outlining some of the key areas of knowledge and ability and outlook relevant to your goals. After these four to six paragraphs, you would provide a set of lists of types of knowledge, skills, or values. These lists would be grouped in sets according to Boyer Categories or according to some other system of organization created by you to match your specific type of degree. Each list might include four or five key questions, problems, ideas, theories, practices, and so forth. For each of these, you would rate your current level of familiarity or ability, and also your desired level. You might conclude the needs assessment with a paragraph or two reflecting on the areas where you have the greatest needs for improvement, and possibly discussing the areas where you already feel yourself sufficiently prepared to meet your goals.

The learning needs *assessment should not discuss courses you intend to take*. It should focus only on the sorts of objectives and goals that you would expect to find in a syllabus for ideal courses you might hope to find. You will connect your learning needs to specific courses in a later section of your degree plan, the narrative curriculum and summary degree plan.

**“Include the knower in the known.”**

**Julian Jaynes (The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, 1982)**

**Chapter 9:**

**THE PERSONALIZED GUIDE TO 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, web pages, or activities (e.g., participating in conferences) that you consider potentially useful in the development of a comprehensive academic curriculum.

The purpose of the personalized guide to resources is to help you clarify for yourself and to inform your advisor 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 guide 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 guide, speak to your advisor or other students and faculty members who share your interests and specializations and who may have awareness of prominent spokespeople, significant scholarly works, or major professional organizations in your field.

Your guide 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 guides. 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 guide 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.

The personalized guide to resources is a tool for you to use in your self-directed pursuit of your goals. By creating a good list of the resources that are relevant to your learning needs and academic goals, you will demonstrate your independence and self-directed learning competency.

**“Sit, walk or run, but don’t wobble.”**

**Zen Proverb (Kehl, 1983)**

**Chapter 10:**

**NARRATIVE CURRICULUM/SUMMARY DEGREE PLAN**

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 degree plan. 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.

Your rationale ought to mention at least three things: first, it ought to discuss how you think a course will help you address your learning needs. Which of your learning needs do you expect this course will address?

Second, you ought to mention how the course fits into your degree plan. Is it an ECCE course, a liberal studies elective? Which Boyer categories will it help you address?

Third, you ought to describe your personal motivation in hoping to take a specific course. Especially, you should try to relate each course to some sorts of questions you have about reality. What issues or questions do you hope a course will help you answer? What makes you interested in a particular course? What do you personally hope you will be able to do, or will know about, after you have successfully completed the course?

**Number of credit hours:**

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

**Boyer categories assigned:**

Which Boyer category does each class address? Remember, you need 3 hours of upper-division credit in each of the seven Boyer categories.

**Course purpose:**

Describe the purpose of each course you include in your degree plan:

ECCE;

LIS program requirements;

LIS Boyer elective;

minor requirements (where applicable); and

if you have general education deficiencies these must be accounted for in your degree proposal.

**Part Two: Summary Degree Plan**

When you have completed a detailed presentation of your curriculum and rationales for each course included, summarize the information on the degree plan. The summary degree plan should be a list presenting 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. Try to obtain information about courses that are offered on a cyclical basis (e.g. every Spring, every two years, etc.) in order to anticipate appropriate sequencing and availability. NOTE: Department office support staff often are good sources of information, and so are department chairs, and you can always consult the Class Schedule looking at past semesters to understand the history of when courses have been previously 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 advisor know that you are proceeding through your program in a thoughtful and methodical way. It is not unusual to revise your degree plan once—or several times—during your academic program as you become aware of additional resources and/or opportunities. Revisions do not need approval, but you should make and keep a record of the deviations you take from your *Self Directed Learning* LIS 301 degree plan so you can list the replacements and offer explanations in your liberal and integrative paper when you take *Senior Seminar* LIS 451. Revised time frames also 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 almost right word and the right word is really a large matter—’tis the difference between the lightning-bug and the lightning”**

**Mark Twain (contributed to George Bainton’s *The Art of Authorship*, 1890)**

**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 plan requires that you plan an integrated curriculum, describing your rationale for each course and learning project you propose. The liberal and integrative studies paper (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 an approved degree plan on file in your student folder (students have electronic folders with their degree plans and other materials stored electronically, and accessible from the LIS office), and be in the final semester of your coursework.

The liberal and integrative studies 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**.**

Most importantly, your liberal and integrative paper must justify your degree by making a supported claim that you have met standards of quality in your studies. Since program requirements mandate that everyone follow the Boyer model to some extent (the seven Boyer category courses), anyone can achieve this by describing the Boyer model and showing that they have completed courses in each of the seven categories described by Ernest Boyer, and then writing a bit about why this is a good model and how their studies conformed to this model. If you have strictly followed a plan approved in LIS-301 *Self Directed Learning*, your main challenge will be to articulate how your plan is worthy, but that fact that it is worthy was already settled when it was approved by your *Self Directed Learning* professor. Still, part of passing LIS 451 *Senior Seminar* is demonstrating that you can communicate why your course of study is of high quality and worthwhile, referring to experts or ideas outside your own opinion.

If you cannot do this, you may be told what additional courses seem to be necessary in order to bring your degree up to quality standards, or you may be told that you have failed *Senior Seminar* because, while your degree does seem to be of high quality, you have not demonstrated your ability to communicate in a convincing way that it does meet standards of quality.

**Suggestions**

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

* Work closely with your advisor and the *Senior Seminar* 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 access 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 centrality 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 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.

An honors thesis can be a good source of a writing sample for students who intend to apply for graduate studies. Students in LIS who complete honors theses should submit their work for inclusion in the UIS student research symposia, and should also aim to have their work submitted for presentation at a conference, or even publication.

**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 course½hoursmeetsaweek3 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 should be completed at the time you submit your degree plan in LIS 301. 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 series of forms 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. In fact, the dean’s offices may insist upon this before they give approval. Grading for independent studies and explorations is usually CR/NC, but traditional grading is allowed in tutorials (LIS 499). 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.

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 plan.
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. Other forms relevant to the course will be initiated by the liberal studies program secretary who initiates the permission to register process.
5. Your faculty sponsor will forward the proposal, with faculty signature, to the LNT Department Chair with the Independent Study Proposal form signed. You and your sponsor may each want to keep a copy of the proposal for your records.
6. The LNT Department Chair will forward 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 forms allowing the independent study and return the 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.

**REFERENCES**

American Psychological Association. (1983). *Publication manual of the American*

*psychological association, 3rd edition.* Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Antioch University. (1993). *Antioch university individualized master of arts student manual.* Antioch, NY: Antioch University.

Belenky, M.F., et al. (1986). *Women’s ways of knowing.* New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Cell, E. (1984). *Learning to learn from experience.* New York, NY: State University of New York.

Flower, L. (1981). *Problem-solving strategies for writing.* San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice.* Cambridge, MA: Howard University Press.

Keen, S., and A. Valley-Fox. (1989). *Your mythic journey.* New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press. Kehl, R. (1983). *Silver departures.* San Diego, CA: Green Tiger Press.

Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers.* New York, NY: Cambridge Book Company.

Knox, A.B. (1986). *Helping adults learn.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Limited. Progoff, I. (1977). *At a journal workshop.* New York, NY: Dialogue House Library. Rogers, C. (1980). *A way of being.* Columbus, OH: Houghton Mifflin Company.

University of Illinois at Springfield. (2015-16) *University of Illinois at Springfield*

*Catalog.* Springfield, Ill.: University of Illinois at Springfield.

Steinem, G. (1992). *Revolution from within.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Walden, P. (1985; Revised, 1994, by H. McCracken, et al.). *This is your life*. Springfield, Ill.: University of Illinois at Springfield.