

GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY STUDENTS

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So you think you want to do an independent study with me as guide, eh? Well, here are some thoughts I have put together to help us decide how we want to proceed and to avoid floundering in the beginning phases for half the term. But the first thing to note is that this is YOUR project and YOU will have to do the lion's share of the work here, both in designing how you want it to go and in motivating yourself to do the work. I am here to help you decide on the scope of your project, give tips on how to find appropriate readings, guide you through the readings that we decide on, and respond to the written work that you do. If these guidelines don't seem to fit what you have in mind, let's discuss it. Nothing is ruled out a priori (except immoral acts, of course).

Course numbers and levels

A. Undergraduate students:

PHIL 340 Tutorial in Philosophy—This is the thing that students wanting to do an independent study with me during the school year enroll in, provided that I agree.

PHIL 600 Readings in Philosophy (summer only)—Ditto above, except that this is done in the summer. Some summers I will not be available.

B. Philosophy majors (in addition to above):

PHIL 460 Senior Essay—This is for senior majors who wish to work for departmental honors.

C. Graduate students:

PHIL 899 Master's Thesis—Just what it says. Note that this is not required to get an M.A. at KU.

PHIL 900 Research in Philosophy—Independent study for graduate students, any semester.

PHIL 901 Tutorial II—This is an official requirement for Ph.D students; it requires the preparation of a paper on which the student will be examined by three members of the department.

PHIL 999 Dissertation—Final product of the Ph.D. You'll work with a director at least a year on this. Choosing a dissertation director is perhaps the most important choice you make in graduate school; make it carefully, thinking about professional, intellectual and personal issues.

Themes and topics

A. General topics that I am competent to discuss:

Decision theory, game theory—Various topics

Philosophy of economics, philosophy of social science, philosophy of science—Any topic

Political or social philosophy—Various topics

Epistemic logic

20th century epistemology—Especially foundationalism and its demise

Feminism—Various topics

Philosophy of law: sexual harassment, abortion, date rape, consent theory

Work of particular philosophers: Hobbes, Rousseau, Mill, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, David Gauthier, Charles Taylor, Wilfrid Sellars, and others not regularly taught by the department

B. Research specialties

Foundations of game theory, especially role of common knowledge, theories of convention and norms, theories of oppression, feminist ethics, applications of game theory and decision theory to social/political problems, abortion, rape, sexual harassment, theories of resistance, theories of social groups, methodological individualism vs. holism, theories of rationality

Meeting arrangements

- A. PHIL 340 and PHIL 600 should be weekly meetings that cover the readings for most of the term. We may decide at some points, when the student is writing up the final paper for instance, not to meet for a week or so. This should be clearly agreed upon by both of us, however. And whenever you are going to have to miss a meeting be sure to let me know as far in advance as possible, even if that means calling me 10 minutes before our meeting to tell me that your car broke down!
- B. PHIL 460—Usually weekly meetings until the topic is established and narrowed down, then whenever you have a portion or draft to run by me for comments.
- C. PHIL 900—Weekly meetings are presumed.
- D. PHIL 901—Usually weekly meetings until the topic is established and narrowed down, then whenever you have a portion or draft to run by me for comments
- E. PHIL 999—Weekly meetings, perhaps for an entire term, until there is a clear sense of direction, then whenever you have a draft of the prospectus for me to comment on. After the prospectus has been approved, you may want to meet more or less frequently, but at least whenever you have a draft of a chapter to show me.

Readings and assignments

- A. PHIL 340, PHIL 600, PHIL 900

Syllabus: You will select the reading with more or less assistance from me, though I will maintain veto power over any reading that you will want to discuss with me (expect me to read).

Annotated Bibliography: At the end of the term you will prepare a list of the readings we have done with a brief annotation concerning the topic and points of interest of the reading.

Paper: Normally you will be expected to write a term paper on a subject of interest to you from the readings we have done. We can also consider other final products, however.

B. PHIL 460, PHIL 901

Paper: The final product for each of these is set by departmental practice.

Bibliography: You will select all references and we will discuss some of them together. I will provide suggestions, but the final choices are yours to make.

Exam: Each of these requires an oral exam by three members of the department, including myself as director.

C. PHIL 899, PHIL 999 (see Department Guidelines for Graduate Students for specifics)

Thesis: The final product for each of these is set by department practice.

Bibliography: You will select all references and we will discuss some of them together. I will provide suggestions, but the final choices are yours to make.

Exam: Each of these requires an oral exam. The M.A. oral exam is by three members of the department, including myself as director. The Ph.D. oral exam is by four members of the Philosophy department, including myself as director, and one member of the KU Graduate Faculty from a department other than Philosophy.

Grades

A. PHIL 340, 600, 900, 901: I will assign A, B, C, D, F as merited. In exceptional cases I may consider giving the student an "I" for a specific, short period of time.

B. PHIL 899, 999: I will assign P/F for every semester until the last one, then A, B or C as merited.