

Research Opportunities with the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)

Students can participate in student-faculty research and collaboration. They are encouraged to work with faculty with whom they have shared academic interests. This type of student-faculty research varies and can include data collection, co-authorship or some other joint work. The best way for students to earn academic credit would be through an independent study in American Politics (4010), Political Theory (4040), Comparative Politics (4060), or International Relations (4080). Additionally, students can complete an independent research project under faculty supervision for which they can also use an independent study or can conduct research as a part of their senior thesis experience by signing up for POL 5000 and also possibly POL 5001 (optional).

Individual Work

Note that students are allowed to complete up to 3 credit hours of individual work or a total of 6 hours in “special” course work (that includes optional electives and other individual work) should be applied toward Political Science (POL) and International Affairs (INTA) major requirements. In cases of senior thesis work, the SPIA encourages students interested in pursuing individual research to consider completing a two-semester senior thesis (POL 5000 and 5001) rather than a one-semester individual work but this expectation is optional.

Advanced students (juniors or seniors) wishing to pursue a narrowly defined subject in more depth than is possible within a single course may ask a faculty member to supervise extensive independent reading for up to three credits in American Politics (4010), Political Theory (4040), Comparative Politics (4060), or International Relations (4080). The student must have completed basic course work in the area before proposing an individual work project. In order to obtain the necessary approval of both the supervising professor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the student must prepare a written proposal listing the materials to be read and providing a schedule of meetings with the faculty supervisor to discuss the course requirements (readings, assignments, papers, etc.). To receive academic credit, the student must complete a written report. Usually research topics are being generated by the student with guidance by a faculty member. Students are expected to produce a research proposal, which along with approval by supervising faculty, should be submitted to the Undergraduate Director for their review.

The purpose of independent study is to provide scholarly opportunities for students who wish to pursue special academic interests that cannot be accommodated within the existing curriculum. Independent study is intended primarily for juniors and seniors who have already mastered basic materials in their specialized field of study within Political Science, Public and International Affairs. It is an unusual opportunity for undergraduates to work one-on-one with a member of our faculty to design their own course with readings, research and written work tailored especially for them. Individual instructors provide such work on a voluntary basis, but not all students and scholarly interests can be accommodated. Individual Work is not a way of accommodating students who cannot fit a particular course into their schedule; it is not a way of taking a course that they have been closed out of; and most assuredly, it is not an easy way of getting three or more Political Science credits. Yet, it can be a most fulfilling academic experience for sincere students who feel they have the drive and interest to engage in serious academic pursuits outside of the

ordinary framework of the classroom. Three hours of work per week are generally expected for each hour of academic credit earned through the individual work, so the typical workload would be 9-10 hours per week for a 3-credit independent study.

Students interested to pursue an independent study that includes an internship component should register for POL 4090 when the class is scheduled. For more information about internship opportunities visit the undergraduate advising page:

<http://www.artsci.uc.edu/departments/spia/undergrad/internships.html>

Also, note that students need approval and permission by the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Undergraduate Advising Coordinator to complete independent studies and the Internship for Academic Credit Program.

Senior thesis

One way that students can complete the POL or INTA major capstone requirement is by doing a one- or two-semester senior thesis. A one-semester long senior thesis requires registration for POL 5000, while a two-semester long requires registration for POL 5000 **and** then POL 5001 (both by permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Advising Coordinator). Students who have a major GPA of 3.67 or higher (and will thus graduate with high school honors by doing a senior thesis) and/or students who want to go on to graduate school are especially encouraged to do a senior thesis. Students should consider topics that build on upper level classes they have taken and approach faculty members who are doing related research and teaching to discuss and design their research proposals. Each student writing a thesis will need a faculty supervisor and a faculty reader. INTA majors can invite one of these faculty members from a core INTA field other than Political Science. A senior thesis student and the faculty supervisor and reader should clearly delineate in writing a proposal including expectations about the scope and schedule for the project. Faculty supervisors can decide whether they will grade each semester separately or use an IP (in progress) grade that will be changed to the final grade at the end of the second semester. Students should plan to have a draft of the entire thesis submitted to their advisor **no later than** week ten of the semester when they are going to complete the project (in case they take POL 5001 no later than October 1 for those who plan to graduate the same Fall semester and March 1 for those students who plan to graduate in the spring. Juniors contemplating a senior thesis should plan ahead in order to have a proposal developed and faculty ready to serve as supervisor and reader in time apply for the Taft Undergraduate Research Fellowship. More details are available here:

<http://webcentral.uc.edu/taftawards/programdetail.cfm?programid=23>

Students must have a supervisor, a reader and a proposal approved by both prior to signing up for POL 5000. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Advising Coordinator listed on the SPIA's website.