

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

INDEPENDENT STUDY GUIDE

To be used in the preparation of:

SENIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY
COMM 45100 & COMM 45200

August 2024

**IMPORTANT DATES FOR SENIORS
2023 - 2024**

Thursday 29 August 2024	*Meeting with Faculty – 11:00 am
Friday 27 September 2024	Deadline to hold second reader meeting
Monday 7 October 2024	Complete Chapter II due
Friday 15 November 2024	Last day to submit drafts for written feedback on 451
Mid-November 2024	HSRC typically meets for the last time in mid- to late-November, so you should submit your HSRC request no later than mid-November.
Thursday 30 January 2025	Meeting with seniors – 11 a.m.
Thursday 27 February 2025	Last day to submit drafts for written feedback on 452
Monday 31 March 2025	I.S. Monday (2 copies to Registrar by 5 pm)
Tuesday 22 April 2025	Last day to hold an oral defense
Tuesday 25 April 2025	Any revisions are due
Friday 2 May 2025	Senior Research Symposium (All seniors are required to participate <i>or</i> they may give a presentation to the entire Communication Studies faculty about their I.S. See p. 3 for more details)
Saturday 17 May 2025	Commencement

Your advisor reserves the right to adjust these deadlines.

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES
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INDEPENDENT STUDY PHILOSOPHY

The Department of Communication Studies' Independent Study Guide complements the general regulations governing Independent Study as stated in the College's Handbook for Independent Study. This study guide specifies the procedures for conducting Independent Study, and provides guidance by the faculty of the Department of Communication Studies on the content, method, and form of Independent Study (I.S.) projects.

I.S. encourages the student to design a project that will explore a topic beyond the limits of a course, and often across several disciplines, demonstrating how the boundaries of knowledge can be extended. Thus, Independent Study at Wooster is simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity. I.S. can also carry a utility that extends beyond your academic experience.

Your Independent Study can be designed to provide an introduction to graduate school or an entree into the professional world. Wooster graduates who have matriculated to graduate programs have found that their writing has improved significantly and that arguably the most difficult aspect of their graduate program (writing the thesis) has already been practiced at Wooster. Potential employers are duly impressed by the scope and magnitude of I.S. projects and frequently consider them as valuable evidence of the potential employee's ability to organize, execute, analyze, and present complex ideas. A number of characteristics unique to I.S. make this true.

- √ I.S. presents you with the intellectual challenge of your choice. From the breadth of communication inquiry, you select the research question that intrigues you and a method for achieving your end results.
- √ You will bring to bear your ability to think critically about a research problem. It is an important opportunity to consolidate your knowledge about human communication, gained in the classroom and from life experiences, with information from scholars who have preceded you. Issues in human communication will surface throughout your life, and although you may not analyze them with the detail you will apply here, you will certainly be capable of doing so as a result of the I.S. experience.
- √ You will draw upon your own creativity and insight, gained from your liberal arts education, to explore new worlds of understanding. You will use the tools that you have developed—a strong and curious mind, self-discipline, library and scholarly research skills—in ways that are normally only suggested in regular coursework.
- √ You will sharpen your analytic skills, while solving an intellectual problem, through the application of a scientific or humanistic method.
- √ You must communicate your analysis and results; therefore, you will improve your organizational and expository skills for thinking, writing, and speaking.

Independent Study is the capstone to your formal academic experience at Wooster. Nationwide, very few schools require all their students to write a senior thesis. This makes both you and Wooster very special.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In pursuing Independent Study, the word “independent” should not be interpreted to mean that the student does not seek or receive support or counsel. Quite the contrary, learning to be an effective independent scholar requires faculty mentoring. Independent Study is an evolving apprenticeship whereby the student develops and refines analytic thinking, writing, and oral communication skills. The faculty in the Department of Communication Studies will assist, encourage, and challenge you to seize the opportunities that I.S. affords.

Independent Study Advisors

Senior I.S. Advisors

Due to the year-long requirements of Senior Independent Study, the faculty will divide Senior Independent Study candidates among the existing faculty based upon: (1) The stated interests and desires of senior majors; and (2) An equitable balance of I.S. advisees among the faculty. NOTE: Your Senior I.S. advisor may not be the same as your Junior I.S. advisor. The I.S. advising workload is an important part of faculty responsibilities at Wooster and thus plays a prominent role in the teaching load for faculty. Mandatory weekly meetings with your Senior I.S. advisor will be initiated early in the academic semester.

Independent Study Requirements and Deadlines

College Standards and Policies

The entire Independent Study program “belongs” to the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. Each individual department merely administers I.S. for the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement. In this fashion, the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement can exert a desirable degree of control over the consistency of I.S. from department to department, especially regarding deadlines for the submission of I.S.

All requests for extensions, or special considerations due to subject content, can only be approved by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement through written application. No individual department is authorized to deviate beyond the Dean’s established deadlines.

Senior I.S. Requirements: COMM 45100 and 45200

The Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement authorizes individual departments to set their own internal requirements for the completion of 45100, the portion of I.S. that is typically completed in the fall semester of the senior year, and 45200, the portion of I.S. that is typically completed in the spring semester of the senior year. Specifically, in order to pass 45100 and 45200, you must adhere to the deadlines and expectations set out by your individual Senior I.S. advisor in your specific I.S. syllabus. This syllabus becomes a contract between you and your advisor. Failure to meet the requirements set out by your advisor and the Department (see page and source requirements below) will result in failure in COMM 45100 or 45200.

Students in COMM 45100 should generally expect their COMM 45100 requirements to include completing Chapter I: Introduction, completing Chapter II: Literature Review, drafting Chapter III: Method, and submitting an HSRC application (if applicable*). Projects that involve ethnographic research, travel to archives, the creation of a film or website, and other possibilities may follow different formats and/or deadlines. Regardless of your project’s topic or method, the contract with one’s advisor is key here, as well, and of course, the quality must meet your advisor’s specifications.

As a Departmental requirement, each student completing I.S. in the Department of Communication Studies must produce a Chapter II: Literature Review that is a minimum of 10 full pages and draws upon a minimum of 15 scholarly sources, although your individual advisor may

require more pages or sources depending upon your topic or the scope of your project. Students in the Department of Communication Studies must also fulfill the oral proficiency requirement of the Department by giving an oral presentation of their I.S. Successful completion of this oral presentation will be fulfilled by participation in the Senior Research Symposium in April. If you present a poster at symposium, follow the example in Appendix A.

No student may be registered for both COMM 45100 and COMM 45200 in the same semester. Students who do not meet the Department and advisor requirements for minimal performance in COMM 45100 will fail and may not take COMM 45200 in the subsequent semester. Students who fail COMM 45100 must re-enroll in COMM 45100 regardless of the amount of work remaining in COMM 45100. The Department is authorized only to hold orals for those students who are enrolled in COMM 45200.

*If a study involves human participants, students must collect data only if they have received approval from the Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC). *Prior* to submitting an HSRC proposal, students must complete a module and earn certification for doing research with human participants. Note: The HSRC does not meet between semesters or during the summer. **Collecting data without obtaining approval of the HSRC will result in failure of Senior I.S.** HSRC approval must be noted in Chapter III..

To fulfill the oral communication requirement of Senior Independent Study in the Department, **all seniors must participate in the April Senior Research Symposium or give a presentation to the entire Communication Studies faculty** in January about their I.S. If a student does not do either of these presentations, they will present to the faculty after the Symposium in order to fulfill this requirement.

A copy of your I.S. title page is due to the Registrar's Office by 5:00 p.m. on the first day of classes following Spring Break. For Senior I.S. theses completed in the fall semester, the due date is four weeks prior to the end of classes. The registrar's office may not accept your title page until you've submitted it electronically to open works. You will get emails about I.S. submission from IT and the registrar.

THE CONTENT, METHOD, AND SCHOLARLY WRITING OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

Selecting a Topic

Although students differ in their interests, a well-selected project is one that *advances the student's individual interests, furthers scholarly understanding, and responds to the needs of society*. When selecting your I.S. topic, you should remember that your advisor will provide you with guidance, but will **NOT** select your topic for you. Instead, you should keep the above criteria in mind and consider how you will translate your general topic into a research project with a specific purpose or research question.

Selecting Either a Research Question or a Purpose Statement

In addition to a topic, every Independent Study has either a research question or a purpose statement that guides the project. *A research question provides a clearly-articulated question* that your project will attempt to answer. For instance, the following are research questions that communication students have used to guide their studies:

- “Are word learning and retention different when children are exposed to traditional books compared to electronic books?”
- “What are the rhetorical characteristics of Barack Obama’s speech on race?”
- “Do college women perceive their communication ability, in a dating relationship, to be stronger and more effective than that of their romantic partner?”

A purpose statement is the precisely-stated goal of your project. The purpose statements of actual communication research projects completed by students have included:

- “to examine the rhetorical strategies that presidents employ to handle a situation in which an administration official is accused of violating specific ethical codes.”
- "to present a critical analysis of the hidden framework and deceptive structures of television talk shows, and to examine how the audience is frequently manipulated by the hidden dimensions of this television genre.”
- "to examine how sound effects in films are often used to alter our pre-existing assumptions about reality or even to create new ideas about reality.”

Those of you who are working on creative projects (such as documentaries, films, advertising campaigns, web designs) or performance writing-based projects (such as narrative-based or autoethnographic studies) should consider a critical question that frames your inquiry, writing, or creative processes.

- “to create an advertising campaign to challenge the existing representations about gender performances and masculinity.”
- “to create a visual narrative about Black women’s experiences at the college.”
- “to present a collection of personal narratives about immigrant experiences in Northeast Ohio.”
- “to create a film that explores the vectors of environmental racism.”

- “to write an autoethnography to illuminate the politics of gender and race and the power structures within student organizations.”

In deciding whether you should develop a purpose statement or articulate a research question, you should consult with your advisor. Regardless of the approach you take, a purpose statement or research question is extremely important because it narrows the scope of your project and provides the foundation on which your entire Independent Study will be built. You should not, in other words, take such matters lightly, for a thoughtfully-articulated purpose statement or research question can provide the basis for a well-constructed project, while a sloppy or hastily-selected one will lead to problems as you proceed to the later stages of your Independent Study. In addition to conferring with your advisor, here is a checklist of points you will want to consider in choosing a purpose statement or research question:

- **Is your purpose statement or research question too broad?**

For example, “to study fear appeals” (purpose) or “How are fear appeals used?” (research question) are much too broad for any single research project, let alone your first formal research study. Instead, aim for depth rather than breadth: “to study how the American Cancer Society’s antismoking campaign, ‘Cancer Isn’t Pretty,’ used fear appeals to persuade teenagers” (purpose) or “How does the American Cancer Society’s antismoking campaign, ‘Cancer Isn’t Pretty,’ use fear appeals in its attempts to persuade teenagers?” (research question) are much better choices.

When evaluating whether your proposed purpose statement or research question can be investigated and its relevant data analyzed, consider such issues as:

- whether the purpose statement or research question can be answered by a communication study
 - whether you can locate participants who fit the population description
 - whether you can operationalize all key terms
 - whether the data can be analyzed with reliability and validity
 - whether you can locate the necessary rhetorical artifacts
 - whether you will have adequate time to complete the study
 - whether there are monetary costs
 - how familiar you are with the statistical and/or critical methods you will need to analyze the data
 - whether you can write effectively (and concisely) about your experiences within a cultural context to analyze and critique certain cultural practices and performances
 - whether your film or documentary or other visual creations can capture the main focus of your project without presenting tangential information, stories, or visual elements
- **Does the purpose statement or research question make your study a significant one?**

A study should have scholarly value because it contributes to the communication

discipline's understanding of a concept or provides knowledge about communication in a context that has not previously been examined or at least not examined in much detail.

A study should also have practical value because it contributes to a need in society in some way. For instance, you might interview and survey international students in order to discover what means of communication and what types of messages are most effective in helping them make the transition to college in a new culture.

• **Will the pursuit of your purpose statement or research question lead to a study that is ethical?**

It is often necessary in research that involves human subjects not to provide participants with complete information about the purpose or research question guiding your study. This is because knowledge of your interests may lead people to react differently in the experimental setting or to answer questions that are part of a survey or interview differently than they normally would, hence leading to invalid results. Nonetheless, researchers must carefully balance the need to get honest reactions with the need to treat the participants in their studies ethically. Even if you are conducting qualitative research, you must consider what the impact of your research may be on others. The following are just a few of the ethical issues one should ponder before settling upon a purpose statement or research question:

- Will the purpose statement or research question of your study lead you to mistreat people?
- Is it necessary to debrief participants in your study?
- What will be the impact of your research on society?
- Do you need to maintain confidentiality and, if so, what steps will you take to do so?
- Will your study provide benefit to a treatment group that is not available to a control group?
- Do you need to get approval for using human participants? Students completing I.S. theses involving research with human participants must first read carefully The College of Wooster Policy on Protection of Human Subjects <<http://www.wooster.edu/academics/hsrc/>> and then complete *The College of Wooster Human Subjects Research Review Application* in compliance with federal policy for the protection of human participants (Department of Health and Human Services Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects). Please contact your advisor concerning the timely and accurate completion of these forms. Completed applications should be submitted electronically to the Human Subjects Research Committee. Note: The collection of data without HSRC approval will result in the failure of I.S.

HSRC statement

The College of Wooster's Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC), or "Institutional Review Board (IRB)" for federal purposes, is a specially constituted review body established or designated to protect the welfare of human subjects recruited to participate in research studies or assessment projects. Any member of The College of Wooster community planning to conduct research using human participants (this includes student projects such as Independent Study and other research projects involving human participants.). Information about how to apply can be found at <https://inside.wooster.edu/hsrc/>

IACUC Statement

The College of Wooster's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is a federally mandated committee that oversees the college's animal programs, facilities and procedures to ensure the appropriate care, use, and humane treatments of animals being used for research, testing and education. The IACUC serves as a resource to faculty, students, and staff, providing guidance in meeting applicable guidelines for animal care and use.

All college students and personnel participating in animal research should complete IACUC training, and all research protocols involving the use of vertebrate animals must be reviewed and approved (or classified as exempt) by the committee before they can be implemented.

Information about how to apply can be found at <https://inside.wooster.edu/iacuc/>

Finding Relevant Scholarly Literature

As you explore possible purpose statements or research questions, you will survey scholarly literature related to your chosen topic in order to find out what type of research has been done previously and what its conclusions were. A thorough literature review becomes even more important once you have committed yourself to a particular purpose statement or research question. Not only will your Independent Study include an entire chapter that summarizes the research relevant to your topic, but also you will need to be familiar with this research in order to conduct your project in a competent, professional manner.

One of the first questions that students often ask about literature reviews is: "Where do I find more scholarly research beyond what I already have?" There are several answers to this question. First, check the Communication Studies Department link on the library's web page. Second, *Communication and Mass Media Complete* is particularly helpful for finding resources. Third, consult with librarians who can alert you to other sources for the information that you may need and who will be happy to show you how to access that information if you only ask. Fourth, consult Google Scholar. Fifth, solicit your advisor's input on particular books or articles that he/she thinks you should examine. Sixth, check the references and/or endnotes of the scholarly research you already have collected. What sources do the authors cite? By following the trail of references and endnotes, you may be able to gather a great deal of material with maximum efficiency. Seventh, use the reverse citation search explained on the Department of Communication Studies Wiki page. Finally, remember that no one expects you to familiarize yourself with everything that has ever been written on your topic (unless, that is, only a handful of relevant scholarly studies exists). Instead, what we want you to do is at minimum to exhaust the resources available to you on The College of Wooster's campus and in the library system.

A second question that students frequently ask about literature reviews is: "How many sources should I have?" The answer is that Senior I.S. Chapter II must draw upon at least 15 scholarly sources. In the end, the total number of sources may vary greatly since one topic may have a great deal written about it, whereas another topic may be quite obscure. But the above minimum requirements must be met. The key to keep in mind here is that your sources should be scholarly. Newspaper stories, articles from trade magazines, and some websites, for example, may be helpful to your I.S.—and we certainly encourage you to use them when they are applicable—but they are not scholarly sources arising from academic study that have undergone peer review. If you are in doubt as to whether you have drawn upon the required number of sources and/or the appropriate type of sources, be sure to consult your advisor—before you submit your literature review.

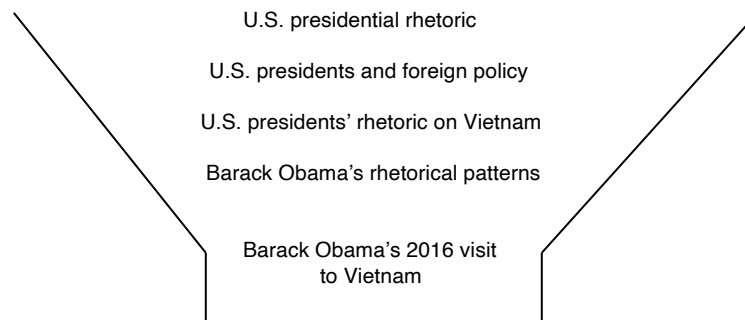
Organizing the Literature Review

Of all the chapters students must write for Independent Study, the literature review chapter usually proves the most challenging. This is because students must digest the sometimes overwhelming amount of research they have gathered and then organize and explain that research in an easily-understood way. When deciding how to organize your literature review, you should choose the format that works best for you, given the breadth and depth of the studies

you wish to summarize. Communication faculty members strongly recommend that you confer with your advisor about this matter and that you submit a detailed outline of your literature review for your advisor's approval. If there are problems in the way in which you have organized your literature review, it will be better to correct them before you have spent huge amounts of time and energy writing the actual chapter itself. The following are two typical ways in which literature reviews can be organized.

- **The Funnel Concept**

The “funnel” starts with a broad, theoretical concept and, through a deductive process subdivides it into more specific domains until the author finally reaches research that deals with the specific research question or purpose statement that he/she has raised. For example, the purpose statement: “This study is designed to analyze the strategies used by Barack Obama in his 2016 address to the people of Vietnam,” lead to a literature review organized using the following funnel concept:



- **Topical Organizing Scheme**

The topical organizing scheme simply “sorts” the scholarly literature that has been gathered into groupings based upon their subject matter.

For instance, the research question—“How does a social movement group with limited resources, in this case the United Farm Workers of America, use persuasive means to advocate for changes in policy?”—led to a literature review organized topically:

1. Historical studies on the United Farm Workers
2. Research on self-esteem among minority group members
3. Research on leadership in minority group social movements

4. Discussion of symbolic convergence theory
5. Research on public policy rhetoric and social movements
6. Research on strikes as a form of rhetoric

In this particular study, the student found that previous research could not be neatly organized according to the funnel concept because she was drawing together research done in contexts that were quite disparate. Therefore, it made more sense for her to organize her literature review topically.

An important component of most literature reviews that is not explicitly included in either the funnel or topical organizing examples is a theoretical framework. The theoretical framework can be included in the literature in a variety of ways. For example, the theoretical framework may be its own section, or it may be incorporated into various other sections of the chapter. You should work with your advisor to determine the best method for including an appropriate theoretical framework. Make sure you understand how your theoretical framework is informing your study.

Methodological Considerations

Implicit in any inquiry is the method or research tool that you will employ to carry out your study; that is, the method is the means by which you will fulfill your project's purpose or answer the research question that you have posed. The following are some guidelines to keep in mind as you choose and employ your method:

- **The purpose statement or research question you select will suggest the method most appropriate to your analysis.**
- **Choose the method that will work best for your study, not the method that seems most convenient or is already familiar to you.**
- **Choose a method of investigation that you can learn adequately in the period of time available to you.**
- **The method you choose should be clearly stated and followed in your Independent Study.**

Regardless of which methodological approach you use, do not attempt to collect your data or conduct your analysis without your advisor's approval.

Results and Discussion or Analysis Chapter

- If the study is quantitative, this chapter should not merely include the reporting of your results (i.e., your data), but also the interpretation of your results (i.e., explain what the numbers mean).
- If the study is qualitative, this chapter should not simply include descriptions (e.g., just stating what the elements of the Pentad are) or quotations, but must also provide interpretations (e.g., explaining how a message worked or why something was said by an interviewee). You should also provide a context for the messages you examined. This chapter is typically 20-25 pages, but consult your advisor about the specifics for your particular project.
- For both quantitative and qualitative studies, we expect that you will cite previous

scholarship in this chapter as you explain (i.e., make sense of) your study.

The Conclusions Chapter

The final chapter is the payday for your work – don't lose focus before you finish. Please leave enough time in your schedule to write a thoughtful, organized final chapter. This chapter demands a great deal of thought on your part so that you may examine your study critically and synthesize its various parts. In addition, a poorly written final chapter leaves readers with a negative final impression even if the remaining document is well-written.

The last chapter takes a macroscopic perspective on your study. You need to synthesize your smaller results from your I.S. in order to answer your research question or fulfill your overall purpose. This chapter also should consider how scholars could extend this line of research. The five major components of this chapter include: major conclusions, implications, limitations, recommendations for future research, and final thoughts.

• **Major Conclusions**

- This section should articulate the broad patterns in your study. It does not simply reiterate the individual results but rather synthesizes those results to form higher order answers to your research question. In other words, what is the big picture? This section is about reporting the overall pattern of your individual results. How do those individual results come together?

• **Implications**

- What is the significance or importance of your major conclusions?
- You are not just restating the conclusions.
- Your implications may be scholarly and/or practical.
 - Do the results have theoretical implications?
 - Are there implications for the field or discipline?
 - How can the findings be used?
 - What significance or importance do the findings have to people?
 - How can your results be applied in the real world?

• **Limitations**

- Any study has weaknesses or shortcomings. Limitations may stem from the method used, the procedures followed, the amount/type of data collected, or the purpose of the study.
- It is your ethical responsibility to articulate the weaknesses of your study.
- What are the weaknesses of your study? Why do those weaknesses exist? What are the consequences of those weaknesses for the reporting and interpretation of your results?

• **Recommendations for Future Research**

- The recommendations should indicate how future research can overcome the limitations of your study but should not stop or primarily focus there. They should also identify ways in which scholars can extend this line of research.
- These should be specific and clearly articulated. For example, do not just state that a different method should be used without identifying a recommended method. Why should a different method be employed? What would be the rationale for this alternate method?

- **Final Thoughts**

- This is a conclusion for the study as a whole.
- It is also an opportunity for the student to reflect on his or her study.

If you are doing a creative IS, consult with your advisor and second reader about your method and the format of your IS.

If your IS has a visual component, please provide an archival copy for the department.

The Scholarly Writing of Independent Study

General Guidelines

Although we come to know and understand one another in many different ways, the formal written expression of your ideas is valued most highly in the Independent Study process. Your writing constitutes your academic identity, your scholarly calling card, your *intellectual credentials*. Through your academic writing, you are expected to express yourself clearly, argue effectively, examine critically, and report accurately. Learning to write as a scholar can be a daunting task, but one that can be made much easier if you keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **Write for others as you would have them write for you.**
- **Strive for clarity in your structure.**

Each of your chapters should have an introduction that eases the reader into the topic at hand and provides an organizational preview of the structure that your chapter will follow.

Within the body of each chapter, you should follow the structure you have set forth in your introduction.

Finally, where appropriate (see pages 18 – 19), your chapters should have a definite conclusion.

- **Avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms; when specialized terms need to be employed, be sure to explain them.**
- **Find and use your own “voice,” even when citing the work of others.**

Although you are drawing on the voices of previous scholars, it is crucial that you use your own voice to explain, interpret, and contextualize what other researchers have said. This does not mean that you should write in the same style as you talk. Rather, you need to discover what your “scholarly voice” or writing style is and to use it. This can be a difficult process—and you may not feel that you have settled upon a comfortable and consistent scholarly writing style until the end of your Independent Study—but the following guidelines can help:

- When you quote an authority, make clear in your own words how his/her statement relates to the topic at hand in your study; what is obvious to you may not be obvious to your audience.
- If the idea of an established scholar can be expressed in another way—that is, if his/her exact words do not make a significant contribution to the comprehension of his/her idea—then paraphrase rather than quote directly. You still need to document the source of the idea. Nonetheless, explaining others’ concepts in your own words—and interpreting them within the context of your research project—helps your writing flow in a way that says, “This is my study.”
- Provide examples to clarify concepts and support claims whenever possible. In your literature review, you may find that an example paraphrased—and documented—from a previous study or a hypothetical example that you provide will suffice. As you analyze your data and begin to make arguments about it, however, you will want to provide examples from your data—e.g., summarizing statistics or quotations from artifacts, etc.—to illustrate. Examples not only serve as evidence that lend credibility to your claims, but also they personalize your study by helping you to convey a consistent style, rather than writing an Independent Study that is nothing but a series of disjointed quotations from others.

Proper Spelling

Even the best-written, most illuminating study will lose credibility if the manuscript includes errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. To avoid such mistakes:

- Make use of a dictionary and thesaurus, as well as grammar and punctuation resources, whether in hard copy or electronic format.
- Go to the Writing Center to get help with any special grammatical or punctuation problems you may have. Note: Some students may be required by their advisor to utilize this campus resource.
- Make use of the spelling and grammar checks on your computer. Do not, however, rely upon those tools alone as they will not catch every error. (For instance, the spelling check may pass over “their” because it is correctly spelled, even though you meant to write “there” instead. In addition, spell check does not indicate errors in words that are in all caps).
- Carefully proof your writing. You will do a better job if you plan in advance and can set aside your work for a while before you proof. It also may help if you read the pages in reverse order.
- If you are notoriously bad at proofing, do all of the above and also find someone on whom you can rely to check your work before you give it to your advisor.

Grammar and Punctuation Guidelines: A Few Basics*

- **Use active voice, rather than passive voice.**

* See *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Latest ed.) or *APA Publication Manual* (Latest ed.)

passive: It was found that most communication studies considered male communication patterns to be the norm (Huong & Jones, 1987). (In passive voice, the subject—in this case, “It”—is acted upon, rather than performing the action).

active: Huong and Jones (2023) found most communication studies considered male communication patterns to be the norm. (In active voice, the subject—in this case, “Huong and Jones”—performs the action).

- **Avoid shifts in tense.**

tense shift:

Incorrect: Smith argued that the experiment failed to support the hypothesis, but says it generated useful information nonetheless.

Correct: Smith argued that the experiment failed to support the hypotheses, but said it generated useful information nonetheless.

- **Do not end sentences with prepositions.**

Incorrect: Political rhetoric in the 2020 presidential election campaign is what this study will deal with.

Correct: This study will deal with political rhetoric in the 2020 presidential election campaign.

- **Avoid fragments or portions of sentences that cannot stand on their own as complete sentences.**

Incorrect: This study examining communication in families who have experienced divorce. Because divorce is a significant problem today.

Correct: Because divorce is such a significant problem today, this study examines communication within the context of families who have experienced divorce.

- **Avoid run-on sentences.**

Incorrect: The participants read the questionnaire, many did not complete it, though, because it was too long.

Correct: The participants read the questionnaire, but many did not complete it because it was too long.

- **Avoid split infinitives.**

Incorrect: The participants were asked to thoroughly examine the photograph.

Correct: The participants were asked to examine the photograph thoroughly.

- **Strive for subject-verb agreement.**

Incorrect: The handful of existing studies are insufficient in both depth and scope.

Correct: The handful of existing studies is insufficient in both depth and scope.

- **Avoid dangling participial phrases.**

Incorrect: Frustrated by the difficulty in locating archival documents, changing the nature of the study was necessary.

Correct: Frustrated by the difficulty in locating archival documents, I decided that a change in the nature of the study was necessary.

- **Use Non-Sexist Language.**

Sexist: The human being is, by nature, a symbol user; he is also the only animal who can use the negative to discuss matters of morality.

Non-Sexist: Human beings are, by nature, symbol users; they also are the only animals who can use the negative to discuss matters of morality.

Note: Another way to strive for non-sexist language is to alternate between the use of she/her/hers and he/him/his. That is, one sentence might refer to the listener of a radio program as “she,” whereas the next paragraph might refer to an individual listener as “he.” Of course, if your study deals only with male views of situation comedies or only with female leaders of sports teams, then you should use the appropriate sex identifiers

- **Avoid the use of contractions.**

Incorrect: The study wasn’t a complete success.

Correct: The study was not a complete success.

- **APA and MLA require you to italicize the titles of books, magazines, scholarly journals, movies, plays, and television shows; you should place the titles of magazine articles, poems, journal articles, songs, and particular episodes of television programs in quotation marks.**

The “Rachel’s New Hair” episode of *Friends* aired in April 1996.

The “Skinny on Fat” article appeared in *Newsweek*.

- **Its = possessive, but it’s = it is.**

The computer was worthless to me because its hard drive had crashed.

It’s time to go.

- **Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, for, nor, or, yet, so, but) that joins independent clauses in a sentence.**

The study was completed, and Smith published it in 2023.

- **Use commas to separate items in a series. (Note: In scholarly writing, a comma does typically appear before “and” in a series).**

The discourse examined in this study came from speeches, television ads, public service announcements, and print advertisements.

- **Use semicolons when the items in a series have internal commas.**

Members of the committee included Rachel Wisely from Vanlue, Ohio; David Goldzwig from Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Rowan Dionisopoulos from San Diego, California.

- **Use a semicolon between independent clauses not linked by a conjunction.**

The survey included a number of ambiguous phrases; thus, the survey's results may not be valid.

- **Use a colon to introduce a list, an elaboration of what was just said, or the expression of a rule or principle.**

The essay examines the use of communication by four social movement leaders: Malcolm X, Betty Friedman, Cesar Chavez, and Maggie Kuhn.

The surveys were not randomly distributed: the researcher asked people he knew to complete the questionnaires.

Students enrolled in Independent Study would have more success if they remembered this important rule: One must manage one's time carefully. (Note: A rule or principle after a colon must begin with a capital letter).

- **Periods and commas go inside quotation marks.**

"We will," he said, "emerge triumphant."

- **Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.**

He murmured, "The wind is howling"; however, I could hear only silence.

When she came in, she whispered hoarsely, "All is lost": the enemy had broken through the city's barricades.

- **Question marks and exclamation marks go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation.**

She asked, "What is plagiarism?"

What is meant by "objectivity"?

They chanted, "Tell us what happened!"

Stop whistling "Don't Worry, Be Happy"!

- **If a work is singular, add an apostrophe and s for the possessive.**

somebody's research Carol's essay an hour's work Chris's book

- **For a plural noun that ends in s, add an apostrophe for the possessive.**

trees' leaves Browns' party

- **For a plural noun that does not end in s, add an apostrophe and s for the possessive.**

men's hats women's clothing

- **Use "person-first" language whenever possible.**

Children with hearing impairments versus hearing-impaired children

- **Affect vs. Effect**

Affect is usually a verb meaning “to influence.” Effect is usually a noun meaning “result.”

The drug did not affect the disease, and it had several adverse side effects.

- **When referring to people, use the word “who” instead of “that.”**

Incorrect: All the participants that filled out my survey were female.

Correct: All the participants who filled out my survey were female.

- **Use parallel structure whenever possible.**

Incorrect: We tried to get in shape through aerobic exercise and eating healthy meals.

Correct: We tried to get in shape through aerobic exercise and healthy meals.

Correct: We tried to get in shape by exercising aerobically and eating healthfully.

Plagiarism

Perhaps the greatest sin that one can commit in scholarly research is plagiarism or taking the ideas of others and passing them off as one’s own. When writing your Independent Study, you should remember that it is possible to plagiarize the substance of a scholar’s ideas, the style or way in which that writer expressed those ideas, or both. Hence, you should be very careful that you not plagiarize, even unintentionally.

- **Be wary of plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional.**

For example, Peggy Yuhas Byers and Carolyn Secord Weber wrote an essay, “The Timing of Speech Anxiety Reduction Treatments in the Public Speaking Classroom,” which was published in *The Southern Communication Journal* in Spring 1995. In their conclusions, they stated, “more intense scrutiny with regard to the effect of treatment on different levels of initial apprehension would be useful.” If you use their suggestion to justify your own study on how treatment affects speech anxiety, plagiarism may occur in one of four basic ways.

- Plagiarism Form #1: You use their idea, exactly as they have expressed it, but do not use quotation marks and do not cite the authors. You have robbed the authors of both the substance and the form of their idea.
- Plagiarism Form #2: You thoroughly paraphrase their idea, but do not cite the authors. You have robbed the authors of the substance of their idea.
- Plagiarism Form #3: A) You cite the authors, but use their idea exactly as they have expressed it and fail to put quotation marks around the excerpt. B) You cite the authors and paraphrase their idea somewhat but not thoroughly (for example, you write that more attention with regard to the effect of treatment on different degrees of initial apprehension would be useful). In either case, you have robbed the authors of the form of their idea.

- Plagiarism Form #4: You paraphrase carefully or quote accurately, but use the wrong authors when you attribute the source. This is an inappropriate citation.

To avoid such instances of plagiarism, you have two options available to you:

- Option #1: Quote the authors and cite them.

Ex. According to Byers and Weber (1995), “more intense scrutiny with regard to the effect of treatment on different levels of initial apprehension would be useful” (p. 255).

Ex. Previous research (Byers & Weber, 1995) on speech anxiety suggested that “more intense scrutiny with regard to the effect of treatment on different levels of initial apprehension would be useful” (p. 255).

- Option #2: Thoroughly paraphrase the authors and cite them.

Ex. Past research (Byers & Weber, 1995, p. 255) indicated that scholarship needs to pay more attention to the impact that remedies for speech anxiety have on students with varying levels of initial apprehension.

Ex. At least one previous study (Byers & Weber, 1995, p. 255) indicated that researchers need to turn their attention to the effectiveness of speech anxiety treatments relative to the degree to which individuals initially suffer from this problem.

Following either of these two options (demonstrated here with APA format) when using the ideas of others will allow you to avoid plagiarism, along with the loss of credibility and potential legal ramifications that it can bring. You also should feel free to consult with your advisor if you are unsure as to how to represent another’s ideas in any particular case. As a reminder of The College of Wooster’s policy on plagiarism, you should refer to *The Scot’s Key*. The College of Wooster’s *Academic Integrity* booklet, and the Library website are good sources for ethics in writing.

Department Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the sole responsibility of the author of the Junior or Senior Independent Study document. At no time during the Junior or Senior Independent Study process is plagiarism the responsibility of the I.S. advisor. Failure of the I.S. advisor to detect plagiarism in the preliminary drafts of I.S. chapters does not relieve the student from the responsibility for his or her actions, intentional or otherwise. If questions of impropriety arise during the normal exchange of chapter drafts between the student and the advisor, those questions regarding plagiarized material will be addressed immediately, and corrective action will be taken to revise the document. If questions of impropriety arise in the final submission of the document for completion of COMM 40100, COMM 45100, or COMM 45200, you will, as a minimum penalty, fail the course.

Second readers have the right to raise questions about plagiarism that may have gone undetected by I.S. advisors. In instances where the second reader suspects that plagiarism may have occurred, the second reader will confer with the I.S. advisor. If the I.S. advisor and the second reader agree that the student has failed to meet the standards for academic integrity, the student’s I.S. orals will be cancelled and The College of Wooster’s policy on plagiarism will be followed.

Academic Integrity from the Scot’s Key

An atmosphere in which each student does their own work, except when the instructor indicates that additional aid is legitimate and profitable, is necessary for genuine academic mastery. It is each student's responsibility to be mindful of the difference between appropriate academic resources and support (such as services offered through the Academic Resource Center, Writing Center, and Math Center, as examples), versus inappropriate or unauthorized academic aid (such as plagiarism of another's work). It also places on each student an obligation not to offer or make available unauthorized sources of aid to other students, knowing that such aid is detrimental to those students and to the college community. Finally, each student must be responsible for the maintenance of an atmosphere of academic integrity by confronting violators or reporting any actions that violate its principles, since such violations ultimately harm all members of the community. These principles merely carry out the general purpose of the college to be a community in which the members find it right and necessary to promote the fullest learning by everyone. In other words, a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity conflicts with the values, work, and purpose of the entire college community and is not merely a private matter between an individual faculty member and a student.










Principles of Academic Integrity

A student will not:

- give, offer, or receive aid other than that specifically allowed by the professor on any course work or examination
- knowingly represent the work of others, including materials from electronic sources, as their own
- falsify or fabricate data
- submit an assignment produced for a course to a second course without the authorization of all the instructors involved
- deny other students access to necessary documents/materials by stealing, misplacing, or destroying those materials
- give false reasoning to a faculty member or Dean when requesting an exam change or an extension on a paper/project
- violate the spirit of the code

Common Proofreader's Marks

Use the following as a key to understanding some of the editing marks your advisor may make on your document.

Act.	Use active voice	 Close up; print as one word
Agr.	Agreement problems (e.g., subject-verb)	 Delete; take it out
APA	APA style error	 insert
AWK	Awkward sentence structure	 Transpose; change the order
MLA	MLA style error	 or << Begin a new paragraph
Rep.	Unnecessary repetition/redundancy	 Insert a period 
R.O.	Run-on sentence	/ Set in Lowercase (lower case)
SP	Spelling error	 Set in capitals (Capitals)
WC	Word choice (i.e., find a better word or phrase)	 insert space
Fsq	Free standing quote	// or \\ double space

THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

Style Manuals

All Junior and Senior Independent Studies will be expected to follow the format established by either MLA (Modern Language Association) or APA (American Psychological Association). Consult with your advisor on which to use.

Academic writing employs a rather formal style that not only pertains to Independent Study, but also has great application in other realms, as well. Familiarizing yourself with a style manual is an important part of the Independent Study process that you will use in the future to present your ideas and/or the results of your inquiries.

When using a style manual:

- Read the manual for guidance.
- Use the entire manual. Even though some of the rules for things like margins and quotations may seem petty, do not “invent” your way of presenting this information.
- Be consistent in everything that you do.

Format Requirements

In this section, we provide additional information or amend the APA and MLA style guides in specific ways that you are required to follow. Formatting is to be consistent in all documents and pages.

• **Chapter Configurations**

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES		
<p>Communication research should always be conducted in a systematic way. The five basic steps in research (outlined below) may be followed as a <u>general</u> guideline when a qualitative study is planned, conducted, and reported. Across from these research steps are the equivalent chapters (with specific content subheadings) that <u>may</u> be appropriate chapters in a qualitative Independent Study. Consult with your I.S. advisor to determine which specific chapters and subheadings you will need.</p>		
1. SPECIFY THE CRITICAL PROBLEM	CHAPTER I	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Purpose Statement or Research Question - Rationales - Background (as needed) - Definitions - Description of Method - Conclusion
2. REVIEW PREVIOUS CRITICAL STUDIES	CHAPTER II	<p>LITERATURE REVIEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Body Material - Conclusion
3. DESCRIBE THE METHOD	CHAPTER III	<p>METHOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Advantages of Method - Participants and/or artifacts - Specific methodological steps
4. APPLY THE CRITICAL MODEL OR THEORY	CHAPTER IV	<p>ANALYSIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - The context of your message, if needed - Analysis Section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized topically by the sub-arguments, characteristics, or principles - Supported with quotations & paraphrases from message within each section - Conclusion
5. SUMMARIZE FINDINGS	CHAPTER V	<p>CONCLUSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Major Conclusions - Implications of the Research Finding(s) - Limitations - Recommendations for Future Research - Final Thoughts
<p>* For more detail on Chapter context, see Appendix B.</p>		

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES

Communication research should always be conducted in a systematic way. The five basic steps in research (outlined below) may be followed as a general guideline when a quantitative study is planned, conducted, and reported. Across from these research steps are the equivalent chapters that may be appropriate chapters in a quantitative Independent Study. Consult with your I.S. advisor to determine which specific chapters and subheadings you will need.

1. SPECIFY THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Purpose Statement or Research Question and Research Hypotheses (if any) - Rationales - Definitions - Background (as needed) - Description of Method - Conclusion
2. REVIEW PREVIOUS CRITICAL STUDIES	CHAPTER II	LITERATURE REVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Body Material - Conclusion
3. DESCRIBE THE METHOD	CHAPTER III	METHOD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Advantages of Method - Participants - Instrument(s) (frequently this is a survey) - Experimental Materials (If applicable) - Procedures
4. PROCESS AND ANALYZE DATA	CHAPTER IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Results - Discussion - Tables (as needed) - Figures (as needed)
5. SUMMARIZE FINDINGS	CHAPTER V	CONCLUSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (no header) - Major Conclusions - Implications of the Research Finding(s) - Limitations - Recommendations for Future Research - Final Thoughts

*For more detail on Chapter Content, see Appendix B.

• Headings

APA provides information on the use of headings, while MLA does not. If you use APA, follow its guidelines for establishing sections and subsections of each chapter, and verify the form with your advisor. If you follow MLA, you can devise your own system. A typical method for headings is to center major headings, make secondary headings flush with the left margin and italicized, and to insert headings of a third order as the first portion of a new paragraph; third order headings also should be italicized and followed by a period.

• Appendices

Appendices are important support documents such as copies of instruments, consent forms, excerpts of artifacts, interview questions, stimulus materials, etc. The location of appendices should be referenced in the body of your study, and then paginated and attached to your document after your References or Works Cited.

- **Tables and Graphs or Figures**

Tables and graphs or figures are visual references that you add to your study to help organize or explain information for your reader. Tables and graphs should be located close to the body of copy that supports them. In all instances, copy should flow around these items. If a table is a half-page in length, the rest of the page should be filled with copy. Follow APA or MLA for labeling tables and graphs or figures.

- **Pagination**

Pagination must conform to The Department of Communication's standards. It is required that all chapters that are submitted to your advisor for review must have pagination.

- The final (bound) version of your I.S. should be printed double sided.
- With the exception of your title page, which has no page number.

- **Title Page** (see Appendix C)

Import the watermark of the college. The title of your I.S. is capitalized. Everything else on the title sheet is upper and lower case. All elements are equally spaced on the page. The title page is considered to be page i of the study, but no lower case Roman numeral appears. Use the template on the Communication Department Wiki page.

- **Abstract** (see Appendix D)

An abstract is a concise description of a scholarly paper that allows the reader to get a general overview of the study. An abstract should include the purpose of the study, as well as a brief description of the method, results, and conclusions. These 150-200 word paragraphs appear at the beginning of the paper and should be understandable independent of the study itself. Finally, a list of 3-4 "Keywords" should appear at the end of the abstract. Keywords serve as search terms that allow other scholars to find your study and similar research.

- **Acknowledgments**

The acknowledgments page should appear before the Table of Contents. Acknowledgments are not necessary; however, many Wooster students use them. Keep in mind that this is something that you will probably look back on 20 years from now, so keep your acknowledgments significant and appropriate.

- **Table of Contents**

Neither APA nor MLA indicate how a Table of Contents is to be constructed. The Department of Communication uses an "outline-style" format (See the Table of Contents for this document). When creating a Table of Contents, Google how to and/or attend the IT Workshop.

- Table of Tables.
If you use tables, a "Table of Tables" goes on a separate page.

TABLE OF TABLES	
Table 1: Table for the Comparison of Means and Standard Deviation of the Pre-test Data.....	57
Table 2: Table for the Comparison of Means and Standard Deviation of the Pre-test Data.....	62

- Table of Figures
If you use a "Table of Figures," it goes on a separate page.

TABLE OF FIGURES	
Figure 1: Bar Graph of Mean Ages of Subjects.....	62

- **References or Works Cited**

Only cite works that you used in your I.S. You should not have a source in the body of your study that does not appear in your **WORKS CITED** or **REFERENCES** section, or a source in your Works Cited or References section that does not appear in the body of your work.

- **MLA and APA internal citations (within the body of the text)**

In MLA, one typically cites sources internally in one of several ways:

- (1) Most commonly, one uses the author's name in the text and the page number.

Example:

Vasquez discovered that dolphins could communicate (24).

OR

Research with animals indicates that apes can communicate (Vasquez 4).

[*Note that a comma does not follow the author's name in this MLA example.*]

- (2) If your study has drawn on two works by the same author, you should also include an abbreviated form of the title.

Example:

In its recruitment appeals, the KKK has shifted away from expressing hatred of minority groups and toward articulating claims of "white pride" (Kindig, "KKK Today" 81).

- (3) If the source has no author, you should cite an abbreviated form of the title and provide the page number.

Example:

Donald J. Trump repeatedly referred to his accomplishments as the President of the United States during his 2020 presidential race ("Trump Lauds Record" 2).

In APA, one typically cites sources internally in one of several ways:

- (1) Most commonly, one uses the author's name, the year of publication, and the page number.

Example:

Through her research project, Vasquez (2023) discovered that dolphins could communicate emotional content (p. 24).

OR

Research with animals indicates that dolphins can communicate (Vasquez, 2023, p. 24).

- (2) If your study has drawn on two works by the same author in the same year, you should include letter subscripts with the date whenever you cite either source.

Example:

In its recruitment appeals, the KKK has shifted away from expressing hatred of minority groups and toward articulating claims of "white pride" (Kindig, 2021a, p. 217; Kindig, 2021b, p. 34).

- (3) If the source has no author, you should cite the first few words of the reference (usually the title), the year, and the page number.

Example:

Donald J. Trump repeatedly referred to his accomplishments as the President of the United States during his 2020 presidential race ("Trump Lauds Record," 2001, p. 2).

Special Note for APA users: While APA requires page numbers with in-text quotations only, the Communication Department requires the inclusion of page numbers with in-text paraphrasing as well. In effect, each in-text citation should include a page number.

- **The Sequencing of I.S. Components**

1. Title Page
2. ABSTRACT
3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
4. TABLE OF CONTENTS
5. TABLE OF TABLES
6. TABLE OF FIGURES
7. Body of the Independent Study
8. REFERENCES or WORKS CITED
9. APPENDICES

Final Document Requirements

- **Font**

The Department has a specific font that you must use in the Independent Study document that you submit for Junior or Senior Independent Study. The 12 Point Times New Roman font is required, and the following guidelines are recommended:

- Do not use shadowed or highlighted type.
- You may use italicized type where appropriate.

- **Margins**

The Department of Communication requires 1" margins on all sides.

- **Photos**

The copies of Independent Study that you submit should not have any stapled, pasted, or taped photos, graphics, or tables. Learn how to transport these graphics into your document, or copy those pages so that nothing can be lost from your document.

The Oral Examination of Senior Independent Study

Purpose

Oral examinations or oral defenses are perhaps the least understood aspect of the Independent Study process. The goal of the oral exam is to allow you to display your knowledge and understanding about some significant portion or portions of your thesis. The exam gives you the opportunity to “show off” what you know about your project—its strengths and its weaknesses. Orals also provide you with the opportunity to answer questions that your committee has about your project, to clarify any aspects of your thesis that may be unclear, and to note any minor corrections.

The Second Reader

Second readers provide an outside perspective on what you have done. They read your work with a “cold call” approach. This means that they know little about the processes that you went through, but focus mainly on the results that they read for themselves.

Scheduling

Consult with your advisor about the scheduling of I.S. orals. Orals will be scheduled for a 90-minute time block (1 hour for the orals and 30 minutes for debrief).

Procedures Leading Up to the Oral Examination

Once your oral exam is scheduled, you may presume—unless you have been told otherwise—that you have written a passing document. However, your advisor and second reader reserve the right to cancel your oral exam at any time, up to and including the actual date and time of the scheduled exam, because they deem the final document to be unsatisfactory. This right must be reserved for several reasons. First, some students do not work closely with their advisors and, hence, forego the benefit of having the advisor evaluate their work and make recommendations for strengthening the study prior to the scheduling of the oral exam. This lack of interaction and feedback often leads to a substandard document. Second, occasionally a student does not implement the changes his/her advisor deemed necessary on the earlier drafts of the I.S. that the advisor saw. Third, second readers typically have had no exposure to an I.S. document until they receive it in preparation for the oral exam. In all of these cases, the advisor and second reader need to be able to cancel an oral exam if the final version of the document that they read fails to meet minimal standards. The ability to do so right up until the date and time of the scheduled exam provides committee members with the time flexibility they need during the busy month of oral exams to be able to confer with one another and to make a thoughtful decision about the quality of a document. In sum, the more closely you work with your advisor and implement his/her recommendations, the better off both you and your document will be.

Approximately 24 hours before your oral exam, your second reader will provide you with a list of questions that he/she plans to ask at your oral defense. These questions can help you prepare for your defense; they are not, however, meant to represent every question that your committee will ask. New questions and follow-up questions will arise in your meeting, as well, and

should be expected.

Procedures During the Oral Examination

You should come to your oral exam dressed professionally and have several items with you: your I.S., any notes to which you wish to refer, and paper to write down suggestions and to record the changes that your committee desires. You also may be asked to bring other relevant reference material (e.g., the actual messages that you examined in your rhetorical criticism, transcripts of your ethnographic interviews, completed questionnaires, the coding manual and completed codings from your content analysis, print-outs of statistical operations, etc.).

To begin the oral exam, your advisor will ask you to talk about how you first became interested in your topic, as well as the most interesting findings of the study and/or any minor corrections that you would like to make. Avoid the temptation of simply repeating what you have already written. (Remember, your committee has read the document.)

After your opening statement, your advisor and second reader will begin to ask you questions. You should answer these questions to the best of your ability. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification on a question or to refer to your notes if you need to do so. On the other hand, you should strive as much as possible to be so prepared that you can answer your questions in a poised, articulate way. Many students are surprised to find that the oral examination can actually be fun. Orals are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and ponder the wider implications of their research.

At the end of the one-hour exam, your advisor and second reader will ask you to leave the room so that they may confer. An additional 20-30 minute period is used to indicate to you whether you have failed or passed your oral exam, and to debrief you regarding the next steps you need to take. If you have failed your oral exam, you must re-schedule (within two academic days) a future date for a second oral exam (see I.S. Grading Procedures section). If you have passed, your advisor and second reader will congratulate you and indicate to you what changes are required in the document. You will be informed of your final grade in a letter during final exam week.

THE EVALUATION OF SENIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

Evaluating the Written Document

Independent Study is both a product and a process. The product is a document that results from the year long (COMM 45100-45200) experience with Independent Study. The process is the growth that a student goes through during this intellectual pursuit. Here, within the Department of Communication Studies, we are concerned with both attributes of your Independent Study.

Evaluating the Oral Examination: The Ability to Demonstrate Understanding

Once you have completed your written document, it is very important that you be able to discuss it in an articulate and knowledgeable way. For instance, you must be able to explain how you obtained the results that you did. That is, you should be able to refer your committee to any of the relevant reference materials (transcripts, coding manuals, computer print-outs of statistical operations, etc.) and to indicate, step by step, how you went from point A (data) to point B (interpretation of data) to point C (conclusions). You should be able to talk competently about literature published in your area of research and about the methodology you used, as well as its strengths and weaknesses, etc.

If you fail your oral exam, it means you have failed to display an adequate degree of knowledge and understanding about some significant portion or portions of your thesis.

Independent Study Grades

Although the Department of Communication Studies takes the grading of I.S. very seriously, the faculty members also want to remind you that the grade you receive on I.S. is NOT a

reflection on your worth as a human being, how well you are liked, or what your future will hold. Indeed, one of the most difficult tasks that first and second readers face is assigning a grade to a student that they know will make that student unhappy, even though it is the grade that the student has earned. In short, we want you to take pride in your Independent Study, but we also want you to put your I.S. grade in perspective and not let it ruin the relationships that you have with your advisor, second reader, fellow Department of Communication students, and friends. Four Senior Independent Study grades exist. They signify the following:

- No Credit - Seriously deficient in written content, method, or form, and/or oral demonstration of understanding in regard to content, method, and form, with no compensating strengths in any of these individual areas.
- Satisfactory - Acceptable
- Good - Significantly above average
- Honors - Outstanding

Your final grade in Senior Independent Study is dependent upon both your written document and your oral exam. Although your written work is scrutinized far more thoroughly than your oral exam, satisfactory performance in both is required in order to pass Independent Study. Because your written document and oral performance work hand in hand, an outstanding orals, coupled with a satisfactory written document, may result in a grade of Good. Likewise, an excellent written document, paired with an average orals, may lead to a lower evaluation of Good. See Appendix C for the rubric of expectations for the written document.

Arbitration of Grades

Your grade is determined by your first and second readers. If they disagree about your work, your I.S. will go to an arbitrator (a third reader) within the department who will then decide your grade.

Notification of I.S. Grades

All I.S. grades will be released during final exam week. This is allow the first and second readers ample time to consider your grade in a thoughtful fashion.

I.S. Grading Procedures

- **If your written document fails, your oral exam will not be held.**

You then will need to register for COMM 45200 again the following semester and to make the necessary corrections.

- **If your written document passes but you fail your oral examination, within two academic days, a second oral exam will be scheduled for a future date.**

A second failure of orals will mean you need to register for COMM 45200 again the following semester.

- **If your written document passes and you also pass your oral exam, you may still need, for example, to make any minor revisions in regard to syntax, grammar, spelling, the insertion of a table or two, and/or the strengthening of a section of the document to obtain your assigned grade.**

These changes must be made, and an electronic copy of the corrected document must be provided to your advisor no later than 4 p.m. on the Wednesday of the last week of classes. You must also resubmit an electronic copy to open works. See the Registrar for

details. If these changes are not made OR are not made to the degree that your committee requested, it may result in a lower grade in COMM 45200 or even, possibly, turn a borderline "Satisfactory" into a failure.

Departmental Honors

To be considered for Departmental Honors, students must meet the following criteria: (1) a grade of Honors on the Senior I.S. thesis or the unanimous vote of the department; (2) an average of 3.5 in all courses taken in the department; and (3) an overall average of 3.2 for four years at Wooster. If you received Honors on your I.S., the Department will automatically grant you Departmental Honors. If you did not earn a grade of Honors, you will still be considered for Departmental Honors at the end of your last semester at Wooster. **In the Department of Communication Studies, the unanimous vote of the faculty has typically gone to those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the department.**

COMMENTS AND CAVEATS

General Guidance

Writing an Independent Study can be a frustrating experience, but it need not be the headache that many people make it. The following guidelines will help you to complete the project with a minimum amount of distress.

- If you are going to miss an Independent Study appointment, or if you have not been able to complete the work you promised to have completed by your next appointment, please call or email and cancel your scheduled meeting.
- Do not promise your advisor what you will be unlikely to deliver.
- Do not attempt to use procedures or methods of analysis that you do not comprehend. It is better to ask questions or seek background information than to struggle with something you do not understand. We strongly recommend that you use a methodology related to the method course you took.
- Do not tell your advisor, "I don't understand what you want," when what you really mean is, "I don't want to do what you are telling me to do."
- Do not use other people's research as an exact model for your own. Research projects are supposed to be original contributions. "Replication" studies need to be carefully considered for approval by your advisor.
- When you are unable to write about the substance of your research, work on other aspects of the study such as the references, tables, figures, the table of contents, etc.
- Develop a daily writing habit. Write every day, even if it is not perfect.
- When beginning your I.S., do not polish your writing to death. Frequently, students spend inordinate amounts of time perfecting their first paragraph, then their first page, then their first section—without moving to "flesh out" the rest of their study. What they frequently generate is a tremendous beginning, followed by a body of work that "tails off" drastically in terms of quantity and quality.
- Be prepared to write several drafts of each chapter.

- Spell-check all of your drafts.
- Do not provide your advisor with a hastily-written, and/or incomplete draft. At this level, a certain professionalism in writing is a minimal expectation. Proofread your writing. If your work has an excessive number of syntax, grammar, and/or spelling errors, it will be returned to you. You will be expected to revise it. If the revision also contains a significant number of errors, the process begins anew.
- Secure the services of a competent proofreader. It is amazing what you will miss in syntax and grammar, and in violations of the format required by a style manual.
- Do not wait to reformat the document until the night before it is due. Reformatting often requires a tremendous amount of time. Reformat as you write each draft of a chapter, and attempt to write in the form of finished copy.
- Go through the checklist (see Appendix E).

APPENDIX A: Poster

Time's Change in Depiction Over Time: A Rhetorical Analysis on Time Magazine Immigration Cover Stories

By: Luis Delgado
Advised By: Denise Bostdorff



IMPLICATIONS

- *Time's* magazine exhibits a sympathetic attitude towards immigration, which is not what past research would lead one to expect
- *Time* magazine's focus on children constructs enhanced sympathy but, simultaneously, limits the other issues and perspectives that *Time* can include.
- *Time's* magazine future immigration portrayals could potentially shape public opinion and influence

Rhetorical Artifact

Artifacts indicate the importance of illustrating a message to their audience



The years 2000 and 2018 were chosen because they had the highest number of immigration cover stories published by *Time* magazine



Time magazine had 44.4 million printed and digital readership worldwide in 2021



SUMMARY
This study analyzes *Time* magazine's portrayal of immigration in 2000 and 2018 using Critical Race Theory. *Time* used the American dream, sympathy, and depictions of children to challenge dominant narratives, but these strategies limited readers' perspectives by not including a more accurate portrayal of immigrants' experiences

PURPOSE
This study examines *Time* magazine's depiction of immigration in 2000 and 2018. The year 2000 had the highest immigration population of any decade, while in the year 2018, Trump's targeting of Mexican immigrants created a criminalized perspective and impacted Americans' views of that group.

METHODS
I utilize rhetorical criticism through Critical Race Theory.
-A total of 6 cover stories were analyzed
-I examined the visual and textual rhetoric of the articles

FINDINGS

- The portrayal of immigration motivation changed from a positive American dream in 2000 to a negative American nightmare for undocumented immigrants in 2018.
- *Time* in 2000 focused exclusively on the Elián Gonzalez story, whereas the magazine in 2018 shared stories about Maria's immigration story and an in-depth Trump analysis
- The recurring inclusion of children when depicting immigration was a constant theme present in almost every single issue

APPENDIX B: Detailed Components of Each Chapter

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction
 - Generated interest in clearly articulated topic
 - Chapter was previewed
2. Research Question or Purpose Statement
 - Focused
 - Answerable
 - Discipline specific
 - Original
 - Significant/Valuable
3. Rationales
 - Compelling points related to research question
 - Logical organization
 - Scholarly justification with use of sources
 - Practical justification
4. Definitions
 - Clear and understandable
 - Use of credible/scholarly sources
 - All key terms included
5. Method
 - Appropriate
 - Clear
6. Conclusion
 - Chapter was summarized

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction and Conclusion

- Generated interest in clearly articulated topic
 - Chapter was previewed and summarized
2. Organization
 - Clear, Logical
 - Leads to study at hand
 3. Integration/Synthesis of literature
 4. Sources Used
 - Current literature relative to purpose
 - Scholarly
 - Theoretical and/or Empirical
 5. Review of Relevant Literature
 - Comprehensive
 - Understanding of sources
 - Appropriate breadth of topics
 - Appropriate depth of topics
 - Identify need for further inquiry
 - Appropriate emphasis on primary vs secondary sources
 6. Integration of theoretical framework or appropriate mode
 7. Conclusion
 - Chapter was summarized

CHAPTER III: METHOD **Qualitative Study**

1. Introduction
 - Transitioned from Ch II
 - Restated RQ/Purpose
 - Previewed the chapter
2. Type of Study/Analysis
 - Described general method/design of study
 - Advantages of method
 - Cited methods source(s)
3. Participants/Artifacts
 - Described the people or messages studied
4. Specific Methodological Approach
 - Followed institutional HSRC procedures if applicable
 - Explained how/where participants/artifacts were selected
 - Explained how/where/when data were collected if applicable
 - Described instructions and debriefing if applicable
 - Described consent process if applicable
5. Interview Questions or Observational Guidelines or Pre-Writing Analysis Questions if applicable
 - Described/identified observational areas/targets
 - Provided examples of interview questions
 - Provided examples of initial pre-writing analysis questions
 - Referred to appendix

CHAPTER III: METHOD

- Provided evidence in the way of quotations, examples, observations, and paraphrases to support claims
3. Explanation of Findings
 - Explained *how* evidence supported claims
 - Integrated relevant concepts and theory from literature review to assist in understanding analysis
 4. Conclusion
 - Chapter was summarized
 - Ending was psychologically satisfying

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Study

1. Introduction
 - Transitioned from Ch III
 - Restated purpose or RQ
 - Previewed the chapter

2. Presentation of Findings
 - Analysis addressed RQ/Purpose
 - Presented data clearly
 - Identified what was analyzed
 - Identified how (which stat) data were analyzed
 - Presented results
 - Content was appropriately organized under headings
 - Statistics correctly reported and interpreted
 - Appropriate use of tables/figures
 - Included all relevant results
 - Both significant and not significant
3. Discussion of Findings
 - Discussed all results
 - Explained how evidence supported claims
 - Integrated relevant concepts and theory from literature review to assist in understanding analysis

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

1. Introduction
 - Generated interest
 - Articulated the chapter's purpose
 - Transitioned from previous chapter(s)
 - Previewed the chapter
2. Major Conclusions
 - Answered Research Question
 - Identified overarching results
 - Contextualized (e.g., specific findings and literature)
3. Implications
 - Scholarly application
 - Practical application (if applicable)

4. Limitations

- Use of sources if applicable
- Accurate explanations of the weaknesses of
 - methods and procedures
 - data collected
 - purpose of the study

5. Recommendations for Future Research

- Brief discussion of ways to improve current study
- Expansion of programmatic line of study

6. Final Thoughts

- Personal reflection on your scholarship/findings
- Psychologically satisfying conclusion

APPENDIX C: Sample Department of Communication Studies I.S. Title Page



THE COLLEGE OF
WOOSTER

EQUAL
 SPACING

A COMPARISON OF SINGLES AND DATERS ON THE EXPECTATIONS AND
 ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFECTIONATE AND DECEPTIVE BEHAVIORS
 FROM A PARTNER AND OF THE SELF

EQUAL
 SPACING

by
 Kymberly Dyan Wenz

EQUAL
 SPACING

An Independent Study Thesis
 Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Course Requirements for

Senior Independent Study: The Department of Communication

March 22, 2010

Advisor: Michelle Johnson, Ph.D.

EQUAL
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EQUAL
SPACING

APPENDIX D: Sample Abstracts

From Kelley Johnson's (2013) Senior I.S.

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that could influence the work-life balance of NCAA Division III Athletic Directors. The explored factors were home and work support (including mentorship, resources, and programs), gender, responsibilities, leadership, and experience. Past work-life balance research included many occupations, but very little focus on athletic directing. This study, therefore, extended the scholarship and added to information on work-life balance published by the NCAA. The findings revealed that support (from work and home) and gender contribute to athletic directors' work-life balance. Likewise, leadership and experience related to work-life balance. One major implication of this study is that athletic directors should surround themselves with supportive persons.

Keywords: work-life balance, athletic directing

From Daniel Hazlitt's (2019) Senior I.S.

This study undertakes a spatial analysis of the Yellow Deli, a chain of restaurants run by the Twelve Tribes, a religious cult based in the U.S.. I analyzed two Yellow Deli locations, one in Boulder, Colorado and the other in Chattanooga, Tennessee, incorporating brief informational interviews and discursive material from the *Freepapers*, a pamphlet disseminated by the group. I argue that the Twelve Tribes's restaurant locations use physical and critical interpellation to create multiple subject positions for visitors to inhabit, such as a patron of the Yellow Deli, or a guest and personal friend in the home of the Twelve Tribes. I conclude by considering how the Twelve Tribes's constitutive rhetoric might prompt more critical reflection by consumers of the commercial spaces they frequent, and what other religious groups seeking to recruit could learn from the example of the Twelve Tribes.

Keywords: visual analysis, space, religion

APPENDIX E: Senior I.S. Checklist

Senior I.S. Checklist

This is **not** an exhaustive list. Use this checklist and your I.S. Guidebook to ensure that your document is ready for submission and addresses the items on this list.

- Title page is properly formatted
- All sections of I.S. are in Table of Contents
- Table of Contents and Table of Tables/Graphs/Figures are formatted correctly
- All chapters contain all required sections
- Headings have been properly used
- Page breaks and headings are properly located
- Excessive white space does not precede or follow tables
- Abstract written
- Chapter II is minimum page length of 10 Full pages
- In-text citations are in proper format
- Chapter II utilizes the minimum number of 15 scholarly sources
- References or Works Cited are in proper format
- Proper overall formatting
- Transitions used effectively
- Document is free of plagiarism
- Scholarly voice used (e.g. free of colloquialisms and editorialization)

- Thoughtful acknowledgments section is included if desired
- All citations in the body of the document are included in the References or Works Cited
- All items in the References or Works Cited are used in the document
- Appendices have been included, numbered, and referred to in the text
- Spelling and grammar are correct
- Hard copies of consent forms to advisor (if applicable)

A 2014 Gallup study found a strong relationship between certain types of experiences during college and “great jobs and great lives” for students after college. More specifically, students have significantly better odds of being “engaged at work” and “thriving in all areas of well-being” after college if they work on a project that takes a semester or more to complete and if they have a mentor who encourages them to pursue their goals.

-Julie Ray, and Stephanie Kafka. “Life in College Matters for Life After College.” *Gallup.com*. Gallup, 6 May 2014. Web. May 21, 2015. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/168848/life-college-matters-life-college.aspx>>.