

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICY FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

Biology 499

Description: A research project designed by a student in consultation with a faculty member at Lewis & Clark and carried out at Lewis & Clark, in the field, or at other research institutions in the metropolitan area.

Eligibility: Available to students who have demonstrated initiative and ability in biology class and laboratory work at Lewis & Clark.

Prior to registering for Independent Study, you must select and confer with a faculty mentor and submit a written research proposal *for consideration by the entire biology department faculty*. The proposal can be brief (about 2-3 typewritten pages, double spaced), but needs to demonstrate that you have done enough planning to insure a reasonable chance of success. To do this, your proposal should include a clear statement of the hypothesis that you plan to test, a review of the scientific background on the topic, a list of current references to the biological literature, and a statement of what resources are necessary for the project (e.g., funding, special equipment, accessibility to field sites, etc.). You should work closely with your faculty mentor in developing your proposal.

Because the whole department faculty will read and evaluate your proposal, you should allow at least a week between the submission of the proposal and the time you need an answer. Failure to plan ahead may result in your being disappointed because you are unable to register for independent study by the Add Date.

Credit: 2-4 Semester Hours per semester. Graded.

Time devoted to the project should be comparable to that in regular courses, that is about 3 hours per week of work and preparation for each semester hour of credit earned. You should negotiate with your faculty mentor what level of effort you will devote to your independent study project and how much credit you should receive. Up to 4 credits of Independent Study may be applied towards a biology major.

Product: Students will keep a laboratory/field notebook with chronological entries of work in progress, including brief notes on relevant readings in the scientific literature. Students are expected to meet at least weekly with their faculty mentor to give regular oral progress reports and to plan their next experiments. At the conclusion of the term, the student must submit a final report in the form a scientific paper. This should include an abstract of the work, an Introduction that presents the question you are addressing and places it in the context of previous work in the area. There should then be a section describing the Experimental Methods used in the investigation. The main emphasis of the report should be on presentation of the Results and on your Discussion of how the Results relate to the question that you posed. Finally, there should be a bibliography (or Reference section) listing the scientific literature that is relevant to your study.

Grading: As indicated above, students who are doing Independent Study projects are expected to meet at least weekly with their faculty mentor to discuss their progress. They are also expected to work on the project diligently for the appropriate number of hours per week, as determined by the amount of credit for which they are registered. You will be judged on whether you meet these expectations and on the quality of your written research report.