What is Directed Study?

Directed Study is a College of General Studies course in which a student pursues independent research for academic credit under the guidance of a faculty member. A student who undertakes a Directed Study usually does so to explore in more depth areas covered broadly in courses, or to explore topics not ordinarily covered in the curriculum. In most cases, students initiate the Directed Study, i.e., they have an idea for a course of study and they approach a CGS faculty member to work with them for Directed Study credit. In other cases, however, students may also request Directed Study credit for working with a CGS professor through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), which is a University-wide academic program that promotes Boston University undergraduates’ participation in faculty-mentored research projects across all disciplines. For more information on the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program visit www.bu.edu/urop.

Policies for Directed Study

- It is the student’s responsibility to identify clearly the topic and to submit a proposal for a Directed Study. Sufficient time should be allotted to develop a thorough and academically rigorous proposal.
- A Directed Study course may not be used to fulfill a CGS core curriculum course.
- CGS Directed Study must involve a subject area within the liberal arts. A student may not undertake a Directed Study in business management.
- The supervising faculty must be a CGS professor.
- A student may not receive more than four credits for one Directed Study.
- If taking a Directed Study places a student into an overload, the student is responsible for paying overload charges at the current tuition credit rate.
- A student may not complete more than six credits of Directed Study as CGS student.
- The College of General Studies does not award academic credit for internships, except for those offered through Boston University International Programs.
- However, a student may use an internship as a component of a Directed Study, provided it relates to the academic goals and objectives of the project.

Guidelines for Arranging a Directed Study

- Identify the topic. What is the area or subject of interest? What are your research questions?
- Arrange an initial conference with the supervising faculty member(s). The purpose of the meeting is to design a cogent plan for completion of the course. Topics to discuss:
  - **Readings**—What will you be reading—journal articles, essays, books? Specify the number of pages.
  - **Writing**—What are the specific writing requirements? Journal entries, annotated bibliographies, research papers, etc.?
  - **Exams**—Will there be an examination component to the Study?
  - **Fieldwork**—Is there an experiential piece to your Directed Study, e.g., lab work, internship, other field experiences?
  - **Contact Hours with Your Professor**—How often will you meet with your professor? What will be the nature of the meetings?
o **Time Line**—When are your assignments due? When will your exams take place (if applicable)?

- Applications for Directed Study are available in Room 211.

**Directed Study Topics**

Here are some examples of topics investigated by CGS students in recent years. In some cases, students worked as assistants in ongoing faculty research. Sometimes the topics chosen by the students included work experiences or travel and field research; some have been supported by grants or UROP.

- Isoproterenol stimulates myosin synthesis in apoptotic cardiomyocytes with Prof Sommers Smith
- Neurology and Gene regulation with Prof Sommers Smith
- Leadership in government with Prof Varat
- Contemporary Central and Southern Africa with Prof McGrath
- European economic history from 1300–1900 with Prof McGrath
- Analysis of the myths in the Odyssey with Prof Kremer
- The Great Pyramids (including research travel to Egypt) with Prof Schoch
- An analysis of environmental changes in Egypt over the last 6,000 years (including research travel to Egypt) with Prof Schoch
- The origin of life with Prof Schoch
- Examination of choices made in public broadcasting/propaganda (combined with a work experience) with Prof Emery
- Gothic fiction with Prof Vail
- Investigation of broadcast news: why certain choices are made from the perspective of ethics (combined with a work experience) with Prof Stoehr
- Euthanasia with Prof Mahon
- History of television production and news with Prof Whalen
- American politics with Prof Varat
- History of radio (combined with a work experience) with Prof Parfitt
- Influences of television on American culture (combined with a work experience) with Prof Cole
- Late 19th-century aestheticism with Prof Masters
- The work and life history of Mary Cassat with Prof Masters
- The Cold War with Prof Wend
- Development of the political state with Prof McGrath
- Sociological, philosophical, and scientific perspectives on human behavior with Prof McGrath
- Traditional Chinese society under Confucianism with Prof Grasso
- Holland during Nazi occupation in WWII: analysis of domestic and foreign policy with Prof Grasso
- Environmental justice with Prof Dunlavy
- The quality of local TV news: an analysis of the Miami market (combined with a work experience) with Prof Regan
- The work of artist Marc Chagall with Prof Farrell
- Microscopic human pathology/forensic science with Prof Sommers Smith
- Work as an expression of identity in literature and film with Prof Wells
- Freud’s theories on human behavior with Prof Sweeting
- History of Women in Radio with Profs Boots and Hansen
- Explanation of aspects of evolutionary biology in a format that appeals to nonscientists (involved creating a video) with Prof. Hammer
- Theories of socialization, particularly Mead and Erikson with Prof. Waller
- Changing expectations of middle class fathers in Victorian England with Prof McKnight