

### **POP77201 Independent Study (Literature Review)**

The Independent Study (Literature Review) is crucial for 1st year students for the development of their thesis proposals. Each first year student will be assigned a supervisor for the Independent Study (Literature Review) at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term and will follow a programme designed on an individual basis to provide structured reading. At the start of the course, both the student and supervisor will agree a reading list and a schedule of informal meetings to review progress on these. At least three meetings should be scheduled. The Independent Study (Literature Review) culminates in the student submitting a written paper of 5,000 words by the end of the Michaelmas Term. This paper will be a thorough review of the scholarly literature that clearly identifies a research question, and identifies areas for future research. It should thoroughly explore a topic and its issues, mapping out the territory for the student's own thesis project. The Independent Study (Literature Review) itself is graded by the supervisor, on a pass/fail scale, on the basis of the detailed literature review of the student's research area submitted by the Independent Study (Literature Review) deadline.

The Literature Review paper in Michaelmas Term differs from the Independent Study (Research Proposal) in Hilary Term in that it is typically longer, focuses more on summarizing existing research and identifying lacunae, and contains fewer precise details about the research design and the student's own potential contribution to the field than does the Research Proposal. The importance of the Literature Review lies in the fact that it serves as the basis for the Research Proposal in Hilary Term, which in turn is the basis for the 'Thesis Proposal' to be defended in September after the first year.

### **POP77202 Independent Study (Research Proposal)**

At the start of Hilary Term, both the student and supervisor will agree a schedule of informal meetings for the Independent Study (Research Proposal). At least three meetings should be scheduled. The Research Proposal should be clearly based on principles of research design: defining some variation to be explained, identifying alternative explanations, proposing clear tests which can distinguish between alternative explanations, discussing issues of data collection and measurement issues, etc. (This assumes the dissertation is empirical in nature; a theoretical project, for example, would require a different structure.) The Independent Study (Research Proposal) culminates in the student submitting a written paper of 4,500 words (including footnotes, etc., but not the bibliography) to be submitted by the end of Hilary Term. The Independent Study (Research Proposal) itself is graded by the supervisor, on a pass/fail scale, on the basis of the student's research proposal submitted by the Independent Study (Research Proposal) deadline.

### **POP77211 Independent Study (Further Piece of Dissertation Research)**

At the start of Michaelmas Term of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year, both the student and supervisor will agree a schedule of informal meetings for the Independent Study (Further Piece of Dissertation Research). At least three meetings should be scheduled. The further piece of the dissertation project should be clearly based on principles of research design: defining some variation to be explained, identifying alternative explanations, proposing clear tests which can distinguish between alternative explanations, discussing issues of data collection and measurement issues, etc. (This assumes the dissertation is empirical in nature; a theoretical project, for example, would require a different structure.) The Independent Study (Further Piece of Dissertation Research) culminates in the student submitting a written paper of 4,500 words (including footnotes, etc., but not the bibliography) to be submitted by the end of Michaelmas Term. The Independent Study (Further Piece of Dissertation Research) itself is graded by the supervisor, on a pass/fail scale, on the basis of the student's further piece of the dissertation project submitted by the Independent Study (Further Piece of Dissertation Research) deadline.