

Biochemistry/Molecular Biology Program
POLICY FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY BCMB 499

BCMB 499

Description: A research project designed by a student in consultation with a faculty member at Lewis & Clark or at another research institution in the metropolitan area.

Eligibility: Available to students who have demonstrated initiative and ability in class and laboratory work relevant to the project. The opportunity to do independent study is contingent upon the consent of a Lewis & Clark BCMB faculty member who is willing to serve as your mentor. If you are doing an off-campus project, you will need a Lewis & Clark advisor as well as your off-campus research mentor.

Prior to registering for Independent Study, you must confer with your faculty mentor and submit a written research proposal *for consideration by the faculty in the BCMB program*. 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 appropriate 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.

As the entire BCMB steering committee 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. Credit/no credit or grade, as negotiated with your Lewis & Clark faculty advisor/mentor.

Time devoted to the project should be comparable to that in regular courses, that is about *3 hours per week* of work 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.

Product: Students will keep a laboratory notebook with detailed chronological entries describing the work in progress. 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 some final product. This could be in the form of an oral seminar presented to the public, a poster presented at a regional or national conference, or a final paper in the form of a scientific paper. The form of the final product can be negotiated with your research mentor and advisor, and will document the student's mastery of their project.

Grading: You will be evaluated based upon whether you meet the time commitment, your preparation for your weekly meetings, and the degree to which your final product demonstrates mastery of the science of your project.