

Information for Students and Instructors

Independent Study Courses at St. Stephen's College

Context

St. Stephen's College is a graduate theology school and an Affiliated College of The University of Alberta in Edmonton. The mission of St. Stephen's College is to be an interfaith community that offers sacred spaces for learning and transformation. The College is open to people from all world views, faith traditions and spiritual expressions. For the past century, St. Stephen's has been recognized not only for its commitment to academic excellence, but also for its creative and non-traditional styles of learning: we value flexibility, innovation, collegiality, self-directed learning, and the integration of the arts with theology. The College is an Associate Member of The Association of Theological Schools in The United States and Canada; and an Approved Training Program of the Canadian Art Therapy Association. St. Stephen's College is committed to an adult education model of teaching which ensures that the teaching/learning process occurs when both teacher and student share responsibility, according to their respective roles, for the direction, approach, and content of the subject matter being studied. The following description of the independent study course will assist prospective instructors and students.

Independent Study Course Content and Guidelines

The independent study course should be offered in such a way that the student is able to gain a basic understanding, appropriate to their program, of the general principles of the subject matter being studied, as well as providing an opportunity for an in-depth reflection on aspects that support the student's chosen research topic or area of interest.

Independent Study courses:

- must be taken for credit and cannot be audited
- normally cover topics/content that is not covered in existing St. Stephen's College course offerings
- are restricted to students enrolled in a degree, diploma or certificate program at St. Stephen's College
- must not involve research with human subjects.

Responsibilities of the Instructor

It is important that the student and instructor negotiate a work plan. The instructor's responsibilities are to:

- Provide a course outline/syllabus that indicates the general objectives of the course and a basic bibliography.
- Indicate required reading (include several basic resources as well as supplementary materials).
- Consult with the student and communicate in writing timelines, ways of communicating, assignments and evaluation methods. This information should also be in the course outline.
- Provide adequate feedback to the student in a reasonable amount of time.
- It is expected that instructors keep a record of grades achieved by student for all components of the course that count towards the final grade, and of the percentage weight assigned to each. Individual assignments are to be graded using a rubric (see sample rubric, Appendix 1).
- Submit a copy of the student's major assignment (normally the final assignment), or final examination, containing any evaluative comments, to St. Stephen's College Registrar's Office with the course final grade. Electronic copies are preferred. This substantial piece of written work is retained for one year and shredded/deleted after the deadline for grade appeal.
- After the final course grade is calculated, the instructor is to submit the complete grade record (including final course grade in percentage format) and marking rubric to the Office of the Registrar, one month after the final assignment due date. Instructors are expected to give students their final grade when final assignments are returned to students.

Upon receipt of the final grade, the Registrar's Office will forward to the instructor the current instructional fee of \$400Cdn. In the event that the instructional relationship is terminated, the instructor shall advise the Registrar's Office and the fee will be pro-rated.

Responsibilities of the Student

It is important that the student and instructor negotiate a work plan. The student's responsibilities are to:

- Submit the *Instructor's Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal* to the Chair/Associate Chair of the Department for approval; the course outline, including objectives, content, and bibliography must be attached and the *Instructors Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal* must be signed by the proposed instructor.
- Once course is approved, register for the course online at <https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/how-to-study-at-ssc/register-for-a-course>.
- Ensure that there is sufficient access to the basic resources as well as to supplementary resources required for the comprehension of the course as well as specific assignments; consult with the instructor and establish in writing the timelines, ways of communicating, assignments, and evaluation methods. This information should also be in the course outline.
- Keep in regular contact with the instructor, and apart from exceptional circumstances, ensure that assignments are completed on time.
- Submit the final assignment to the instructor, so that evaluative comments and grade can be submitted to the Registrar's Office.
- Request a transcript if desired (<https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/files-cabinet/student-files>).

Duration

Independent study courses are a maximum of eight months in duration. Extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances (refer to Academic Policies, page 4 of these guidelines). The final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office within nine months of the course start date.

Appointment of Instructors

Students take the initiative to seek out suitable instructors for their independent study course. Students must explore, with the individual under consideration as instructor, the feasibility of doing the independent study course with them, and receive assurances of their willingness to teach. Potential instructors must provide brief biographical and professional information, and a *curriculum vitae*, using the form accompanying this document. Independent Study Instructors will normally possess a doctoral degree in the field in which the student proposes to work. In certain circumstances – for Master's-level Independent Study courses – other advanced credentials may be deemed acceptable (e.g. a thesis-based Master's degree with demonstrated experience in the field). Students forward this information to the Chair/Associate Chair of their Department, along with the proposed course outline. The Chair/Associate Chair will signify approval by signing the form, and the Registrar's Office will advise the student of course approval. The student then registers and pays for the course and commences course work.

Forms of Communication

There are several ways that the communication required for an independent study course can take place. Students and instructors can communicate through a combination of email, phone, video-conferencing or mail. Students residing in the same community as the instructor may arrange face-to-face meetings as well as using the other forms of communication noted above.

Number of Meetings between Student and Instructor

There must be a minimum of four meetings, using the agreed upon form(s) of communication:

- (1) an initial meeting where the course outline is given, and timelines are determined,
- (2) a second meeting to ensure that the student has gained a sufficient understanding of the general aspects of the course through the required reading; an assignment can be required beforehand,
- (3) a third meeting where the student and instructor agree on the focus of the major assignment topic, review general content of the assignment, and resources,
- (4) a fourth meeting where the student receives feedback with respect to assignments and final grade (the grading rubric is used as written documentation of this evaluation); alternatively, a final take-home exam may be assigned.

Authority and Accountability

The instructor is considered Associate Faculty of the College during the course. The instructor therefore has a dual accountability: to the student for the terms negotiated, and to the College through the Chair/Associate Chair of the student's department or the Dean. In the sensitive matter of evaluation of the quality of the student's work, the primary accountability of the instructor must be to the College and its published standards. Such primary accountability is meant to enhance the instructional relationship.

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Guidelines: Doctoral Level 3-Credit Course

1. Extensive reading in the literature of a particular topic with emphasis on primary sources. (At least 10 classic or up-to-date articles plus research on philosophically based books.)
2. One major assignment (eg. specialized paper or project) weighted approximately 40% of the course mark. If a specialized paper it should be at least 4000-5000 words (16-20 pages double-spaced) with proper annotation and bibliography of significant works (normally 8 books and 8 articles) in the area. It should include works that represent at least 2 viewpoints and perspectives. A project should be the equivalent amount of research and work.
3. A number of minor assignments weighted approximately 10-25% of course mark (eg. book report, class presentation, mini-project, reflective writing, or examination).
4. Should the course lend itself more to smaller assignments in lieu of 2 and 3 above, there should still be a minimum of 7500 words (thirty pages double-spaced, not including cover page, figures, tables, artwork, appendices, or references/bibliography) of writing for the course.
5. Attendance and class participation will be given due recognition. Online courses will maintain the class participation requirement by means of email or online discussion groups; independent study courses will be exempt, putting more weight on the other course assignments.
6. Through their assignments, students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of, and cultural interaction with some original thought which advances knowledge and its integration. Command of the English language and the ability to understand and communicate clearly, verbally and in writing, will also be expected.
7. The above guidelines are to be considered the norm for St. Stephen's College. However, St. Stephen's College may approve a 3-credit course with divergences of teaching methodology and assignment structures if the instructor provides a rationale to justify such divergences.
8. A doctoral student is expected to perform to a minimum grade level of 66% in an individual course, while maintaining a grade average of 70% in her/his program.

Academic Guidelines: Master Level 3-Credit Course

1. Approximately 1000 pages of reading including textbook(s) and 4 classic or up-to-date articles.
2. One major assignment weighted approximately 40% of the course mark (eg. technical paper or project). If a technical paper, it should be at least 4000–5000 words (16–20 pages, double-spaced) with proper annotation and bibliography of at least 6 books and 6 articles reflected in the paper. A project should be the equivalent amount of research and work.
3. A number of minor assignments weighted approximately 10–25% of course mark, eg. book report, class presentation, mini-project or examination (totaling 10-15 pages, double-spaced).
4. Should the course lend itself more to smaller assignments in lieu of 2 and 3 above, there should still be a minimum of 7500 words (30 pages, double-spaced) of writing for the course, not including cover page, figures, tables, artwork, appendices, or references/bibliography.
5. Attendance and class participation weighted approximately 10% of course mark. Online courses will maintain the class participation requirement by means of email or online discussion groups; correspondence and independent study courses will be exempt, putting more weight on the other course assignments.
6. The above guidelines are to be considered the norm for St. Stephen's College. However, St. Stephen's College may approve a course with divergences of teaching methodology and assignment structures and weight if the instructor can academically justify such divergences for a 3-credit master level course.
7. Students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of the subject matter in terms of philosophical analysis and critical assessment—with some original thought which advances knowledge and understanding of it—as well as command of the English language and the ability to understand and communicate clearly in it, verbally and in writing.
8. A graduate student is expected to perform to a minimum grade level of 66% in an individual course, and also maintain a grade average of 70% in her/his program.

Academic Guidelines: Master Level 3-Credit Art Therapy Studio Elective Course

The objective of Art Therapy studio courses is the development of studio skills for competent Art Therapy practice. The studio skills may include, but are not limited to, a working understanding of fine art materials and processes, a working understanding of elements of design/aesthetic theory, various approaches to the creative/therapeutic process, ability to attend to imagery and symbolism in one's own work, the ability to establish and facilitate a functional art therapy studio environment, and the ability to model and facilitate a therapeutic environment conducive to creative exploration and therapeutic work.

1. Approximately 500 pages of reading including book(s) and/or articles.
2. One major assignment weighted approximately 40% of the course mark (eg. arts-based project or integrative paper). An integrative paper should be at least 16-20 double-spaced pages (not including cover page, figures, tables, artwork, appendices, or references/bibliography), with degree-designated (APA or Turabian) formatting, and must include at least 2 books and 1 article. An arts-based project should include a coherent series of creative works developed during the course or one integrated piece of art with an accompanying 10-12 page reflective/integrative component.
3. A number of minor assignments that will be weighted according to guidelines provided by the instructor.
4. Attendance and class participation will be weighted according to guidelines provided by the instructor. Online courses will maintain the class participation requirement by means of email or online discussion groups. Independent study studio elective courses may include participation in group studio activities; if not, more weight will be placed on other course assignments and independent studio work.
5. The above guidelines are to be considered the norm for St. Stephen's College. However, St. Stephen's College may approve a course with divergences of teaching methodology and assignment structures and weight if the instructor can academically justify such divergences for a 3-credit master level course.
6. Students must demonstrate an advanced understanding of the subject matter in terms of philosophical analysis and critical assessment—with some original thought which advances knowledge and understanding of it—as well as command of the English language and the ability to understand and communicate clearly in it, verbally and in writing.
7. A graduate student is expected to perform to a minimum grade level of 66% in an individual course, and also maintain a grade average of 70% in her/his program. Studio courses are graded on a pass/fail basis; a grade between 66%-100% would earn an 'S' for Satisfactory.

Evaluation Standards and Grading System

A+	90 - 100%	Exceptional	Superior performance. Displays great originality and depth. Comprehensive understanding of subject matter, with original insights.
A	85 - 89%	Excellent	Above normal expectations. Occasionally surprises the reader with insights or deft presentation. Strong evidence of maturity, independence and control of the subject. Any lapses in logic and style are few and minor.
A-	80 - 84%		
B+	77 - 79%	Good	Meets normal expectations. Solid, accurate and integrative, convincing. Lapses in logic or style are uncommon and not serious.
B	73 - 76%		
B-	70 - 72%		
C+	67 - 69%	Adequate	Barely meets normal expectations. Covers the ground, but rarely adds anything new or personal. Heavily dependent on sources and authorities, with accurate but awkward handling of concepts. [Course Pass for Masters and Doctoral students: 66%]
C	63 - 66%		
C-	60 - 62%		
D+	57 - 59%	Poor	Below normal expectations. Disorganized, frequent lapses in logic and style, superficial with no evidence of personal involvement. Inability to use theory. [Course Pass for Undergraduate students: 50%]
D	53 - 56%		
D-	50 - 52%		
F	0 - 49%	Failure	Far below normal expectations. Massive structural or other academic defects, evidence of dependence on sources and authorities bordering on plagiarism. [Clear Failure][Grade of 0% calculated in overall grade]
W		Withdrawal	Withdrawal from course with permission within established deadlines. [Not calculated in overall grade]
WC		Withdrawal with Cause	Granted only in case of serious illness or other extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student which makes continuation in a course impossible and where an F is not in order. [Assigned by Registrar's Office and not calculated in overall grade]
*			Final grade includes a mark of '0' for missed coursework that is worth 20% or more of course grade
WF		Withdrawal-Failure	Withdrawal from course after established deadline for withdrawing without academic penalty but before final assignment due. [Grade of 0% calculated in overall grade] WF not awarded after May 31, 2020
INF		Incomplete-Failure	Course work not completed within established academic deadlines: ie final assignment due date. [Grade of 0% calculated in overall grade] INF not awarded after May 31, 2020.
IP		In Progress	Course in Progress: Extension or rewrite of final assignment granted

COURSE COMPLETION

Students are expected to submit assignments to instructors by the deadlines described in the syllabus. For Independent Study courses, final assignments are due the last day of the course. All un-submitted assignments will receive a grade of zero, and the final course grade will be assessed based on all marks recorded for the course (including marks of zero for failed or incomplete assignments).

COURSE EXTENSIONS OR WITHDRAWAL

Students who wish to withdraw from a course must notify the Registrar's Office in writing (st.stephens@ualberta.ca). Refer to the Academic Calendar for policies about course extensions, withdrawal deadlines, and refunds:
<https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/how-to-study-at-ssc/academic-calendar>

St. Stephen's College Instructor Profile and Independent Study Course Proposal

STEPS REQUIRED TO ENROLL IN AND COMPLETE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE

1. This form, with course syllabus attached, is signed by instructor and submitted to Chair/Associate Chair of Department of student's program, for approval/signature.
2. Registrar's Office notifies student of course approval.
3. Student registers and pays for course (pays course fee in effect on start date of course).
4. Student and instructor start course.
5. Instructor submits to Registrar's Office: (i) complete grade record and marking rubric (including all assignment grades, and final course grade in percentage format), and (ii) copy of student's major assignment or examination, containing any evaluative comments
6. Instructional fee is paid to instructor.

Persons considering serving as Instructors of Independent Study courses are asked to provide the following information, as well as a *curriculum vitae*, for the purpose of evaluating suitability in regard to the student's proposed course.

STUDENT INFORMATION	
Student Name	
Student Email	
Student Program (DMin, MPS, MPS-AT, PMATD, MTS, BTS, Grad Certificate, Open Studies)	

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION	
Instructor Name	
Instructor Mailing Address	
Social Insurance Number	<i>Associate Faculty who receive payment for teaching or supervising students are asked to provide their social insurance number to the College by phoning 780.439.7311 or 1.800.661.4956 [ask for Assistant Registrar]. Confidential information is kept in a secure location at the College.</i>
Instructor Email	
Instructor Phone	
Position Held Currently	
University Degree Attained	
Theological Degree Attained	
Other Professional Training	
Professional Experience (responsibilities assigned in last five years relevant to course)	
Other Comments (anything else that would help us recognize the appropriateness of your appointment as Instructor for this student)	

PROPOSED COURSE AND DATES			
Title of Course (titles over 25 characters will be abbreviated on transcript)			
Brief Course Description (attach detailed course outline/work plan)			
Course Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral (700-level)	<input type="checkbox"/> Master (500-level)	
Proposed Start and End Dates (maximum 8-month session)	Start Date:	End Date:	
		<i>Month-Day-Year</i>	<i>Month-Day-Year</i>
Which program requirement are you planning to satisfy with this course? (i.e., elective, theology, etc.)			

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE	
In signing, I am indicating my availability and interest in serving as an Independent Study Course Instructor, and my willingness to consult with the Chair/Associate Chair of the Department for the student's program, as well as abide by St. Stephen's College academic policies and rules of confidentiality. Signing also signifies acceptance of the terms of the instructional fee (\$400CAD).	
Signature	
Date	

APPROVALS: INSTRUCTOR APPOINTMENT AND COURSE CONTENT	
Approval is based on suitability of instructor, and suitability of course content/method for student's program.	
Department Chair/Associate Chair Signature	
Date	
Department Chair to choose subject category of course from choices below, so that course number can be assigned. <input type="checkbox"/> Methodology (570 or 770) <input type="checkbox"/> Practice or Other (530 or 730) <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Psychotherapy/Therapy/Applied Practice (580 or 780) <input type="checkbox"/> Sacred History (520 or 720) <input type="checkbox"/> Sacred Text (500 or 700) <input type="checkbox"/> Social Issues/Religious Diversity (540 or 740) <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality (550 or 750) <input type="checkbox"/> Theology or Ethics (510 or 710) Course prefix will be assigned as follows: PPSYC, ARTST, or SSC.	
DEPT CHAIR/ASSOC CHAIR FORWARD FORM/SYLLABUS TO REGISTRAR'S OFFICE. REGISTRAR'S OFFICE NOTIFIES STUDENT VIA EMAIL WHEN COURSE IS APPROVED SO THAT STUDENT CAN REGISTER.	

FOR REGISTRAR'S OFFICE USE ONLY Copied for student file _____ [Asst Registrar retains original until grade received] Instructor entered in database _____ Student notified of approval _____ Instructor paid _____
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Grade Range Criteria (weight)	Excellent			Good			Adequate			Poor		
	A+ (90–100)	A (85–89)	A- (80–84)	B+ (77–79)	B (73–76)	B- (70–72)	C+ (67–69)	C (63–66)	C- (60–62)	D+ (57–59)	D (53–56)	D- (50–52)
Structure / Organization (10%)	Exceptionally structured with clear organization. Ideas form a coherent whole and logically flow together.			Clear structure with evidence of organization. General coherence of ideas but their connection is not always clear.			Some structure but further organization is needed. Ideas loosely fit together, but many are displaced.			Poorly structure with minimal evidence of organization. Little coherence of ideas, and writing lacks unity.		
Clarity of Expression (20%)	A delight to read. The student's purposes and main ideas are conveyed clearly and unambiguously. Writing betrays nuance, precision, and creativity.			Easy to read. The student's purposes and main ideas are generally clear with minimal ambiguity. Writing betrays intention and care.			Challenging to read. The student's purposes and main ideas are strained due to ambiguity. Writing lacks care and intention. Proof read required.			Difficult to read. The student's purposes and main ideas are unclear and/or absent. Writing is vague and at times incoherent.		
Research Quality (20%)	Strong breadth of secondary literature that reflects a diversity of scholarly views. Strong command of the secondary literature.			Decent breadth of secondary literature that reflects many scholarly views. Sufficient command of the secondary literature.			Underdeveloped bibliography that reflects a narrow set of scholarly views. Heavily dependent on secondary literature.			Major gaps in the bibliography. Inability to command and/or minimal engagement with secondary literature.		
Conceptual Engagement (30%)	Strong evidence of independent thought. Critical engagement of secondary literature. Depth of analysis and strong control of the subject. Clear ability to use theory coupled with self-critical awareness.			Evidence of emerging independent thought. Some critical engagement of secondary literature. Sufficient analytical depth and control of the subject. Emerging ability to use theory and to embrace self-critical awareness.			Little evidence of independent thought. Engages secondary literature but lacks a critical edge. Some analytical depth but lacking control of the subject. Some ability to use theory, but lacking self-critical awareness.			Minimal evidence of independent thought, with nominal critical engagement of secondary literature. Insufficient analytical depth and minimal control of the subject. Inability to use theory and/or nominal evidence of self-critical awareness.		
Writing Quality (10%)	Minimal or no errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization. Minimal or no errors in sentence structure and word usage; structure and word choice is creative/engaging.			Some errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization. Some errors in sentence structure and word usage; structure and word choice is acceptable.			Frequent errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization. Frequent errors in sentence structure and word usage; structure and word choice is strained.			Excessive errors in punctuation, spelling, or capitalization. Excessive errors in sentence structure and word usage; structure and word choice is unclear and distracting.		
Style / Form / Formatting (10%)	Masterfully written and presented within the disciplinary style. Minimal to no errors in citation and bibliographic style. Clearly stays within the assignment parameters.			Acceptably written and presented within the disciplinary style. Some errors in citation and bibliographic style. Mostly stays within the assignment parameters.			Barely written and presented within the disciplinary style. Frequent errors in citation and bibliographic style. Barely stays within the assignment parameters.			Assignment is not written and presented within the disciplinary style. Excessive errors in citation and bibliographic style. Does not stay within the assignment parameters.		

Note: This is a sample rubric that the faculty of St. Stephen's College are welcome but not obliged to adopt. Grading rubrics like this, including their individual "criteria" and their relative "weightings," will undoubtedly differ from assignment to assignment, and from course to course. It is expected that instructors at St. Stephen's College will use a rubric similar to this one.