DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE
Policy and Guidelines for Independent Study (397, 697)
and Drama in Production (480, 580)

I. GENERAL

Independent Study and Drama in Production should provide a challenging opportunity for the advanced, serious, highly motivated student—not a cushion or an escape hatch.

Casualness in applying consistent guidelines erodes the integrity of the curriculum, in unfair to other students, and is of doubtful benefit even to the students directly involved.

II. THR 397/697 INDEPENDENT STUDY

1. Independent study should be used to provide the student with an opportunity to work in specialized areas of a discipline or professional field when no formal, organized courses are offered or when the independent study will provide a richer and more productive experience than a comparable advanced course. A clear determination should be made in advance by the student, his advisor and course supervisor that it is in the best interest of the student to undertake the course. It should make a positive contribution to the student's program and his scholarly development and intellectual maturity.

2. THR 397 (undergraduate) may be taken twice. It may be taken once as "strictly research"—let us call this R. It may be taken once as a "production related" study—P. Neither P nor R may be repeated. Both require consent of instructor (supervisor) and Chairperson.

THR 697 (graduate), essentially the same principles and guidelines apply, except that as presently defined, THR 697 has no "R" or "P" distinctions; that is, either the "R" form or the "P" form can be repeated.

3. Neither ought to be taken until the student has established a satisfactory record in handling a number of related regular courses, and is in a more mature position to propose the kind of specific, intensive project that ought to form the substance of Independent Study. For example, a Directing student should have successfully completed THR 350 and 351.

4. Implicit in both the R and P versions is study. In "R", study is central in the form of research and a resulting substantial paper of a historical, critical and/or theoretical nature. Rule of thumb: 25-35 pp.

In "P", study that eventuates in a written document should be a considerable component related to production activity. The written component ought to deal thoughtfully and carefully with the concept, description and evaluation of the actual activity. (10-15 pp.)

5. The production activity ought to be initiated and followed through to completion by the student. Moreover, the student should have a central controlling function: e.g., director or designer, rather than stage manager, head of crew, or assistant to the director (for these, see THR 480). For acting, see the following.
6. Time involvement and level of achievement should correspond to what would be demanded in an upper level undergraduate course, including not only class time, but also 'homework' time.

7. If the independent study is to be undertaken in production activity, a determination must be made about the nature and scope of the activity, its significance to the student's program, and its contribution to his intellectual and artistic maturity.

8. The student must prepare a written proposal summarizing his intended study. As a minimum this should include the objectives, nature and scope of the study, and resources needed or to be used, their location and availability. It must also explain why an existing structured course (including seminars) cannot meet the needs of the student. The proposal must also indicate what the expected end product may be (for example, a paper, annotated bibliography, theatrical production, etc.) Any special or unusual time schedule should be indicated, and the proposal must be signed and approved by the student, his advisor, the course supervisor, and the Department Chair. Copies are to be distributed to each of the above, and a copy is to be placed in the student's Department file.

9. If the independent study is in the nature of production activity, the student must also include tentative production plans and adhere to procedural guidelines recommended by the Production Committee, unless the activity is in conjunction with previously scheduled productions. The purpose of the guidelines is to determine specifically the facilities and nature of materials which are needed to undertake the study and to make these available. The procedure is to be followed in this order: 1) approval by academic advisor and course supervisor; 2) approval by individual faculty members in tech areas: set designer, lighting designer, costume designer; 3) approval and scheduling through Experimental Theatre Board in accordance with the Board's established procedures; 4) approval by the Department Chair. The course supervisor may require or the student may request that other members of the faculty serve in evaluating the independent study, depending on the degree of emphasis to be applied to each area of the study.

10. The independent study course may not be taken or approved when its purpose or operation is in conflict with University policy or academic regulations or standards. For example, it specifically may not be authorized to provide study "in absentia" when the student's academic status requires in-residence study on campus.

11. An independent study may not be taken or approved when its purpose is extraneous to the academic requirements for the degree. For example, it should not be used merely to increase total credits in a registration.

12. The student must complete the proposal in the semester prior to the semester in which the course is taken.