

Chicago Arts Program - Independent Study Project

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“Education is the building of a person. To educate means to draw out or evoke that which is latent; education then means drawing out the person’s latent capacities for understanding and living, not stuffing a (passive) person full of preconceived knowledge. Education must tap into the close relationship between play and exploration; there must be permission to explore and express. There must be validation of the exploratory spirit, which by definition takes us out of the tried, the tested, the homogeneous.”

~Stephen Nachmanovitch, *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art* (p. 118)

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.”

~Martha Graham to Agnes DeMille

OBJECTIVES

- Plan, complete, and reflect upon a large-scale creative, interpretive, or scholarly project (or combination thereof)
- Engage with Chicago in deep ways that match your specific professional and personal goals
- Collaborate with other Chicago Arts Program students to plan and produce an interdisciplinary arts festival

GRADES & ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade for the course will be calculated out of 1,000 points total using this scale:

A = 940-1000

A- = 900-939

B+ = 870-899

B = 840-869

B- = 800-839

C+ = 770-799

C = 740-769

C- = 700-739

D+ = 670-699

D = 640-669

D- = 600-639

F = 0-599

Assignment grades can be roughly translated into this rubric:

A = the work is above and beyond expectations, truly exceptional

B = the work is about what was expected of someone who had done all the work for the assignment in a thoughtful way; a good job.

C = the work is the minimum to meet the requirements.

D = the work is significantly deficient in some way.

F = the work does not meet the requirements in any way.

These are the assignments for the course and the maximum points you may earn with each:

Experiential Component = 300

ISP Proposal = 50

Independent Study Project = 500

ISP Reflection Paper = 50

Arts Festival Planning and Execution = 100

Each Unexcused Absence or Missed Meeting = -25

TOTAL POSSIBLE = 1,000

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

In conjunction with your instructor, you will design and complete your own large-scale Independent Study Project (ISP). The project may be creative, interpretive, and/or scholarly in nature. If you plan to receive major credit for your ISP (under approval of the professors at your home campus), you must work in your major discipline. Otherwise, you are free to work in any medium/discipline that you and your faculty mentor deem appropriate to your education as an artist. In the past, some students have used the ISP as an opportunity to explore their major in more depth and/or variety than is available on campus; some even use it to get ahead on a departmental senior thesis. Other students have relished the opportunity to “take a break” from their major and spend time working in a field that may not be available on campus or in a field that complements their major work in unexpected or surprising interdisciplinary ways.

Under the mentorship of your instructor, you will create and submit an official proposal for your Independent Study Project. This proposal will present (as much as is reasonably possible) an articulated idea for your project, a working process, and a method of ongoing and final assessment. Changes in this proposal must be made in collaboration with your mentor. In the end of the semester, this document will provide a basis for grading your ISP.

A NOTE ABOUT INTERSECTION WITH INTERNSHIPS: You are encouraged to use resources through your internship site as it makes sense to do so, however such use must occur above and beyond the hours and tasks associated directly with your internship credit.

EXPERIENTIAL COMPONENT

In addition to your Independent Study Project itself, you will be required to devise and execute a plan to experience a significant part of Chicago as it relates to your academic, personal, and/or professional goals. This experiential plan could take one of many forms—extra courses, volunteer work, a series of museum or performance visits, etc—and will be worked out in

collaboration with your mentor. You are responsible for all costs, but much can be accomplished in Chicago for free or relatively cheap. Your instructor can work with you if finances are a concern.

Some students elect to take extra courses in Chicago as part of this experiential component (i.e. figure drawing at Hyde Park Art Center, hip hop dancing at Old Town School of Folk Music, printmaking at Lill Street Studios, playwriting at Chicago Dramatists, improv acting at Second City, digital photography at Chicago Photography Center, screenwriting at Chicago Filmmakers, etc). Such courses are available in nearly every artistic discipline and sub-discipline. It is the students responsibility to pay any tuition fees associated with these courses (usually in the range of \$200-400 for an 8-12 week course).

ARTS FESTIVAL

At the end of the semester, all Chicago Arts Program students will collaborate to produce an interdisciplinary arts festival. At minimum, each student's ISP must be included in the festival, as well as at least one project from the Seminar. Collectively, you will be responsible for finding and choosing a venue (including negotiating a price within our program budget), planning the event, setting up the festival space, shopping for refreshments (again, using an allotted portion of our program's budget), advertising the festival to friends and family, and running the event itself. Your instructors in this and other classes are willing and able to help guide you in many of these areas, but feel that it would rob something important of the educational experience if you didn't mount the festival yourselves. I recommend that you elect a student to lead this effort, though everyone should contribute to the work.

SCHEDULE

You will meet one-on-one with your ISP faculty mentor about once a week. At some times these meetings may be called as a group. Each unexcused absence from an individual or group meeting will automatically deduct 25 points from your final grade for the course. Absences will only be excused at the instructor's discretion and in advance of the date in question. It is your responsibility to check the Chicago Arts Program Google Calendar regularly to make sure you know of all scheduled activities in this and other classes.