

University of Kentucky  
Department of Landscape Architecture

## LA 395: Independent Study

### Details

Course Administrator: Chris Sass

Faculty Advisor/Mentor(s): selected by student

Meeting Location/Time: student and faculty mentor arrange regular meetings

Credit Hours: 1-6

### Course Description

Advanced topical studies in landscape architecture allowing for individual research or a work/travel experience coordinated with academic pursuits. May be repeated to a maximum of nine credits.

Prereq: Permission of faculty.

Goal: The preparation, execution, and/or presentation of an independent research or design project, or work/travel experience with an educational component.

### Course Format: Topic/Experience Selection

Students should strive for a topic or experience that excites and interests them. Consider topics or experience areas that will provide exposure to local, regional or national trends, socially or technically significant professional experience, or will provide an extensive educational benefit. Discuss your ideas with professors and related professionals. After selecting a potential topic or experience you should obtain advisor(s) to work with you.

Note: The elements comprising a research study, design competition, design/implementation project, or travel/study experience will differ substantially from one another; however, every project should have a written component as part of the final project/experience submission.

### Advisor/Mentor(s)

Prior to writing your proposal for the project or experience, you must obtain the cooperation of an individual to serve as your primary advisor or mentor. Your primary advisor need not be a landscape architecture professor. The primary advisor must be a recognized resource person within your proposed area of study and you must obtain approval from the Department Chair for this individual to serve as your primary advisor. If your primary advisor is not a landscape architecture professor, you should also obtain agreement from a landscape architecture professor to serve as a secondary advisor.

### Advisor/Mentor(s) are responsible for:

- Assist/mentor student in selecting and developing project/experience proposal.
- Set due dates for review of proposal outline and subsequent revisions.
- Mentor/guide student during research/study phase.
- Establish evaluation criteria for project/experience submission.
- Set due dates for first draft of project or written portion and subsequent revisions as needed.
- Obtain input from secondary advisor as needed.
- Set due date for submission of final project or written portion of experience.
- Evaluate submission and issue final grade.

## **Project/Experience Proposal**

The project/experience proposal may be submitted in detailed outline form or in long form (sentences, paragraphs, etc.). The student should talk to his/her advisor(s) about their ideas for the direction of the project/experience before writing the final proposal. The proposal should at least answer in detail these basic questions:

- What it is you plan to do?
- What are your objectives in doing it?
- How are you going to accomplish these objectives?

A well prepared outline should contain the basic structural elements of the proposed project or written portion of the experience. It should show the relationships between the various topics to be studied or experienced and provide elements in their proper sequence to effectively communicate the project or experience. This should, in turn, provide the student with a logical organization to pursue the project or written portion of the experience, further facilitating his/her grasp of the subject or experience. The outline should provide a means to readily visualize the distribution of emphasis and transition between topics.

## **Project/Experience Proposal Approval**

The student should submit a typed preliminary proposal outline to the primary advisor by a previously agreed upon date. The student and mentor(s) should discuss the preliminary outline and subsequent revisions. Once the final expanded proposal has been written, the student should obtain official approval from the advisor(s) for the project and then submit the final proposal to the Department Chair for approval.

## **Final Project/Experience Submission**

The student should submit two typed copies of your written project or experience component to your advisor(s) at a previously agreed upon date. One copy will be kept by the Department. Your advisor(s) will then review the project and issue a grade based on the previously determined evaluation criteria. In addition, when appropriate, your advisor(s) may require you to orally present your project to faculty and students as part of your grade (this should be determined at the beginning of the project and included in the agreed upon evaluation criteria).

## **Components of Project/Experience Submission**

The nature, scope and goals of the project or experience should dictate the components or elements of the final submission and the criteria used to evaluate it. These elements should be discussed, outlined in detail, mutually agreed to by the student and faculty mentor(s), and included in the project proposal submission.

The elements comprising a research study, design competition, design implementation project, or travel/study experience will differ substantially from one another; however, every project should have a written component as part of the final project/experience submission.

## Example of content for written research project submission

1. Cover Page/Table of Contents: project title, student name, date, course info, content list
2. Introduction: Let reader know exactly what the project is about, its limits of coverage - where you plan to begin and end. This may also be called the explanation, showing how the text is organized and on what principle it is based. What is your purpose in writing? If your study is intended to do something for someone, who are they? What are their needs and what are the considerations you are about to elaborate on?
3. Body/Content: The format should be discussed in detail with the advisor(s).
4. Conclusions/Results/Application/Summary: What did you do or achieve and how does it relate or apply to the topic – positive, negative or inconclusive? Doubt may remain but should be complemented with indication of areas needing further research.
5. Bibliography/Citations complete and in appropriate format.
6. Graphics or Supplemental Material as needed to communicate information.

### Example of Evaluation Criteria

Note: The student and advisor(s) should agree on the specific criteria to be used in the evaluation of the project/experience and include this information in the proposal.

#### 100 Pts Submission Components

- 15 Introduction: title page/table of contents/introduction of project
- 40 Body/Content: literature review, analysis, process/methodology
- 15 Conclusion: findings, relevance, synthesis, summary
- 10 Technical Writing/Organization
- 15 Bibliography/Citations
- 5 Graphic Communication/Supplemental Information

#### 15 pts Introduction

- 1-3 Poorly crafted title page, table of contents and/or introduction.
- 4-7 Elements provided; weak introduction, fails to clarify intent of study.
- 8-14 Introduction identifies topic, need/purpose for study; clearly identifies goals and methodology.
- 15 Well organized/comprehensive introduction, with detailed goals and methodology.

#### 40 pts Body/Content

- 1-9 Poorly written; fails to address subject in a comprehensive manner.
- 10-19 Topic minimally addressed; limited literature review or analysis. Poorly organized and difficult to follow/understand central theme.
- 20-29 Topic addressed through limited literature review, case studies, and expert viewpoints. Central theme and organization understandable to reader, but minimal in scope.
- 30-39 Topic addressed in a thorough manner through literature review, case studies, and expert viewpoints.
- Substantial analysis and clear organization of material.
- 40 Topic addressed in a comprehensive manner through extensive review of literature, case studies, expert viewpoints and personal observations Well organized material presented in enlightening and creative manner.

#### 15 pts Conclusion

- 0-5 Conclusion not stated or very limited in nature.
- 6-10 Conclusion minimally stated and/or not linked to content. Lacks personal synthesis of subject and/or relies on unsupported opinions.
- 11-14 Conclusion clearly stated/organized. Demonstrates personal synthesis of subject, supported by study content.
- 15 Conclusion clearly stated/well organized. Demonstrates innovative synthesis of subject, well supported by study content.

#### 10 pts Technical Writing/Organization

- 0-5 Information poorly organized, numerous grammatical and spelling errors, poor syntax.
- 6-9 Information moderately-well organized, minimal grammatical/spelling errors, moderate syntax.
- 10 Information well organized; good grammar, spelling and syntax.

#### 15 pts Bibliography/Citations

- 0-5 Bibliography submitted but limited references; citations incomplete; errors in format.
- 6-14 Bibliography includes range of sources; citations complete; minimal errors in format.
- 15 Comprehensive bibliography; citations complete; correct format.

#### 5 pts Graphic Communication/Supplementation Material (where appropriate)

- 0-1 Limited use of graphics; little supplemental material.
- 2-4 Graphics/supplemental material effectively contributes to communication of topic.
- 5 Creative use of graphics or supplemental material to highlight and enhance communication of topic.



# Undergraduate Independent Study Contract

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SID (not SSN): \_\_\_\_\_

Course (prefix, course no.): \_\_\_\_\_ Semester (Year/Term): \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Research/Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning goals:

General description of methods to be employed:

Anticipated project or research results:

Product student is to provide, including due date:

Grading expectations:

Arrangements for student-faculty member interactions:

Must be completed and submitted no later than the last day to add a class in any term. Please sign below by entering your name, e-mail address, and phone number.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name, e-mail address, phone number)

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name, e-mail address, phone number)

**Submit form to Landscape Architecture office for approval by DUS and Department Chair**