

MA British Studies

Guidelines for Independent Study Projects

What is an 'Independent Study Project'?

The ISP gives you the chance to further your understanding of the module's overall topic by working on a set of texts of your choice. These texts should be connected to the topic of the module but go beyond the precise topic of the seminar(s) you take. The project should be roughly comparable to the reading you would do for a typical seminar (without preparing / researching your term paper). Thus, depending on the length and complexity of individual texts, your reading list might comprise roughly three to five novels, **or** six to seven plays, **or** a substantial selection of poetry, **or** a combination of different genres (including film); your reading list can also include non-fiction. Your reading list should also include some secondary sources connected to the topic of your independent study project (at least one monograph **or** four to five essays).

It will be your task to come up with a topic for the study project and suggest a reading list, but your supervisor will have to agree to the list.

For example, when you visit a seminar on Early Modern Drama, your ISP might consist of:

- a selection of EMod plays not covered in the seminar (e.g., other genres, other authors, etc.) **and/or**
- a selection of EMod prose fiction **and/or**
- a selection of EMod poetry **and/or**
- a selection of EMod non-fictional texts (e.g., travel accounts, conduct books, poetics, political theory)
- **and** some secondary sources (essays, monographs) connected with your overall topic

When you have finished your project, you will meet with your supervisor for a talk of c. 15-20 minutes to present and discuss the insights you gained. This talk should take place during or shortly after the term in which you take the module seminar; it should not be scheduled later than the third week of classes of the following term. (For example, if you do your independent study project during a summer term you should present/discuss your thoughts no later than the third week of classes of the next winter term.)

During the course of your MA programme, you will do one or two Independent Study Project(s) (ISP). You will have to do an ISP in Module BLK-M5; you can choose to do an ISP in Module BLK-M2.

Module BLK-M5

Module BLK-M5 gives you the choice of four topics (but you cannot choose the same topic as in BLK-M4): Early Modern Studies II (BLK-M5a) **or** Eighteenth Century Studies II (BLK-M5b) **or** Twentieth Century Studies II (BLK-M5c) **or** New English Literatures / Postcolonial Studies II (BLK-M5d)

In each case, the module will consist of a seminar (Hauptseminar) and an independent study project (ISP). Once you have decided you want to take a seminar as part of your module BLK-M5, you should talk to the person offering the seminar (your supervisor of the study project), to discuss your ideas for an ISP.

Module BLK-M2 (Victorian Studies)

In the module on Victorian Studies (BLK-M2), you have the choice of **either** taking a lecture on Victorian Studies **or** of doing an Independent Study Project. Please note that a lecture on Victorian Studies will not be offered every term. If you choose to do an ISP, the teacher of either of your two seminars in module BLK-M2 can be the supervisor of this project; you should contact one of them to discuss your ideas for an ISP.