What is HNRS 499: Honors Independent Study?

The Ramapo College Honors Program will no longer be offering the course HNRS 420: Honors Senior Seminar. In its place, we are requiring all graduating students to complete a 2-credit or 4-credit independent study to work in conjunction with the Honors Senior Project.

Why is HNRS 499 replacing HNRS 420?

Completing an independent study under the guidance of a faculty mentor allows you to gain a deep research experience, deploying your intellectual curiosity and the skills you have gained during your undergraduate years. It will help you complete your Honors senior project and graduate from the Honors Program.

One of the primary roadblocks for many students seeking to graduate with Honors was difficulty with fitting the Honors Senior Seminar into their schedule because it was a 4-credit course and took up an elective space. The independent study requirement makes it easier to include the final Honors course requirement into your schedule while including more structure and allowing for greater freedom and flexibility over the specifics of the course.

What is an Independent Study?

An independent study is a course in which you are the only student. You and the faculty sponsor must develop a syllabus with deadlines, grading system, meeting times, assigned readings and writing assignments, etc. That syllabus must meet with the approval of your school Dean and the Director of the Honors Program. This requires planning and preparation well in advance of the end of add/drop at the very start of the semester. You and your instructor should review the requirements and deadlines for the Senior Project as you develop the syllabus and make your Faculty Reader aware of your plan.

How does the Honors Independent Study work with my Senior Project?

The Honors I.S. is not an additional project or course on top of your Senior Project. Instead, think of it as a more specific framework within which to complete your project. Honors students must still meet all of the requirements of the original Senior Project process. However, the Honors Independent Study makes the project an official graded part of your course schedule and transcript.

How will the Honors Independent Study fit into my schedule?

You have a great deal of flexibility with how you add HNRS 499 to your schedule. You can:

- Add HNRS 499 as a 2-credit course on top of your schedule at any point during your junior or senior year. This would allow you to take 18 credits total (Four 4-credit courses plus the 2-credit I.S.), which does not require paying any additional tuition.
- Take 3 classes worth a total of 12 credits and add a 4-credit HNRS 499 to reach 16 credits total.
- Take it during the summer, but this requires paying for tuition for 2 or 4 credits.
What is the difference between a 2-credit and 4-credit independent study?

A 4-credit course is twice as much work as a 2-credit course. A 2-credit independent study should have a syllabus indicating approximately 75 hours of work, while a 4-credit one is 150 hours of work. If you need more time and space to complete your project, opt for 4 credits; if you don’t, or are building on work you already completed, opt for 2 credits. Also consider which option best fits your schedule.

How is the Independent Study graded?

Along with your Honors Sponsor, you will choose if you would like your I.S. to be on a letter-grade scale or pass/fail.

Is the professor who coordinates my independent study the same as my Senior Project Sponsor?

Yes.

Do I still need a Senior Project reader?

Yes.

Can studying abroad for 4-weeks or more still be substituted for Honors 420 or Honors 499?

If you are a current sophomore, junior, or senior, studying abroad through Ramapo College for 4 weeks or more can still substitute for Honors 420 or the Honors Independent Study. Students entering the Honors Program during or after the 2019 cohort cannot substitute studying abroad for Honors 499.

Can my independent study double-count as a course toward my major?

You should ask the convener of your major if they will approve this.

What forms do I need to fill out to complete an Honors Independent Study?

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<td>Honors Program</td>
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<td>Senior Project Proposal Form</td>
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<td>Honors Independent Study Contract</td>
<td>Prior to Add/Drop Date of Semester you intend to enroll in Honors 499</td>
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<td>Ramapo College Independent Study Contract</td>
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Where can I find the above documents?

All of the above documents with the exception of the Independent Study Registration Form can be found on the Honors Documents page at https://www.ramapo.edu/honors/studentres/documents/