GUIDELINES FOR:

CMAT 492 Independent Study and CMAT 497 Independent Research

Department of Communication Arts

Salisbury University

Dr. Bryan Horikami
Department Chair
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are CMAT 492 and CMAT 497?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the differences between CMAT 492 and CMAT 497?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMAT 492 and CMAT 497 Eligibility Checklist</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Types of Papers Might I Write?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Instructions for a Summary and Critique of Directed Readings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Instructions for a Scholarly Paper</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Syllabus for CMAT 492</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Syllabus for CMAT 497</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Faculty Supervisors</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>492/497 Proposal Form</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are CMAT 492 Independent Study and CMAT 497 Independent Research?

These courses are designed to give you the opportunity to work one-on-one with a Communication Arts faculty member on a subject you choose in consultation with the professor.

You can study an area in which we do not offer a course, such as *Freedom of Speech* or *Gender Portrayals in Media*. You might expand on a subject you began in another course by studying it in more detail, like conducting surveys on *Deception in Interpersonal Relationships*. You could also do a creative project, building off your course knowledge, such as designing a film script or a magazine. Projects must have a communications component, be well designed and executed, and be approved by a faculty supervisor and the Department Chair. Students generally complete a paper for CMAT 492 and CMAT 497. While there may be some variation by instructor, the general rule on length is ten pages per credit hour taken: 10 pages for 1 credit hour, 20 pages for 2 credit hours, 30 pages for 3 credit hours, and 40 pages for 4 credit hours.

Students who choose to undertake CMAT 492 or CMAT 497 are expected to possess the requisite skills for the task. First, you should have strong writing skills. This means having a firm grasp of correct grammar and usage, as well as a proficiency with good essay form and structure. A familiarity with the elements of a scholarly paper is preferred. Second, you need solid research skills, including the ability to obtain resource materials both online and in the library, plus the ability to design your own project in consultation with the professor. Third, you should have an interest in and prior knowledge of the subject. It is preferred that you have completed previous work with the subject and are pursuing an already established avenue of study. Finally, you should be a motivated self-starter who works well independently with minimal supervision.
What are the differences between CMAT 492 Independent Study and CMAT 497 Independent Research?

CMAT 492 Independent Study

Students must choose a topic for investigation with the advice of an instructor prior to registration. The student must then submit a proposal including a letter of intent, an outline of the proposed study and an abstract of the intended topic area. Prior familiarity and work with the topic are recommended. Prerequisite: Permission of the department chair. Hours arranged.

CMAT 497 Independent Research

This course has been designed to encourage students to pursue an important area of research in communication. This course allows a student to study a subject area in more depth than possible in the traditional classroom setting. With the advice of an instructor, the student must submit a proposal including a letter of intent, an outline of the proposed study with bibliography and an abstract of the intended topic area. Ideally, the topic should be new research with an addendum to an earlier project. A public presentation of research is required. Prerequisites: C or better in CMAT 297, (at least 3.0 GPA in CMAT courses), permission of the department chair, and approval and cooperation of supervising instructor. Four hours per week.

While the descriptions above may seem more similar than different, there are two important distinctions:

1. CMAT 497 is considered “traditional” scholarly research. The student will prepare a research report that follows the rules of the American Psychological Association Style Manual. CMAT 492, by contrast, is not limited to projects and limitations that fit those constraints.

2. CMAT 497 requires a public presentation of the research project. Ways to fulfill that requirement include, but are not limited to:

   a. Presentation at the annual Salisbury University Student Research Conference
   b. Presentation before the CMAT faculty
Independent Study and Independent Research Eligibility Checklist

_____ 1. For CMAT 497, I have a grade of C or better in CMAT 297: Communication Research. For both CMAT 492 and CMAT 497, the following criteria must be met:

_____ 2. I am an SU student majoring or minoring in Communication Arts.

_____ 3. I have completed these core courses for my major: For CMAT: 101, 102, or their equivalents.

_____ 4. I have completed all of the core courses for my track.

_____ 5. I have a sufficient GPA to handle the course expectations. An overall GPA of at least 2.5 and CMAT GPA of at least 3.0 are recommended for CMAT 492, and are **required** for CMAT 497.

_____ 6. I have read this Independent Study and Independent Research packet.

_____ 7. I have a developed project idea and have asked a Communication Arts faculty member in the field in which I am conducting this project to supervise me.

_____ 8. My faculty supervisor and I have completed the CMAT 492/497 Project Proposal Form (located at the end of this packet).

_____ 9. I have submitted a CMAT 492/497 Project Proposal to the Department Chair so that he/she can assess my materials and determine if I am eligible to register for CMAT 492/497.

_____ 10. I received my registration code from the Department Chair and have registered for the course on GullNet.
As stated earlier, CMAT 492 and CMAT 497 offer the opportunity for different forms of inquiry. In CMAT 492, the student investigates a topic area of interest to learn more about. On the other hand, in CMAT 497, the student actually engages in performing original research. As a result, the types of papers associated with each option differ.

For CMAT 492, the student might produce a traditional research paper or a critical analysis of a text or group of texts. In contrast, for CMAT 497, the student would produce a more formal, scholarly work complete with a literature review, and descriptions of methodology, results, and conclusions. Supporting data might be presented in tables and charts, and exhibits containing data collection instruments such as coding sheets and surveys may be included as well.

Descriptions of sample assignments for CMAT 492 and CMAT 497 are presented in the next sections.
Sample Instructions for a Summary and Critique of Directed Readings

The following paper might be written for CMAT 492. It is designed for students who compile a reading list to learn about a particular topic area and then wish to summarize and critique the works they have encountered.

Give your paper a title. Start your paper with a paragraph that introduces the reader to your topic. The paragraph should define your issue and give the reader a sense of why knowledge and understanding about it is relevant for them. Provide a few specific examples of your issue to illustrate it for the reader. You only need to briefly mention them. Don’t describe them in great detail because you can assume that the reader already knows about them. You are just establishing some common ground. Then, say that your issue has been documented in several important works, and list the titles and the authors of each one. Finally, tell that you are going to summarize and critique the works.

In the body of your paper, address each of the works separately. You don’t necessarily need subheadings; however, it will be much easier for you and the reader if you deal with each work one at a time. In treating each work, first determine the main points you want to address. Isolate the arguments you feel are critical to conveying the writer’s message. Then, summarize the writer’s main points and arguments and present them in your paper. When necessary, include examples the writer uses to illustrate his/her points.

As you summarize the writer’s arguments, points, and examples, provide your own commentary. Tell when you believe the writer is making a good point and explain why you feel this way. Also, tell when you disagree and explain why.

At the end of the discussion of each work, provide a paragraph where you put the writer’s work into perspective for the reader. Explain the significance of the writer’s work and tell what it has contributed to the scholarship/discourse on your topic. Here, you will be providing your assessment of each work. Finally, this section should provide a transition to your next work. (Your last one will provide a smooth transition to the conclusion.) Don’t force these transitions, but when possible, try to make as smooth a shift as possible from one work to the next.

At the end of your paper, you will need to provide a conclusion which brings the works and your issue into perspective for the reader. Explain the significance of the writer’s work and tell what it has contributed to the scholarship/discourse on your issue. You might accomplish this by answering the following questions: Do these works address all the important aspects of my issue? If not, what have they left out? Do these works offer plausible solutions to the problems associated with my issue? If not, what problems do you see with their solutions? Finally, tell how you think your issue will ultimately play out. Will it continue? If so, what effect will it have?
Provide a page at the end entitled “References” wherein you provide bibliographical entries for each of your books. Keep direct quotes to a minimum. Instead, summarize the authors’ points and put them in your own words. Then, provide your own analyses and critiques of the authors’ thoughts. In your introduction and conclusion, rely on your own words. Use a quote only if absolutely necessary. Include no more than one quote each in the introduction and the conclusion.
Introduction

Familiarize the reader with the subject you will address in your paper. Lay out the particular aspect of your topic you are researching and explain why research is needed in this area. You might refer to the subject of your study as a research problem. Also, you need to show what your research will add to the canon of knowledge on this topic and who specifically will benefit from your research.

Review of the Literature

In this section, you need to describe the research that has already been accomplished in this area and then prove how your study is original and does not simply duplicate the work that has already been done. To achieve this, you need to cite the relevant studies and briefly summarize their findings. You might also indicate if you are expanding on a previous study (or group of studies), or are embarking on a completely original approach.

Methodology

Here, you describe how you accomplished your study. You will identify the specific method you used and explain how you employed it in performing your research. Carefully go through each step you performed and describe what was involved. Be sure to describe the coding instrument you used to collect your data from the sample.

Results

In this section, you will report what you found. This section can be approached in several ways and is generally tailored to the particular project you are working on. In more quantitative studies, the data collected (frequency counts, percentages, statistics, etc.) are reported here, usually without any interpretation or discussion. Then, in another section, usually labeled “Discussion,” the implications of the findings are discussed.

For qualitative or critical textual projects, you might combine the results and discussion sections into one section called “Analysis.” (Actually, you can label these headings with your own titles that most appropriately convey what the sections contain.) Here, you would describe what you found and then evaluate your findings and explain what they imply.

Conclusion

Here, you will put your significant findings into perspective for the reader. You will identify all of your major findings and explain their implications for your topic and area of study. You will
Also explain what ramifications your findings potentially have for interested and affected partied.

If, in performing your study, you have become aware of any limitations in your methodology (it might have ignored some data), you need to inform the reader and suggest what this means about your conclusions.

Finally, you need to suggest how subsequent research might build on your study. What other research is needed in your area? What other questions about your topic need to be answered?

**Coding Sheet**

You need to include a clean copy of the coding instrument you used to collect your data as an appendix in the back of your paper.

**Tables**

You might present any numerical data collected and used in your study as a table in an appendix in the back of your paper.
Sample Syllabus for CMAT 492

Week 1  Proposal for Project
Week 2  Approve reading List
Week 3  Discuss readings
Week 4  Discuss readings
Week 5  Discuss Readings
Week 6  Discuss readings
Week 7  Outline of Paper
Week 8  Draft of Introduction
Week 9  Draft of First Half of Body of Paper
Week 10  Draft of Second Half of Paper
Week 11  Discuss Revisions
Week 12  Draft of Conclusion
Week 13  Draft of Entire Paper
Week 14  Discuss Revisions
Week 15  Final paper
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proposal for Research Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ten Sources with Summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Draft of Introductions; All Sources Collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Draft of Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Guidelines for Collecting Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Coding Instrument; Sample Collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Draft of Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Entire Sample Collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mid-semester Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Draft of First Half of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Draft of Second Half of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Complete Draft of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Draft of Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Draft of Entire Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Final Paper Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You must meet with a faculty member in the area of your proposed study, discuss your planned project, have the professor agree to supervise you, complete the CMAT 492/497 Project Proposal Form, and give the completed form to the Department Chair. Available faculty members and their specialties are listed below:

**Vinita Agarwal**
Strategic Communication  
Research Methods  
Public Health Communication

**David Burns**
Electronic Journalism  
New Media Production  
International Reporting

**James Burton**
Media Industries  
New Media and Convergence  
Media and Cinema Studies  
Cultural Memory

**Jennifer Cox**
New Media/Online Journalism  
Newsroom Culture  
Community Journalism

**Lori Dewitt**
Small Group Communication  
Religious/Ideological Communication  
Intercultural Communication  
Interpersonal Communication

**Chrys Egan**
Freedom of Speech and Media Effects  
Interpersonal Communication  
Research Methods and Academic Publishing  
Alternative Magazine Writing and Music Promotion

**Bryan Horikami**
Communication Theory  
Intercultural Communication  
Interpersonal Communication

**Frances Kendall**
Mass Communication  
Broadcast Communication

**Michael Moeder**
Mass Communication  
Media Criticism and Analysis  
Writing for Broadcasting

**Jody Morrison**
Interpersonal Communication  
Discourse Analysis

**Darrell Mullins**
Interpersonal Communication  
Rhetoric in the Popular Culture  
Organizational Communication

**Darrell Newton**
Media and Cinema Studies  
Mass Communication  
Globalized Media  
Multicultural Affairs

**Paul Scovell**
Organizational Communication  
Communication Technology  
Event and Conference Planning  
Parliamentary Procedure  
Social Media
Andrew Sharma
Television/Radio Production
International Media
Advertising

Haven Simmons
Journalism
Broadcasting
Public relations
Mass Communication
Media and Government

Melany Trenary
Instructional Communication
Interpersonal Communication

Amanda Welch-Hamill
Public Speaking
Human Communication Studies
Arts Administration
CMAT 492/CMAT 497 INDEPENDENT STUDY/INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
PROPOSAL OUTLINE

In order to be considered for CMAT 492/497, you must write a proposal of 2-4 pages organized as follows:

1. **Topic/Purpose:** What is the research project about? What question(s) will the project address? Why is the project worthwhile?

2. **Existing Knowledge:** What do you already know about this topic? For CMAT 496, this will require the specification of existing theory or concepts that are relevant. For CMAT 492, the same may apply or it might be that there is relevant practical knowledge that the student has acquired through experience.

3. **Method:** What is the process for the project? In other words, how will you attempt to answer the questions articulated for number one above? **NOTE:** If the project requires the approval of the Salisbury University Committee on Human Research, be sure to acknowledge that in this section.

*Attach your proposal to the form below with appropriate signatures and submit it to the Department Chair.*

---

NAME___________________________________ PHONE____________________________
EMAIL_______________________________________________________________________

CMAT 492 INDEPENDENT STUDY _____ CMAT 497 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH _____

SEMESTER____________________ YEAR_________ CREDITS (1-4)_______________

TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

PROJECT ADVISOR SIGNATURE_________________________________ APPROVED _____
                                                      NOT APPROVED _____

DEPARTMENT CHAIR SIGNATURE_________________________________ APPROVED _____
                                                      NOT APPROVED _____