

**Graduate Programs Intent to Register Form for:
Independent Study 499
Thesis 590
MCW 579, 580, and 589**

Northwestern
SCHOOL OF
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Once you have finalized your proposal with your faculty adviser, please fill out this form completely, save it to your computer, and email it to your graduate adviser along with your faculty adviser's email approval and a copy of your proposal. Once SPS confirms that all proposal requirements have been met, you will be registered in your course. The deadline for the completion of this process is two weeks before the beginning of the quarter. Please check the SPS graduate calendar for current deadlines.

Student Name: _____

Student ID#: _____ Program: _____

Email address: _____

- 499: Independent Study MCW 579: Teaching Practicum Quarter/year: _____
- 590: Thesis MCW 580: Publishing Practicum
- MCW 589: Thesis Research

Faculty Sponsor Name: _____

Second Reader (if applicable): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

--To be completed by academic adviser--

SPS Approval: _____ Date: _____

For Independent Study: Attach a description of work to be completed, including a reading list, assignments and papers to be submitted, assessment criteria, and percentage of the final grade comprised by each assignment or paper. Creative writing (MA or MFA) students need only state the number of pieces being worked on, number of revisions, and estimated page length. All proposals must be approved by your faculty sponsor before registration can be completed.

For Thesis/Capstone Projects: Attach a complete copy of your proposal. See below for proposal guidelines. All proposals must be approved by your faculty sponsor before registration can be completed. If you have identified a second reader, include his or her name on this form. For program-specific guidelines, refer to the SPS student **handbook**, your program Blackboard site, or your faculty sponsor.

For MCW 578 and 580 Practica: Attach a description of work to be completed, including a reading list, assignments and papers to be submitted, assessment criteria, and percentage of the final grade comprised by each assignment or paper. Attach approval email from the MCW faculty sponsor. All proposals must be approved by your faculty sponsor before registration can be completed.

Guidelines for Writing your Thesis or Capstone Proposal

Every master's degree student at SPS must write a final thesis or do a capstone project. Your paper or project is meant to represent the culmination of your experience in your program and must demonstrate your mastery of the entire curriculum. In most cases, this final project is a thesis paper built on research you conduct independently. In some programs, however, an applied capstone project is appropriate. A capstone may take many forms, including a work of art, a database, or a business plan. Please discuss the possibilities with your program's faculty director or one of your instructors. The following guidelines apply to students in all programs except Creative Writing (MA and MFA).

Your proposal is a summary of what you plan to do for your thesis or capstone. It needs to convince your faculty advisor that you have a clear research question or project idea, that you have a reasonable plan for conducting your research, and that the project can be completed within a manageable time frame. Below is a list of items you should cover in your proposal. Please note that the final proposal may cover these items in any order and may be written as a continuous narrative, if you wish.

- **Title:** A working title that adequately describes the purpose of the paper or project.
- **Guiding research question:** A statement of the question you are trying to answer or the problem you hope to solve with your research.
- **Significance:** A description of your intended audience and how it will benefit from your project or paper.
- **Methodology:** Describe: (1) the information and resources you will need to develop your argument and complete your project, (2) how you plan to collect the relevant data, (3) your plan for analysis, and (4) how the analysis relates to your topic or research question.
- **IRB approval:** If you are planning to conduct interviews, surveys, or involve people in your research in any way, you must contact Northwestern's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before you finalize your proposal. Your final proposal should include a statement indicating IRB approval or waiver.
- **Preliminary bibliography:** A properly formatted bibliography containing your key research sources. Your bibliography must include at least 4 peer-reviewed sources. If you are uncertain about whether an article you are considering is peer-reviewed, consult Ulrich's International Periodical Directory through the Northwestern Library website. Please note that Ulrich's refers to peer-reviewed sources as "refereed" and these articles are distinguished with a special symbol (a referee's jersey).

Please don't rush through the proposal phase. A thoughtful and well-written proposal will help ensure that your project is completed as efficiently as possible and that it will have lasting value to you and others in your field.

We expect the final proposal will be about 1-2 pages long.

Creative Writing Proposal Guidelines

Creative writing (MA or MFA) students need only state the number of pieces being worked on, number of revisions, and estimated page length.