Independent Study (I.S.) Handbook
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
(Revised January 2012)

Table of Contents

Part A: Rules and Procedures

I. General College Regulations concerning Independent Study (I.S.) 1

II. Human Subjects and Human Subjects Review Committee 1

III. The Relationship between Junior I.S. and Senior I.S. 2

IV. Advisors 3

V. Form of the I.S. Thesis 5

VI. The Oral Defense and the Role of the Second Reader 5

VII. Evaluation and Grading of Senior I.S. 7

VIII. Resources 8

Part B: Content

I. Selecting a Topic 9

II. Crafting Good Research Questions and Hypotheses 10

III. Organization of Chapters 11

IV. Writing the Introduction to the Independent Study Project 12

V. The Literature Review 13

VI. The Theory Chapter 14

VII. Methods 15

VIII. Findings, Analysis, and Discussion 16

XIX. Conclusion 18

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Title Page 20

Part A: Rules and Procedures

I. General College Regulations concerning Independent Study

Two copies of the thesis are due in the Registrar's Office by 5:00 p.m. on the first day of classes following Spring Recess or four weeks prior to the end of classes for Spring Semester, whichever date is sooner. Any delay in turning in the thesis automatically gives the student a grade of "I" for the thesis. The conditions for changing the "I" to a passing grade will be established by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement after consultation with the student's advisor. The "I" automatically becomes an "NC" two weeks after the deadline for the submission of the thesis unless prior approval for an extension of the "I" has been given by the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement, after a formal petition by the student. No thesis turned in after the deadline will receive a grade of Honors without the unanimous vote of the department and the approval of the Dean of Curriculum and Academic Engagement.

Departments and advisors may impose deadlines for the purpose of commenting and advising when the work is in progress. The student should not expect editorial comment, guidance, and advice on drafts of the thesis or versions of the project submitted after the eighth week of classes of the semester in which the student enrolls in I.S. 452. Any advising at all in the final few weeks before the thesis is due in the Registrar's Office will be made on the basis of individual arrangements between student and advisor.

In addition to the two bound copies of their thesis that they submit to the Registrar's Office, students must also submit an electronic copy of their thesis to the Administrative Coordinator of the Sociology and Anthropology Department. This electronic copy should be submitted after the oral defense, and can be submitted via email or on a CD.

II. Human Subjects and Human Subjects Review Committee

All research with human subjects at The College of Wooster must be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) for approval. (Research on non-human primates must be reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.) The primary purpose of this review is to ensure that students develop and maintain an ethical framework for all research. Please refer to the HSRC web page for further information (www3.wooster.edu/psychology/hsrc/). In addition, students may want to review the statements on ethics for both sociology (www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm) and anthropology (www.aaanet.org/profdev/ethics/).

Students must receive approval of their HSRC proposal before beginning research. Research conducted prior to the senior year (e.g., during a semester abroad, or during the summer preceding Senior Independent Study) must have received HSRC approval or it cannot be included in your Senior I.S.

Students should allow at least 2 weeks for HSRC to consider their proposal. Frequently the HSRC will have questions on your initial submission, and may require clarification and modification of the initial proposal. Make sure to consult your advisor throughout this process and in all communications with HSRC.

There are three levels of review employed by the HSRC – *Exempt*, *Expedited*, and *Full Review*. There is a specific proposal form for each level, and these are available on the HSRC website - http://www3.wooster.edu/psychology/hsrc/ The factors that determine which level of review is appropriate for a thesis are the nature of the population being studied, and the nature of the information gathered from this population.

Exempt from Review
Few of the research projects undertaken in our department are exempt from the HSRC review, but some might be. For example, if you are using existing data sets, documents, records or other information publically available or anonymously recorded, such research is exempt from HSRC review. In addition, all interview/survey/observational research on appointed or elected public officials, or candidates for public office, is exempt. The collection of oral histories is also exempt from review, but any analysis of oral histories must be reviewed. In conducting oral history research, great care should be taken to protect the contributors to the research and to treat their stories with respect.

Expedited Review
Much of the research students undertake in our department can be submitted for expedited HSRC review. This includes research where your data are collected anonymously through surveys, interviews, or participant observation, and the data does not include information that could put the subjects at risk.

Full Review
If your research involves any of the following, it will most likely require a full review by the HSRC committee:

- individuals under the age of 18
- pregnant women
- prisoners
- seriously ill persons
- mentally or cognitively compromised adults
- behavior by your contributor that could lead to criminal or civil liability (e.g., drugs, alcohol use, sexual behavior) and/or where your research could potentially damage your contributor's financial standing, employability, and/or reputation

III. The Relationship between Junior I.S. and Senior I.S.

Officially, students fulfill their Junior Independent Study requirement when they complete Anthropology 352: Contemporary Anthropological Theory (for Anthropology majors) or Sociology 350: Classical Social Theory or 351: Contemporary Social Theory (for Sociology majors). In reality, however, we have infused Junior I.S. into two classes--the theory class and the department's required research methods course (SOAN 240). In the research methods class, students are asked to write a literature review and a methods prospectus on a research question of their choosing. In the theory classes, they are asked to apply theory to their research question. Ideally, students will work on the same research question in both classes, but we understand that some may choose to change if, for example, they discover that their question is not as compelling as it appeared at the outset.

Junior I.S. is essentially a small Senior I.S. without the data collection and analysis. Most of the time, Junior I.S. also involves the use of fewer sources and less depth of theoretical analysis. We encourage students to carry over their Junior I.S. topic to Senior I.S. It is likely that this will involve major revision and expansion of the chapters, but it will save students a good deal of work as the same sources can be used. Additionally, copying parts of one's Junior I.S. into one's Senior I.S. is **not** considered plagiarism (unless of course the Junior I.S. was plagiarized). Students always have the option of doing their Senior I.S. on a completely new topic.

As a final note, we urge students to pay close attention in their coursework as all of the department's classes are designed to teach the skills necessary for Junior and Senior I.S.

IV. Advisors

Assignment of Advisors
Your I.S. advisor is not necessarily the same as your academic advisor. The assignment of I.S. advisors is the responsibility of the department Chair, after consultation with the student and faculty, and consideration of the topic the student wishes to investigate. Assignment of an advisor will be made in the first week of the semester, and will take into account: (a) the student's preferences; (b) the I.S. advising and teaching load of each faculty member; and (c) the faculty members' areas of expertise.

Your I.S. advisor is considered the ―first reader" of your thesis, and a ―second reader" will be assigned after the I.S. is completed. As with the first reader, assignments of the second reader will be made according to student preference, faculty availability, and faculty expertise.

Obligations of students and faculty

1. The responsibilities of the advisor are as follows:

    a. To encourage the student to attempt an inquiry or project of appropriate rigor and scope given the strengths and limitations of the student's academic background, the time available, and the College's and the student's access to resources (e.g., library, computer, field work facilities, contacts, etc.);

    b. To advise the student toward the successful completion of the chosen project, meeting the general College specifications as interpreted by the department;

    c. To assist with the editing of the thesis according to the following guidelines:

        1. On all drafts of the thesis, the advisor is responsible for indicating to the student typical errors of logic, style, mechanics, etc. which may occur. The advisor is not required to edit and proofread these drafts paragraph by paragraph and sentence by sentence. The editing of any draft by the advisor does not imply the ultimate acceptability of the thesis.

        2. Your advisor is not a proofreader, and it is not part of the advisor's job to struggle through improperly prepared drafts. The ―rough drafts" that you submit to your First Reader must be carefully proofread, revised, word-processed drafts with complete and accurate source citations.

3. If you want your advisor to read a draft of your entire thesis before you submit it to the Registrar, you must provide that draft to your advisor at least 1 full week before the beginning of Spring Break.

4. After the completed I.S. thesis is submitted and evaluated, the advisor is responsible for indicating to the student any specific typographical and mechanical errors that must be corrected before the document is filed with the department.

5. Advisors are not available during college breaks. Should you wish to complete a semester of I.S. during the summer, the department cannot guarantee that there will be an advisor available for you.

2. The responsibilities of the students are as follows:

a. To take ownership of the I.S. process. We are there to guide and support you, but the final product is your own.

b. To communicate with your advisor. If you have not completed the expected work during a particular week, you must still meet with your advisor. Missing I.S. appointments may be grounds for failure on the I.S.

c. To follow through with agreed upon deadlines and expectations. Research is unpredictable, so we recognize that deadlines may need to change. But it is the responsibility of the student to manage these deadlines and communicate when it is not possible to meet them.

d. To carefully respond to advisor comments on drafts, and revise appropriately.

Double Majors

Students who are double majors will be assigned an advisor from each discipline. The nature of the meetings between advisors and the student will be determined jointly by both advisors, but it is crucial that the student be in frequent contact with both advisors. The two advisors will serve as both first and second readers of the I.S.

Students double majoring must complete a form with the Registrar outlining the requirements and expectations of both departments concerning the I.S. thesis/project:
http://www.wooster.edu/Academics/Registrar/~/media/Files/Academics/Registrar/Forms/Forms-Dean/Proposal-for-Double-Major-12-6.ashx

V. Form of the I.S

Spacing and Pagination
The finished thesis submitted to the Registrar should be double-spaced with pagesnumbered at the top and running continuously from page 1 through the appendices and bibliography. All pages before Chapter One should be in lower case Roman numerals.

Margins and Font
The margins should be no less than 1 inch and no greater than 1.25 inches (this 1.25 incorporates the space needed for binding the document). The font should be no larger than 12 point.

Printing
We encourage students to print on both sides of the paper, but remember that this means the page numbers should appear at the top right of the front page, and the top left on the back page of the paper. Please adjust your pagination accordingly.

Table of Contents
The thesis should include a Table of Contents (including Acknowledgements and Abstract, in lower case Roman Numerals) and if more than two tables, charts or maps are used, a separate List of Tables and Figures should be added immediately after the Table of Contents. Along with the Acknowledgements, Abstract, and Chapters, the Table of Contents should also list any appendices, so that the Table of Contents provides a visual outline of the entire thesis.

VI. The Oral Defense and the Role of the Second Reader

Purpose of the Second Reader
The purpose of the second reader of the I.S. thesis is to have an additional faculty member in the department examine a completed senior project. The faculty member who serves as second reader will offer a dispassionate examination of the student's completed senior project. In this regard, the second reader may be a faculty member of the department with whom the student has consulted about one or more sections of the I.S. prior to submitting the final I.S. project. Despite prior knowledge of the I.S. project, the second reader will be expected to read the completed I.S. with fresh eyes and to develop questions and comments primarily on what the student has presented in the completed I.S. Although the second reader is not expected to be an expert in the area of specialization the senior project focuses on, s/he is expected to examine the project on the basis of the scholarly standards in the respective fields of sociology or anthropology.

What to Expect in Orals
In the weeks leading to the start of Spring Break, seniors will have a conversation with their I.S. advisor about faculty members in the department they would like to consider for the second reader of their project. In the week immediately after Spring Break, the department faculty will meet to assign second readers for all completed senior projects. Although the faculty will try hard to accommodate students' requests for second readers, it will not always be possible and students are encouraged to provide their I.S. advisor with multiple choices for second readers of their projects. The results of the meeting are then posted on the department's bulletin boards for students to see who has been assigned as the second

reader of their projects. As soon as possible, students should arrange with their primary I.S. advisor and the second reader a mutually convenient time for the oral examination.

After a date and time have been set for the examination, the second reader will send to the student and the primary I.S. advisor a set of questions generated from the completed I.S. project. While there is no minimum or maximum number of questions, normally there are no more than 15 questions presented by the second reader. The focus of the questions is at the discretion of the second reader - some faculty members will focus on methodological considerations of the student's project, others on theoretical considerations, others still might focus on real-world applications and extensions of the student's project. Often the examination questions are a combination, and students should be prepared to address any question that falls within the scope of their project. The oral defense is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their expertise in the field, so students are encouraged to carefully re-read their thesis prior to the oral defense. The focus of the second reader's questions can depend on the areas s/he believes will yield the richest discussion during the oral examination and/or on areas s/he has questions about and would like for the student to elaborate on during the oral examination and/or on the second reader's own scholarly interest and expertise.

Regardless of the focus of the questions, all second readers are expected to send out questions about the completed I.S. project to the student and the primary I.S. advisor at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled oral examination. The student may email the second reader for clarification of questions, but we advise students to keep such questions to a minimum. The student is also encouraged to bring her/his copy of the completed I.S. to the oral examination with notes responding to the second reader's questions, as a way to facilitate the conversation during the examination.

The oral examination can be expected to take place in the primary advisor's office, unless otherwise stated. The student is expected to attend the oral examination on time, alert, and fully prepared. Missed oral defenses may be rescheduled at the discretion of the I.S. advisor and second reader. While many students wear business casual attire to the oral defense, there is no specific dress code for this event. Students should use common sense and dress in the way that will put them in the best frame of mind for the oral examination.

Length of Examination

The oral examination will last for 45 to 50 minutes, during which there will be no interruptions. The primary I.S. advisor will begin the examination with a few introductory remarks and s/he will usually turn to the student to provide a brief preface of how s/he became interested in the project. The conversation that follows the student's remarks will largely be between the second reader and the student based on the questions the second reader sent in advance of the examination. Based on the flow of the conversation, the second reader may sometimes veer away from the questions sent in advance. In such cases, the student will demonstrate how well s/he can think quickly on her/his feet about a topic s/he is expected to have firm grounding in. It will do the student well to bear in mind that s/he likely knows the topic at hand better than either advisor in the room and that there is no reason to be cowed by unexpected questions during the examination.

Notification of Pass/Fail

After 45-50 minutes of conversation about the I.S. project, the advisors will ask the student to step outside and away from the primary advisor's office while they decide whether the student passed or

failed the oral examination. There will be no other grade notification of the student's performance at this time. See below for the evaluation and grading process of I.S. projects beyond pass/fail.

VII. Evaluation and Grading of Senior I.S.

The two semesters of Senior I.S., SOCI/ANTH 451 and 452, are graded separately using two distinct types of grades and two distinct grading processes.

SOCI/ANTH 451Grades
No letter grade is assigned for the first semester of Senior I.S. Only grades of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (NC) are used. NOTE: An incomplete in 451 is **rare** and must be approved by the student's I.S. advisor.

SOCI/ANTH 451Grading Process
The I.S. advisor alone is responsible for determining the student's grade for SOCI/ANTH 451. In order to earn an S for SOCI/ANTH 451, students must:

- complete two chapters of their thesis (typically the Literature Review and Theory chapters), and develop a plan for collecting data, which will eventually be incorporated into the Methodology chapter.

- attend **all** weekly I.S. meetings, and to arrive for these meetings prepared to discuss the progress they have made and their plans for future work on the thesis.

SOCI/ANTH 452 Grades
The grades for SOCI/ANTH 452 are Honors, Good, Satisfactory, and NC (No Credit).

Honors: Outstanding performance on all facets of the I.S. (see Grading Process below). The grade of Honors is reserved for truly exceptional work, and is rarely awarded.

Good: Significantly above average performance on all facets of the I.S.

Satisfactory: Acceptable performance, in which weaknesses in certain facets of the I.S. are compensated by strengths in others.

NC - Seriously deficient, with no compensatory strengths in specific facets of the I.S. Students who receive a grade of NC on SOCI/ANTH 452 will need to complete the work in the following semester. Summer *may* be an option, but you may need to return the following semester. You will be reassigned an advisor, which may not be the same advisor that you worked with previously.

SOCI/ANTH 452 Grading Process
As mentioned above, students are notified whether they passed or failed SOCI/ANTH 452 shortly after the oral defense. If the thesis satisfies the requirements for passing 452, the I.S. Advisor and second reader together determine a final grade of Honors, Good, or Passing.

This grade is based on the form, content, method, and process of the written thesis, as well as the student's performance in the oral defense. Students are notified of this grade in a letter from the Chair of the department, which is usually sent on the last Friday of classes in the spring semester, after all theses have been orally defended. This letter is followed by a letter from the student's I.S. advisor, which discusses the student's performance on both the written thesis and the oral defense, and incorporates comments from the second reader.

VIII. Resources

Faculty as a Resource
While your I.S. advisor is your primary academic resource, you are encouraged to contact any member of the department whose research interests are related to your topic, or who has special expertise that is relevant to your project. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to approach faculty from other departments whose research is closely related to your topic. It is recommended that students apprise their I.S. advisor of the results of this communication with other faculty.

Copeland Fund
The Copeland Fund is specifically designated to support the Senior I.S. research, and is available both to seniors who are conducting I.S. research (the Fall Program), as well as rising seniors who plan to begin I.S. research over the summer prior to the senior year (the Spring Program). These funds can be used to subsidize domestic and international travel expenses that will enhance the student's project, such as travel to conduct interviews or surveys, or to attend appropriate conferences or meetings. The Copeland Fund can also be used to support the development of appropriate research tools, and the purchase of supplies and small pieces of equipment that will enhance the student's project. For more information, visit http://www.wooster.edu/Independent-Study/Copeland-Fund-for-Independent-Study
Copeland Fund grants are highly competitive, and students who are interested in applying for these funds should discuss their needs carefully with their I.S. advisor. The Copeland application asks students to describe their senior project, explain how assistance from the Copeland Fund will aid in the successful completion of the project, and provide an estimate of your proposed expenses. Seniors who are interested in applying for Copeland Fund grants should begin the application process early in the fall semester; Fall Program applications are usually due early in October. Rising seniors should begin work on the application early in the spring semester of their junior year; Spring Program applications are usually due early in April.

Writing Center
Located in Andrews Library, the Writing Center is a resource that helps students to think critically about the writing process, and improve their writing skills. Students who are working on their thesis can use the Writing Center for help improving the form of the thesis (e.g., grammar, syntax, organization, and citation format), but it is the student's responsibility to carefully edit and proofread the thesis. Students should not approach the Writing Center for assistance with questions concerning the content of the thesis, but should use the I.S. advisor, along with other faculty members of the department for help with such questions. For more information, visit
http://www.wooster.edu/Academics/Student-Academic-Support-Centers/writing-center

Learning Center
Located in the Rubbermaid Student Services Building, the Learning Center functions as a support service for any College of Wooster student seeking academic assistance. Its central mission is to enrich, enhance, and support students' educational experiences, including the I.S. process. Students who are having difficulty managing their time and scheduling as they work on the I.S. should seek assistance from the Learning Center. The Learning Center staff works in scheduled sessions with individual students to develop and establish strategies that promote the principles of effective learning. For more information, visit
http://www.wooster.edu/Academics/Student-Academic-Support-Centers/Learning-Center

Senior Research Symposium
Each spring The College cancels classes on one Friday in April for the Senior Research Symposium. All seniors are encouraged to deliver an oral, poster, or digital presentation of their research at this event. Students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members are invited to attend these presentations to learn about the sociological and anthropological research conducted by our seniors. This is a valuable opportunity for prospective majors to see the range of research done in our department, and to ask questions of our senior researchers. The Cooperative Research Experience (CoRE) in Andrews Library can help students develop these presentations. For more information, visit
http://www.wooster.edu/Independent-Study/Senior-Research-Symposium

Part B: Content

I. Selecting a Topic

There are many different things to consider when you are deciding on your topic:

1. Many students continue the topic they began researching with Junior I.S., but it is possible to begin a brand new project for your Senior I.S. We encourage you to choose a topic you find INTERESTING and will engaged you for a full year. Do you have a burning question or passion for something you wish to learn more about?

2. We encourage you to think about how your project may relate to your future career goals and plans post-Wooster. For example, do you aspire to work for a particular organization after graduation? There are many ways in which you can craft your I.S. to include research with that organization or one like it to better prepare you for obtaining a job in that field when you graduate from Wooster.

3. Select a topic that takes research in a new direction, and contributes to the existing literature in the field. How is your study unique in the body of research on that social phenomenon?

4. Your topic must be one in which you actually have access to the population you want to study. For example, while researching the role that women play in urban gangs is a valid topic, your access to these people may not be possible. Exploring such a topic during

Junior I.S. will help you identify such problems early. Gaining access to a population for research may take longer than the time you actually have for your Senior I.S. project.

5. Select a topic in which you have the appropriate background to conduct research. For instance, do not select a topic that will require extensive translation if you are unfamiliar with a particular language. Don't expect to conduct ethnography or statistical research if you have not taken classes to assist you in this type of analysis. And we discourage research in a cultural area on which you have taken no classes (or have no significant personal background).

6. In thinking about topics, you should consider the possible relationship between your research interests and off-campus study experiences. Students who plan their off-campus study program with I.S. in mind have a wealth of experiences to draw on in their research, while other students frequently become interested in particular research topics while studying off-campus.

II. Crafting Good Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

Most students start the I.S. process with a topic—a general subject area of interest. For example, a person might be interested in wedding rituals in the U.S. or in the Canadian educational system. Topics are a great starting point, but a successful I.S. requires moving from a topic to a clearly defined sociological or anthropological research question.

How is a topic different from a question? A research question is narrower and more specific than a research topic. You can tell a research question because it is a puzzle looking for an answer--it is not just an interesting phenomena or social arrangement.

Questions to ask yourself when developing a research topic:

1. Does the question deal with a topic or issue that gets me excited and interests me enough that I have my own thoughts on the topic? Do I find that I want to talk about this topic with my friends and family? To see if you have a compelling question, try asking "So what?" This will force you to assess whether or not you really care about the answer to your question.

2. Am I so emotionally invested in the topic that I am unable to frame an objective question or consider data without too many preconceptions? If yes, you should probably avoid the topic. Being interested in a topic is great—being convinced of the answer prior to the research is not.

3. What type of information do I need to answer the research question? Will this type of information be accessible to me?

4. Is the scope of this information reasonable (e.g., can I really research this question in 6 months?)

5. What sources will have the type of information that I need to answer the research question (journals, books, Internet resources, government documents, people)? Can I access these sources?

6. Has my question already been answered? If yes, do I have a unique take on the question? A unique take could be doing research on a new population, or gathering more current data than is currently available.

7. Is my question either sociological or anthropological? Sometimes students are interested in questions that are more psychological in nature—try to remember that our fields do look at individuals, but generally only in the context of social groups. Anthropological questions tend to focus on practices within a particular society, but the Literature Review and Theory chapters should provide a cross-cultural perspective by considering such practices in other cultures and/or time periods.

8. Is my question only descriptive in nature? Descriptive questions are addressed in our disciplines but they must be combined with analysis. One way to help find an analytical question is to start your research question with the words ―Why" or ―How." A ―What" question tends to be more descriptive—an excellent kind of question for a journalist. However, social scientists are interested in interpreting and understanding our world, *not just describing it*. Your question could have two parts: a descriptive part and an analytical part. For example, you might ask whether men and women have different reasons for having children (descriptive) and then go on to use theory to analyze why the genders feel the same or different. In anthropology, you may be attempting to describe a particular cultural practice, but you should also be trying to understand it theoretically or in the context of the cultural/social/historical fabric of the society.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses (using theory and literature to make predictions about the relationships between the variables in your research question) are an important step for many sociologists and anthropologists. Researchers who use hypotheses are making educated and informed guesses about the answer to their research question. Hypotheses help to direct a researcher's attention and they take advantage of prior research on a topic. Not all sociologists and anthropologists use them however. In inductive research, for example, researchers do not begin their projects with preconceived ideas about the outcome. In contrast, many types of deductive quantitative research use explicit hypotheses to help guide their data analysis. Many qualitative researchers have hypotheses that they test as well. It is important that students who engage in hypothesis testing state their hypotheses clearly. This is often done in the methods section, but could appear elsewhere in the I.S.

III. Organization of Chapters

Your I.S. thesis must be clearly presented, and should include: the purpose of your I.S. project; the social and cultural context for the research; the research questions you are asking; the theoretical and empirical literature which you are examining; the theoretical assumptions you are making; the methodology or approach to the topic you have chosen; your data/findings and analysis; and your

conclusion. To fulfill all these aspects of the I.S., theses typically consist of six chapters in the following order:

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Literature Review
Chapter 3: Theory
Chapter 4: Methodology
Chapter 5: Results
Chapter 6: Conclusion

While the thesis is divided into chapters, keep in mind that this is an integrated project, and you should develop that sense of integration by editing and revising your thesis so that the early chapters reflect the research that you conducted later in the process. For instance, it is common for students to revise parts of the Literature Review and/or Theory chapters of their thesis once they have developed their methodology and begun to collect and interpret the data they have collected. You should consult with your advisor to determine the best organization for your I.S. project.

IV. Writing the Introduction to the Independent Study Project

Purpose
The introduction is the first impression the reader has of your project. This is where you draw the reader into your project and make her want to learn more. There are several acceptable ways to draw in a reader, which is called the ―hook" (see below), but regardless of how you do it, you will need to state a clear thesis for your project in the introduction.

The Research Question
The research question can be in the form of a thesis statement, in which you state clearly what your project is about. For example:

> This research project examines the educational achievement patterns of second-generation Mexican-American children from 1990 to 2010.

Or, you might use a problem statement that would read something like this:

> Second-generation Mexican American children have lower educational achievement patterns than their white-American peers. Many researchers attribute the lower achievement patterns of these students to the interference of the students' home language with the language they are required to use in school. These scholars believe that bilingual instruction in school will significantly narrow the educational gap between Mexican-American and white-American students. The purpose of this project is to investigate the effectiveness of bilingual instruction on the educational achievement patterns of second-generation Mexican American students.

A thesis can also be phrased as a hypothesis, which might read like the following:

Second-generation Mexican American students who participate in bilingual instruction have higher educational patterns than their second-generation Mexican American peers who do not participate in bilingual instruction.

The "Hook"
The ―hook" is the way you grab the reader's attention and make her want to read on. This device is almost invariably found at the beginning of the introduction, and it can be done in a variety of ways. Examples of hooks are provided below, but you should not feel limited by these examples. There are other ways to engage a reader, and we encourage you to work with your advisor to determine one that is most appropriate for your project.

A vivid example
A description
A striking statistic
A quotation
A short dialog
Questions

Contribution of Your Research to the Discipline
The introduction should also anticipate the ―So what?" question. That is, you should explain clearly how your research is relevant to the scholarly field in which you are writing – either anthropology or sociology. Do not assume that it is readily apparent to the reader why your research is important; you will need to make a case for its importance. For example, the purpose of your work may be to duplicate results from a published study with a population that is categorically different from the population(s) in the previous study. Or, you might set out to refute the findings of a previous study. You might also use your study to highlight an important gap in the literature that your work can help fill. Whatever the rationale, it must have scholarly merit, and it must be clearly and succinctly stated in your introduction chapter.
Outline of Project
After you have established the importance of your topic, you will then need to provide an outline or ―roadmap" of how you have organized your research in your Independent Study project. Here is where you briefly explain the focus of each of the succeeding chapters.

V. The Literature Review

Purpose
A literature review is a ―scholarly conversation" that sociological and anthropological authors have generated about your topic, broadly understood. The central purpose of the literature review is to set the stage for your research question and your methodological approach, and to help you find a place where you can insert your scholarly voice and make a contribution to this conversation.

Sources
The majority of your sources should be empirical studies in sociology and/or anthropology. In most anthropology I.S. theses, an exploration of cross-cultural material on your topic is an important part of

your literature review. You may make the argument that it is important to include studies from another discipline such as psychology, political science, literary critiques, cultural studies, education, etc.

There is no magic number of sources that must be examined, but the literature review needs to show an awareness of the key sources that relate to your topic. Sometimes several bodies of literature are relevant to your topic, and you should explain *why* you chose to include these particular sources in your literature review.

Treatment of Sources
Your review of the core literature surrounding your topic must contain a discussion of the authors' methods, the population studied, and their major findings. You should include a comparative discussion of these studies (for instance, how have they changed over time? What themes emerge in multiple studies and how are they treated? Why might there be contradictory findings?).

VI. The Theory Chapter

Purpose
Most theses have a distinct theory chapter, although some theses may combine the theoretical and literature review sections of the thesis. The overall purpose of the theory section of your thesis is to provide the lens, or theoretical framework, through which you will address your research question. More specifically, the theoretical framework you develop in your thesis will help you to: frame the question you seek to answer; organize the empirical evidence that you will use in answering this question; and interpret your findings in a meaningful manner. You should therefore take care in developing the theoretical framework that is well suited to your research topic, and be sure to refer to this theoretical framework throughout the thesis. For instance, in your discussion of your findings you should refer back to the theory chapter, and interpret your findings in light of the perspectives examined in the theory chapter.

Primary Sources
In most cases, students combine several sociological and/or anthropological theories in creating an integrated theoretical framework that is appropriate to their research question. To determine what theories are relevant to your topic, you should consider what key sociological and/or anthropological concepts your study will employ (e.g., inequality, authenticity, masculinity, power and discipline, cultural capital, structural violence, systems of exchange, ideas of family/motherhood), and identify those theorists who have developed those concepts. In this regard, it is helpful to consider the theoretical approaches used by the authors you discussed in your literature review.

You need not review all the writings of every theorist discussed in your thesis, and may concentrate on those aspects of a theorist's writings that are appropriate to your topic. However, you should avoid relying on brief excerpts from anthologies, and should instead examine the relevant primary writings of each theorist in order to develop a sound understanding of the theories.

Secondary Sources
It is also highly recommended that students examine and engage some of the secondary literature on the theories they employ in their thesis, particularly those secondary sources that apply the theory to the area

of your research. For example, if you are using conflict theory in a sociology thesis on gender roles, you should not only examine primary sources of conflict theory, such as Marx and Lewis Coser, but also discuss some secondary literature that applies those theorists' work to gender issues. Or if you are using Marcel Mauss's theory of "gift exchange" in an anthropology thesis on certain economic practices in a given culture, you should not only examine Mauss's *The Gift*, but should also examine some of the secondary literature on Mauss's work that is appropriate to your topic. Engaging such secondary theoretical sources will deepen your understanding of the primary theoretical writings, and help you develop language that clearly demonstrates such understanding.

Treatment of Sources
Each theory that you include in your theory chapter/section should reveal a specific facet of your research question, and you should explain why each theoretical perspective is appropriate for your thesis, and how the theories relate to one another. While particular theories may not explicitly or directly relate to your topic, you should offer an interpretation of such theories that clearly demonstrates their relevance to your thesis. This interpretive work is the creative dimension of your theory chapter/discussion, and is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your grasp of the theoretical sources.

VII. Methods

Determining the Appropriate Method for Your Project
In sociological and anthropological research the expectation is that a researcher's question will drive his or her choice of methods, not vice versa. For example, we would discourage students from choosing participant observation as a method and then trying to find a question that would be appropriate to explore in that way. The fit between a research question and its methods is so important that we expect you to discuss it in the methods section of your I.S. Questions you will want to consider are: How did your methods follow from your research question? How were your methods more appropriate for answering your question than other common sociological/anthropological methods? Have you considered the benefits and drawbacks of the methods you employ in your study?

At the same time that we urge you to choose your methods based on your research question, we also suggest EXTREME CAUTION in the use of any methods for which you do not have coursework or training. For example, some students opt not to take the department's statistics course and then decide that they want to conduct a survey for Senior I.S. Similarly, a student might not take the ethnography course and decide later to conduct an ethnographic project. While faculty members are available for consultation, they cannot be expected to teach course material outside of the classroom. Students should think carefully about their course selection so that they have a broad range of methods training and are fully prepared to embark on their I.S. research, wherever it might take them.

A key challenge in I.S. research (or any research with humans) is negotiating access to a research site. In addition to getting clearance from Human Subjects at the College, you may have to apply for access (or further human subjects permissions) to conduct research in places like schools, churches, prisons, and child care centers. This can take a long time. Some places do not require a formal application but it may still be very time consuming to get access or arrange logistics. Students should note that local institutions hold many possibilities for research, however they are often unable to accommodate requests because so many Wooster students have done research there before. Begin your access negotiations

early and with careful consultation with your advisor. Be sure to include your advisor in any communications with potential field sites. Students should also remember that they are representing The College of Wooster and that their actions can have ramifications for future students who might want to access the same field sites.

In your research methods classes, you have learned about a wide range of anthropological and sociological methods. These include, but are not limited to, surveys, interviews (individual, group, and focus group), observation and participant observation, content analysis, secondary data analysis, archival and museum collection analysis. It is beyond the scope of the I.S. Handbook to describe these methods in any detail. Students should review their books and notes from their methods classes and consult with their advisors. It should be noted that students who conduct interviews should fully transcribe them and—if not conducted in English—should translate them. Whether or not transcripts should be included in the final product is a matter for students and advisors to decide in each individual case. Students must describe the implementation of their method(s) in detail (e.g., How did you contact the ―gate keeper" who controls access to the population you want to study?), and also describe the process they used to collect data.

Ethical Considerations in Developing and Employing the Methodology
As described above (Part A, Section II), all students who use human subjects must receive HSRC approval prior to conducting any research. If there are changes to your methodology over time, you must request a ―modification for your study" from the HSRC. The process of obtaining HSRC approvals (and modifications) should be described in the methods section of your I.S.

Ethics is a complex and ongoing process/conversation within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. It does not end with the HSRC process. Your methods section should address a wide range of ethical issues as they pertain to and are appropriate for your project. It should also describe any ethical challenges that emerged and how you handled them. The protection of our research subjects is paramount. Think carefully about how to protect privacy and confidentiality—especially given the nature of a small liberal arts college in a small town. For example, you should not identify your contributors to anyone; to do so is a *serious* breach of research ethics. You should also not present data you collect on social media sites, like Facebook or YouTube; this may be a *serious* breach of research ethics and/or confidentiality/anonymity, *unless you obtain permission to post such data in your consent form*. If you plan to take photos, video, or audio recordings, this must be described in your HSRC application and you must describe all ways in which you plan to share the data with others.

For further information on ethics in sociology and anthropology, please see the American Sociological Association and American Anthropological Society websites.

http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm
http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm

VIII. Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

In general, the format for the presentation of data depends largely on the type(s) of information that you have collected (i.e., ethnographic data, content analysis, quantitative results, etc.). The data and analysis chapters/sections can be kept separate, but in some cases it is useful to combine them. Generally, keep in

mind that the presentation of data is descriptive, while the analysis is interpretive. In all cases, it is important to summarize your data and demonstrate how you are making sense of the information. Below is a list of the expectations for four of the most common types of data.

Quantitative Data (i.e., survey, quantitative content analysis, existing data sets)

1. Descriptive statistics (merely a description of data) are necessary but not sufficient for a passing grade in I.S. You should move beyond descriptive elements (e.g., mean, median, mode) to explanatory techniques (e.g., crosstabs).

2. Inferential statistics (in which you consider whether you are able to draw conclusions statistically from your sample to your target population) are required.

3. For data you will discuss directly, tables should be included within the text. Tables you will not discuss directly should appear in appendices. For table formatting, see the style guides of the American Sociological Association (http://www2.asanet.org/pubs/asaguidelinesnew.pdf) or the American Anthropological Association (http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf)

Interviews

1. If you have conducted interviews, you should provide profiles of your participants while maintaining their anonymity, typically through the use of pseudonyms (this could also be done in the methods chapter). One should give a sense of who this population is, and the cultural context within which you conducted the interviews.

2. You should identify themes that emerge within these data and use supporting direct quotations to demonstrate the topics. If you are working in a language other than English, quotations should be presented both in the original language and in translation.

3. Explain any variations in the responses. Quantitative analysis may be useful in this case (e.g., ~~"~~seven participants indicated X").

Observation and participant-observation (ethnographic research)

1. If you have done ethnographic research, you should describe your field location and cultural context in detail, and your position in relation to the ethnographic environment.

2. Mapping can be quite useful for understanding how a space is organized.

3. One should discuss in detail the participants in your study and identify any salient features (e.g., sex ratio, or age range, of the population studied), and the interactions among participants that have been observed. All of your senses should inform these observations, such as direct quotes from participants..

4. Concrete examples from your observations and/or participation should be included as evidence of your findings and conclusions.

Content analysis

1. The presentation must demonstrate a systematic analysis of the data, typically in the form of a matrix with rows and columns, or some other form of tallying.

2. When relevant, both manifest and latent themes should be discussed, with specific examples.

3. One should discuss the frequency of themes in the data, with a substantial examination of the context of their appearance.

Alternative presentations of data should be discussed with your advisor. Appendices can be used to display primary or supplementary data that do not require presentation in the main text. In general, it is not necessary to include transcripts in your appendices. The forms used to invite individuals to participate in your study, and a list of interview questions or the interview script, should be placed in appendices. If you do include such material in appendices, make sure that respondents are not identified in these documents.

The discussion of data must connect with the review of the relevant literature and theory. In addition, make it clear how your findings speak to broader issues within your discipline. Good examples of data presentation and analysis can be found in previous I.S. theses. The department has some copies that students may examine, and use for guidance in shaping their theses.

IX. Conclusion

The purpose of the conclusion is to wrap up your project in a logical and cohesive fashion by bringing closure to the full scope of ideas presented in the report. It is often a good idea to revisit the introduction chapter/section of the project so as to make explicit linkages between the two sections to ensure a continuity of ideas. This does *not* mean, however, that you should reword the introduction in the conclusion.

The conclusion can be written as a stand alone chapter or it can be a part of the discussion of your results. Either way, it must incorporate a summary of the major findings of your study. Additionally, you may want to include at least one of the following:

- An evaluation of the scholarly significance of your findings.
- A discussion of the limitations of the study (which you can also do in the methods chapter).
- A discussion of what you might do if you were to extend and/or expand the project.
- A discussion of possible policy implications of the study.
- Linkages to a current social issue or event.

In the conclusion, you should **NOT** do the following:

- Introduce new data that you collected but did not discuss in your findings.
- Restate the introduction.

Appendix A: Sample Title Page

The College of Wooster

"Green" Consumerism versus Environmental Activism: An Investigation of the Relationship between Environmentally Conscious Consumption and Other Environmentally Motivated Behavior

by Jennifer Jones

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Independent Study Thesis
Senior Thesis

Supervised by: Thomas Tierney

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
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