Working with me on LIS 699 Directed Research/ Readings:
My Philosophy and Guidelines

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A Little Background

When I was a MLS and Ph.D. student, some of my favorite courses were the directed studies I took. I truly enjoyed those classes because the professors allowed me to do research on my own in areas that excited me. My first directed readings course as a graduate student was with Indiana University Professor Howard Rosenbaum. He allowed me to do a study of print culture during the Holocaust along with another student. While MLS students, we gave a presentation on that study at our first national conference, which helped me land my first professional position. We later published part of that project, as a chapter in Jonathan Rose's *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation*. I had many more experiences like that as doctoral student since PhD. work is all about independent research.

I owe a lot to those professors who allowed me to conduct independent work, and want to carry on the tradition, and to encourage student exploration. Since coming to the University of Hawaii I've had students explore the following topics with me as Directed Readings/ Research:

- The History of Law Librarianship in Hawaii
- Indigenous Librarianship
- Intellectual Freedom and Indigenous Librarianship
- Conducting Oral History Research with Hibakusha
- Theory and Archival Identity
- Archival Theory from an Anthropological Perspective
- The Japanese American Veteran's Archival Collection at UH
- Special Collections Librarianship
- Japan's Publishing "Crisis"
- Models for LIS Education in Tibet
- Public Libraries in Korea during the Japanese Occupation
- Jazz Music Librarianship (with Gregg Geary's assistance)

I've learned something from each paper a student wrote under me. It has been a pleasure to be a part of new discoveries, but I've also had a few disappointments; such as students who create incompletes; leave things to the very last minute; or don't spend enough quality time on the project. To be honest I've had a few times that I wanted to stop offering 699s because they caused such frustrations. I doubt UHM administration would mind as I've been told that there is little reward in terms of tenure/ promotion or other benefits for faculty who offer 699s. It certainly does not impact my salary.

That said, I still want to continue to offer 699s, but want to avoid the heartache and stress, so I created the following guidelines to help you consider doing a 699 with me. These guidelines were greatly inspired by my ICS colleague Philip Johnson's "User Guide for ICS 499 and ICS 699 Courses." Many of the following passages are direct quotes from his excellent guide. After all, why mess with perfection?

Independent Study and Self-Motivation
"An important thing to understand is that these courses are independent study. That means that I expect self-discipline far beyond what I normally require in a classroom. I expect you to be self-motivated, to have a passion for the topic, and to jump in and work hard on it." I should not have to remind you to send updates or papers. Please do not consider a 699 with me if you need such oversight, as I don't have the time.

Expected Work Hours
The LIS Program expects that you will complete "sixty (60) hours of study and/or research for each semester hour of credit." That means you should expect to spend about 12 hours each week on the 699 if you take it for 3 credits.

Meetings
"I don't have any rigid requirements regarding meetings. You can meet with me as much or as little as you feel the need. Most students meet with me more in the beginning of the semester to get started, then less during the middle, and then more again near the end when they're finishing up." I post my office hours online, but you should make an appointment with me if you expect to take more than 15 minutes, which would be understandable. If we meet regularly you should prepare a brief agenda of topics that you want to discuss (in the order of importance).

Updates
In order to keep you on track and to guide your learning, I am following Professor Johnson's idea of requiring weekly updates by e-mail or hard copy. Your update "should contain the following:

1. A description of what you've accomplished during the prior week.
2. How many hours (roughly) you've worked this past week.
3. What you intend to accomplish during the next week."
4. Progress update on the products you are creating for the 699
5. Other questions or comments

Please label your report "Update, #" to keep us both on track.

(Quoting Johnson): "I recognize that there are some periods during the semester (midterms) when things just pile up and you can't work on your independent study project as much. Or at all. When this happens, don't lie to me. Just send me an email saying, "I didn't get a chance to work at all this week on this project." Remember that the amount of time you work should average out to about [4] hours per credit hour for the

whole semester. Thus, it is entirely possible that you'll only work 13 out of the 16 weeks of the semester, but still put in more than enough time to succeed."

"That said, I only enter into independent study arrangements with students who I believe are reasonably productive. If I get an email from you in which you state that you worked 40 hours last week, but there's no significant change in the state of your work products, then you won't actually get "credit" for the 40 hours with respect to your grade. I've never actually had this happen."

"The biggest mistake some students make is to start working, get behind, and then avoid sending me an email for weeks at a time. Don't do that. Send me an email, confess your sins, and ask forgiveness. If you keep communicating with me about your situation, in most cases we'll work something out that is agreeable to both of us. One of the advantages of an independent study is flexibility. And school is stressful enough without having to avoid a Professor in the hallway, right?"

Topics
I've often had students tell me that they'd like to do a 699 with me, but they have no idea what topic they'd want to study. This is often a warning sign for me; because 699s should be about something you are passionate about learning more about on your own. I'm happy to meet with you during office hours to help refine a topic, but it is your job to bring me some rough ideas.

I read quite widely and have experience with different types of libraries and archives, but your topic should be something I am at least somewhat familiar with. I will generally refuse to do a 699 in an area that is in the expertise of one of my full-time LIS colleagues.

Process
You should mention your plan to do a 699 with your academic advisor, and get his/ her tentative approval before talking with me.

Once you and I agree to do a 699, and have a rough understanding of your topic, you should start working on the 699 Proposal Form. This has to be signed in the semester before we start. We can discuss this in person or you can send me an e-mail with a draft of the MS Word document attached.

This form should include:

a) Title
This should be something specific and scholarly

b) Purpose
List the scholarly or professional reasons you want to study this as a 699.

c) Activities
In this section you should explain what work will you do as part of the 699. This should be specific, such as describing if you want to meet weekly or will send me weekly e-mail reports. This should also include your timeline/ deadlines.

If you are doing a research paper or article, the deadline should include submitting a draft one month before the end of the semester so that I have time to review it and get it to you so that you can make a final draft.

If you are proposing a publishable research article, you should select a model journal and use that journal's guidelines in terms of style and page length. This should be noted under "Activities" on the form. Unless we renegotiate this later, this is like a contract, so it will impact your grade in the course if you alter from the plan.

d) Product

This should specify the product(s) you will create as a result of the 699. The three main products my students created have been some combination of the following:

1) **Research Paper not for Publication** (because the student wanted to explore a general topic). You should state the approximate or minimum number of pages and minimum number of sources (# of books, # of articles) you will examine. Please also select your citation style.

2) **Research Paper for Publication**. You should mention a specific journal, and aim for that page length and style. In terms of credit, it does not matter whether the journal accepts the article, but my grading standards would be based on my perception of the journal's publishing criteria.

3) If you simply want to explore a topic, you might send me weekly **Journals**. If you use this option, you should specify a minimum number of articles and books you will cover. Journals can be personal and written in the first person, but should be well written and organized, and contain full citations.

This list is far from exhaustive. I am open to suggestions that allow you to explore new subjects or delivery methods.

e) Evaluation Method

This states what is the basis I should use to evaluate your 699. In most cases, students repeat that I will grade the student on the basis of the journals and research paper.

f) Credit Hour(s)

You can take a 699 for 1-3 credits. Most LIS students take 3 credit 699s, but this is not mandatory.

Once we agree on the proposal form, I sign it and submit it to the LIS Program Chair who can approve or deny the 699. If the chair approves the course, the LIS Office will enter you into Banner. The office should also provide you with the CRN number for doing a 699 with me. You may then register on Banner. Be sure to drag down the desired number of credits when you register online.

Grading and Self-Discipline

I am happy to give As to students who earn them, but I have no qualms about failing a student if you don't follow through with your part of the contract. It is my job to uphold UHM Graduate Division standards. On the other hand it is not my job on 699s to warn you that you are falling behind. You can consult with me on my opinion of your work,

but this is a reminder that you are responsible for keeping on track with the deadlines in your proposal. Your grade will be penalized if you fall behind, and we have not agreed to this.

Prerequisites
You must have a minimum of 12 credits in the UH LIS program before taking a 699. Reasons for any exception should be explicitly noted on the 699 Proposal. Two exceptions that we've granted have been to a visiting Ph.D. student and to a Ph.D. student in Anthropology.

Other Quick Notes
- LIS faculty do not offer 699s during summer.
- LIS 699s are not supposed to replace regularly offered LIS courses.
- You cannot register for a 699 before the proposal is completed and signed by the LIS Chair and me. This must be completed in the semester before the course.
- Sample copies of your 699 products are required to be kept in your official academic folder.
- Only full-time LIS faculty can offer 699s. To some extent this limits your options in terms of subject coverage. If you have an idea for a project in an area that we don't cover (such as Music Librarianship) one of us can supervise a 699 with a qualified adjunct faculty or professional who is willing to offer a 699 with you. In this case, it is your responsibility to:
    - Find an appropriate adjunct instructor (although we might be able to suggest potential specialists).
    - Work with me (or a colleague) and that adjunct to approve your proposal.
- Please pay close attention to my editing of your papers. I become less tolerant of repeated mistakes after I've pointed them out to you. You should have someone proofread your papers before handing them in.
- I may encourage considerable revision between the draft and final version, so be sure to allow yourself time for substantial changes in terms of content, writing, and organization.
- By signing a 699 Proposal form to work under me, you are agreeing to the terms described here.
- Time permitting, I usually offer a limited number of 699s slots each semester. These are given on a first proposed and basis to students who have demonstrated that they are critical researchers who can work independently.

Please don't hesitate to ask me questions if something is not clear or if you want to explore a possible topic.