**Instructions & reminders:**

* Rather than simply registering for the *IKNS Independent Study* course, students are asked to first think about topics and to discuss and refine a topic with a possible supervisor (supervisors must be IKNS faculty).
* The purpose of this process is to ensure that the topic (in scope, depth, and approach) is suitable for an *Independent Study* towards the IKNS degree and that the chosen supervisor has interest, expertise, and availability to work with the student on the chosen topic. During this process, the supervisor will also help the student to refine and shape the topic as well as to discuss the basic research approach and potential data sources.
* Once the student and supervisor agree on the topic, curriculum area(s), and number of credits, the student completes the *Independent Study Proposal* and submits a draft to the supervisor.
* The supervisor will review and, if necessary, iterate the proposal with the student and then sign the proposal.
* The student will submit the proposal to IKNS Administration, which will review the proposal and contact the student once the student is approved to go ahead with registering for the course in SSOL.
* **Timeline**: Students are encouraged to start conversations with potential supervisor(s) well in advance of the semester in which they plan to carry out the Independent Study (typically during the preceding semester). The latest date at which signed proposals must be submitted to IKNS for review is the **first Thursday of classes in the semester in which a student plans to carry out the study** (i.e., during the first week of the add/drop period).

**Student**: Name and Columbia University *uni*

**Supervisor**: Name

**Semester**: Fall, spring, or summer & year

**Curriculum area(s)**: CA1, CA2, or CA3 (designate one CA or any combination of two CAs)

**Number of credits**: Number of credits should be commensurate with scope (see [course description](https://sps.columbia.edu/academics/masters/information-and-knowledge-strategy-ikns/curriculum-courses-0/elective-courses))

**Modality:** Online or in-person (indicate how student <> supervisor meetings will be held)

**1. Abstract (motivation, research question, relevance to IKNS, and data & methods) [500 words max.]**

Concisely describe the proposed study’s background and motivation, research question (open question?; hypothesis testing?, etc.), why/how it connects to the IKNS curriculum, the proposed research method/approach(es) (literature review, survey, expert interviews, etc.), and, if already known, some of the main data sources that will likely be consulted. It is understood that the exact research question, method(s), and sources may evolve during the course of the *Independent Study*.

**2. Rationale for IKNS Curriculum Area(s) [100 words max.]**

Following the IKNS curriculum areas as described [here](https://sps.columbia.edu/academics/masters/information-and-knowledge-strategy-ikns/curriculum-courses-0/elective-courses), briefly explain the rationale for the chosen curriculum area(s), based on the research topic, the approach, or a combination of the two.

**3. Timeline**

List the 3 dates agreed between student and supervisor to meet the 3 milestones (milestones as described in the syllabus and copied below).

***Milestone 1 (week ~3 of semester)****: Research questions: Student crystallizes topic into one or several specific research questions. These research questions can be formulated as open questions and/or hypotheses, but they are typically much more specific than the broader topic outlined in the ~1 page Independent Study Proposal. Work plan: Student develops a work plan for the Independent Study, including tasks and a timeline for completion and submission of intermediate and final work products. Sources: Student provides a list of sources to be consulted and reviewed during the Independent Study. Sources must comprise academic journals or books, but may, depending on the chosen topic, further include other sources such as case studies, white papers (profit or non-profit sector), expert interviews, surveys the student conducts, etc.*

***Milestone 2 (week ~8 of semester)****: Student presents supervisor with preliminary findings and an outline of the expected Independent Study Report. Student reviews the work plan and discusses obstacles and key learnings form the first weeks of their investigation. Any modifications to the research questions (e.g., based on findings in newly discovered sources) should be completed at this time.*

***Milestone 3 (week ~13 of semester)****: Student delivers final Independent Study Report to supervisor. The supervisor may discuss with the student whether the supervisor will agree to reviewing a draft of the Report and provide recommendations for improvement before determining the grade for the Report. In order to prepare for potential dissemination of the findings to the community (e.g., via a presentation to fellow students or a poster contribution at a conference; optional), the Report must include an abstract/executive summary.*

**4. Supervisor approval**

Signature and date.