OVERVIEW:

As an integral part of their graduate work in the program, MALS students expected to complete at least one Independent Study (IS) course. (Students may take two IS courses but no more than two.) These courses are elected by students who are “in residence,” (within commuting distance of the college), and are supervised by Dartmouth faculty. An IS course may be particularly helpful in identifying a thesis topic. They are not substitutes for the thesis. Ordinarily work completed for an IS must be separate from work included in the thesis. IS courses are to be completed at the end of the regular ten-week term in the same manner as any other course.

PROCESS:

Students may apply for an IS after completing a minimum of two courses, though most propose projects after they are at least halfway through their coursework. Students should talk with the Director for preliminary recommendations for faculty with expertise related to the particular IS. Students design the IS in consultation with the supervising faculty. The IS supervisor should work with the student to formulate the proposal and a letter of support from the faculty supervisor to the Curriculum Committee is recommended.

Proposal forms, available on the MALS website, should be submitted to the supervising faculty for review and approval approximately two weeks prior to the office deadline. Proposals without proper signatures will not be reviewed when the Committee meets.

DEADLINES:

The MALS Curriculum Committee adheres to the following deadlines for submission:

- For SUMMER: April 15
- For FALL: August 1
- For WINTER: October 15
- For SPRING: February 1

Late submissions are subject to being withheld from Committee review. The student, not the faculty supervisor, is responsible for ensuring a timely proposal submission to the MALS office.

FORMAT:

The IS course is expected to be a high quality, graduate-level experience. It may be:

- A subject studied independently that is unavailable at Dartmouth or not offered at a convenient time.
- A continuation of a course already taken, with new and original work.
- An independently designed research course.
- Independent study or research preliminary to the thesis.
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The proposal is expected to include:

The IS cover sheet with signatures of the student, the faculty advisor for the IS, and the MALS concentration chair.

A narrative description of the project, with clearly stated goals and components that can be clearly understood by the non-specialist.

A comprehensive bibliography, a plan-of-study, breakdown of weekly activities (syllabus or weekly calendar of topics to be covered during that time and specific reading/writing assignments), and a schedule of meeting times with the supervising faculty member. (Meetings should be scheduled weekly, or at the minimum, bi-weekly.)

Designation of a final product to be evaluated in writing by the professor. It is expected that there will be a significant written component (25-35 pages in length).