

BIS 489: Directed Readings (1-3 credits)

BIS 489 is for students who wish to explore subjects that are not available in the regular university course offerings. Directed readings may be included in a student's BIS concentration; however, it **may not** replace the *research component* of BIS 490.

Completing BIS 489 Readings/Research

It is the student's responsibility to keep the faculty advisor/instructor informed about progress on the readings/research by meeting regularly. Final course requirements should be submitted to the advisor/instructor within a time frame that allows for any requested revision before the final grade is due.

Evaluating the BIS 489 Readings/Research

The faculty advisor enters the grade using the online grading system.

If the readings/research are not completed by the end of the semester of enrollment, and the student is making satisfactory progress, the student may request a grade of IN (Incomplete) from the instructor.

An IN grade must be changed to a letter grade by the specified due date in the next semester or it will automatically become an F grade.



For more information, contact:

Dr. Kenneth Thompson

Director
kthomps4@gmu.edu
703-993-2305

Mark Sistik

Advising Director
msistik@gmu.edu
703-993-4568

Linda Hemm

Academic Advisor
lhemm@gmu.edu
703-993-2303

Janet Ha

Records Specialist & Academic Advisor
jha2@gmu.edu
703-993-4572

Lenore Butcher Kuch

Student Services Manager
lbutche1@gmu.edu
703-993-4556

BIS Faculty Mentor Information

Bachelor of Individualized Study



Aquia Building, Room 230, MSN 5A9

Tel: 703-993-4556

Fax: 703-993-9476

bis.gmu.edu

What is BIS?

BIS is the adult degree completion program at Mason. Returning adult students design individualized and interdisciplinary concentrations to suit their personal and professional needs.

BIS values life and work experience by allowing students to earn credit for college-level knowledge gained through non-traditional sources.

Why become a BIS Faculty Mentor?

The BIS program relies on faculty from across Mason to advise our students. As a mentor you can:

- Obtain undergraduate student support for your scholarship needs and interests.
- Receive a stipend. Upon a student's completion of BIS 490, mentors receive a stipend of \$350.
- Gain personal satisfaction from helping adult students reach their lifelong goals.

Core Responsibilities

- Consultation on BIS contract
- Advice for BIS 390: The Research Process
- BIS 489: Directed Readings (optional)
- Advice & edits for BIS 490: Senior Project

Faculty Mentor Role

Consultation on BIS Contract

- Review student's proposed list of courses for interdisciplinary concentration.
- Provide feedback as the content "expert," and add/delete courses as appropriate.
- Ensure the course selection supports the title of student's concentration .
- BIS advisors will ensure university graduation requirements are complete.



Students are nominated by Faculty Mentors for four possible annual BIS Student Project Awards.

BIS Faculty Mentors are nominated by students for a single annual Outstanding Faculty Mentor award.

Advice for BIS 390: The Research Process

Meet during BIS 390 semester to ensure the proposed project is:

- of interest and relevant to the field.
- appropriate as an undergraduate senior project.
- informed by relevant literature in student's concentration area.
- addressing a complex issue, topic, or problem that requires examination from two or more disciplinary perspectives.
- appropriately bounded for a semester-long project.

Advice & Expectations for the BIS 490 Senior Project course:

The BIS 490 course (3 credits) is taught by faculty, who are generalists. Faculty mentors are subject matter specialists and are crucial partners ensuring relevancy and depth in content areas.

Types of Senior Projects:

- **Investigative** (critical analysis or empirical research): a research paper of at least 5000 words.
- **Creative** (performance, art show, training/workshop, website, video, exhibit): a research paper of at least 3500 words, plus the creative project.

The BIS 490 project is expected to:

- Meet the university capstone/synthesis requirement.
- Draw from literature from at least two disciplines related to student's concentration.
- Extend beyond a literature review, to include critical analysis.
- Be well written, properly cited, and academically sound.

Mentor Responsibilities

- Read and approve project proposal developed in BIS 390.
- Make suggestions regarding relevant literature (as the content area "expert").
- Read two drafts and provide ongoing feedback during senior project.
- If applicable, complete Human Subject Review Training at www.citiprogram.org.