

## Syllabus Fall 2026

### INDIVSTU 4193 Individual Studies Project

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## Instructor Contact Information

- **Instructor:** Linda Emery
  - **Phone:** 319-273-2504
  - **Office hours:** By appointment
  - **Class Delivery:** Online / Blackboard Learn Ultra
  - **Email Address:** Linda.Emery@uni.edu
  - **Preferred Communication:** Email is the preferred communication method. To request appointments (via Zoom), please call the number above and the department secretary will schedule those for you.
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## Course Information and Communication

### Credit Hours: 3

UNI adheres to the federal definition of the credit hour in all courses, regardless of instruction mode, meeting pattern, or course format. This course meets the Course Credit Hour Expectation outlined in the Course Catalog. Students should expect to work approximately 2 hours per week outside of class for every course credit hour.

### Course Description:

This section of the Individual Studies Project course is set up to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their competency in critical thinking, information literacy, effective written communication, and integrated learning. Throughout the entirety of the course, students will dive deeply into a self-chosen topic and through an iterative process develop a finished and well-crafted paper by the very end, all the while reflecting on their experiences along the way.

There are no prerequisites for this course. Though it is primarily aimed toward interdisciplinary majors within the Individual Studies department (e.g. General Studies, Bachelor of Liberal Studies, IS-Health Sciences.), all students will find the content and responsibilities of benefit. This is an upper-level course and with it comes a certain level of rigor suited for juniors and seniors, but there are support mechanisms in place should you need assistance.

- **Purpose of the course:**

- The purpose of this course is to gauge and help you develop stronger critical thinking, information literacy, written communication, and integrated learning skills.
- The content is beneficial in that it spans the entirety of the Individual Studies departmental Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in hopes of helping you grow your competency through practice and reflection. The course is structured in a way that you will not see any assignments, only responsibilities. This is further evidenced by the fact that you are responsible for your own learning.
- Assignments are great for bosses who say to their employees, “Do this *for me.*” Instead, this course flips that model on its head and you are doing this *for yourself.* I am your guide, but I am only with you for one semester. However, you will go on after graduation and use these skills for a lifetime, and I hope to help you cultivate your competency in these areas.

## Communication with Instructor:

Email is the primary communication tool.

- Please send questions and concerns to my email address above.
- Expect up to a 24-hour turnaround for responses on weekdays.
- Weekend inquiries may take up to 48 hours for a response.

I will primarily communicate with students via email, but I will be available by appointment as well for discussion via Zoom. Send concerns to me via my email address above and request appointments with me if you prefer to discuss concerns and questions live via Zoom rather than in an email. Generally, it will take me up to 24 hours to respond to emails, except on the weekends where it may take up to 48 hours. I will provide feedback on responsibility submissions when I grade your work, and I will strive to do this during the weekend following your submission.

## Online Netiquette and Classroom Civility:

Whether on Zoom or a late-night discussion board, how we show up for each other matters. To ensure our online environment remains a supportive space for questions and diverse perspectives, please follow these guidelines:

- **The "Human" Factor:** Remember, there is a person behind every screen. If you wouldn't say it to their face in a physical classroom, don't post it.
- **Mind Your Tone:** Sarcasm and humor can be easily misread online. Avoid "shouting" in ALL CAPS and use emojis sparingly to clarify intent.
- **Stay Professional:** Use standard English and proper grammar. Avoid "text-speak" (e.g., use "you" instead of "u") and excessive slang.
- **Clear Subject Lines:** Help others prioritize by using descriptive subject lines for emails and posts (e.g., Question: Week 3 Case Study).
- **Respect Diversity of Thought:** Focus on ideas rather than people. When disagreeing, stay curious and ask thoughtful questions to understand different viewpoints.
- **Your Authentic Voice:** We want to hear from you. Foster genuine connection by sharing your own unique perspective rather than AI-generated content.

- **Privacy & Safety:** Protect our community's academic privacy. Never share your login credentials or the personal contact info of your classmates.

## Learning Objectives

### University Level Outcomes:

- **ULO1 - Critical Thinking:** Students will demonstrate critical thinking through the ability to evaluate, analyze, and integrate information from a variety of sources in order to develop reasoned positions and solutions to problems.
- **ULO2 - Communication:** Students will display competence in oral, written, and visual communication, as appropriate for their discipline.
- **ULO3 - Program Content Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills in their major fields of study.

### Program Level Objectives:

- **PLO1 – Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, work samples and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. To exercise critical thinking, one must possess the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking and understand the logical connection between ideas.
- **PLO2 – Information Literacy:** Information literacy is the ability to know when information is needed. To be an information literate person, one must be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use sources of information for an issue or problem at hand.
- **PLO3 – Effective Written Communication:** Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. For written communication to be effective, one must possess the ability to use written language in a precise and user-friendly way in order to clearly express oneself to the intended audience.
- **PLO4 – Integrative Learning:** Integrative learning is the ability to make connections across disciplines. To effectively use integrative learning, one must be able to make connections among ideas and experiences and transfer learning to new situations.

### Course Level Objectives:

- **CLO1 – Demonstrate critical thinking skills** by completing a synthesis paper of their findings from researching a self-chosen issue/problem.
- **CLO2 – Effectively implement and discern sources** for quality, content, recency, and credibility in an information literate way through producing an annotated bibliography.
- **CLO3 – Create, analyze, and revise** a clear and concise written work by participating in peer feedback, reflective writing, and expressing written ideas throughout an iterative process.
- **CLO4 – Demonstrate mastery** in combining knowledge gained throughout the course by writing reflectively and producing four reflections, which showcase learning holistically.

# Required Instructional Materials

## Required Texts/Readings/Other Instructional Materials:

- There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings for the course are within or linked to in each responsibility.

## Supplemental Readings/Materials:

- Supplementary readings (those recommended but not required) are linked or referenced in the Blackboard Ultra course.

# Course Structure and Engagement

This course consists of the following activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the course and instructional unit objectives. Each unit you will work on various combinations of responsibilities which build on one another.

## Quiz

There is one syllabus quiz to assure you have read and understand the syllabus and all policies within it.

## Student-Content

There are 15 responsibilities, each with written instructions from which you will create your work sample throughout the course. Responsibilities are released on Fridays at 8am.

## Student-Student

There are two opportunities to interact with your peers in this course. The first is a large group discussion board and the second is a small group peer feedback discussion board.

## Instructor-Student

You will also interact with me as the faculty grading your work, providing feedback, and an individual one-on-one meeting.

# Evaluation Methods

Grading is based solely on points from your submissions. Generally, grading and feedback will be given within a few days after the due date, as the majority of the course is driven by each responsibility building off of the previous ones. Grading rubrics are included in each of the responsibilities.

## Determination of Grades:

Final grades will be reported using the following scale:

|         |    |        |    |        |    |
|---------|----|--------|----|--------|----|
| 93-100% | A  | 80-82% | B- | 63-69% | D+ |
| 90-92%  | A- | 77-79% | C+ | 56-62% | D  |
| 87-89%  | B+ | 73-76% | C  | 50-55% | D- |
| 83-86%  | B  | 70-72% | C- | < 50%  | F  |

Points earned for each assessment will be posted in Blackboard Ultra's Gradebook. The total is figured into a percentage, and the grade is determined by the Grading Scale. Students are expected to monitor their grades on Blackboard and save all graded work on their computers.

### AI Policy

The use of AI for writing assignments is strictly prohibited. This is to ensure that you are fully engaging with the writing process and developing your skills independently. Writing is a critical skill that requires practice, and relying on AI undermines your learning and growth.

Any assignments found to be completed with the assistance of AI will not be accepted and will result in a grade of zero. Please take this seriously and use this opportunity to improve your writing abilities through your own hard work.

### Late Work Policy:

So much of what you do in this course is reliant on previous responsibilities, and as such, late work hinders your successful completion of the rest of the course. The late work policy will be enforced immediately after the deadline. If you submit your work within 24 hours of the deadline, you will receive up to 75% of the points. If you submit your work after 24 hours but within 48 hours of the deadline, you will receive up to 50% of the points possible. Any work submitted after 48 hours past the deadline will receive 0 points. If you have three late responsibilities, you will receive an F for the course.

## Important UNI Policies and Statements

### Free Speech:

The University of Northern Iowa supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principles of academic and artistic freedom. We encourage the free and responsible exchange of diverse ideas on our campus. The University is committed to open inquiry and the spirited and thoughtful debate of such ideas.

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All UNI employees, students, applicants and campus visitors are welcome to disclose their personal pronoun preferences, though no one shall be compelled to do so.

Visit [Free Speech at UNI](https://freespeech.uni.edu/) for more information or to report a concern. (<https://freespeech.uni.edu/>).

### **Non-discrimination in Employment or Education:**

Content in this class has the potential to be disturbing to some individuals based on life experiences. If you ever feel the need to step out of the classroom or decline participation in an activity, please request an alternative learning experience.

UNI Policy 13.02 Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct states: "The University is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination and harassment based on a protected class, as well as retaliation."

Policy 13.02 outlines prohibited conduct and reporting processes. All University employees who are aware of or witness discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation are required to promptly report to the Title IX Officer or Title IX Deputy Coordinator.

Interim Title IX Officer Christina Roybal, Assistant to the President for Civil Rights Compliance, 117 Gilchrist, 319.273.2846, [christina.roybal@uni.edu](mailto:christina.roybal@uni.edu).

**If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at [safety.uni.edu](https://safety.uni.edu) and [equity.uni.edu](https://equity.uni.edu). Resources that provide free, confidential counseling are also detailed at [safety.uni.edu](https://safety.uni.edu).**

For additional information, contact the Office of Compliance and Equity Management, 117 Gilchrist Hall, 273-2846, [equity@uni.edu](mailto:equity@uni.edu).

### **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement:**

The United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requires that a notice of nondiscrimination be prominently displayed in any publications used in connection with the recruitment of students or employees. This applies to electronic formats as well. Refer to [Policy 13.03](https://policies.uni.edu/1303) to view the University's approved statement. (<https://policies.uni.edu/1303>).

### **Affirmative Action Policy:**

The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in employment, retention, and advancement of employees without regard to age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by federal and/or state law, except in rare instances where sex may be a bona fide occupational requirement, and to a policy of affirmative action for

protected classes. Affirmative action entails special efforts by the University community to recruit and hire protected class members throughout the University, proportionate to their availability in the relative labor market. These policies apply to all positions on the University [Affirmative Action](https://policies.uni.edu/1301) webpage (<https://policies.uni.edu/1301>).

### **Attendance, Late Work, and Makeup Work:**

See UNI [Policy on Class Attendance and Makeup Work](https://policies.uni.edu/306) (<https://policies.uni.edu/306>)

### **Campus Accessibility & Accommodations of Disabilities Policy:**

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination by the University. This policy applies to all aspects of campus activities, including employment, education, student programming, and services provided to the community at large. [Campus Accessibility & Accommodations of Disabilities Policy](https://policies.uni.edu/1315) webpage (<https://policies.uni.edu/1315>).

### **Student Accessibility Services:**

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Students with disabilities experiencing a barrier to access should connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to request accommodations. For more information about the accommodation process, please contact SAS at (319) 273-2677 Relay 711, [accessibilityservices@uni.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uni.edu), or GIL 118. Additional information is also available at [sas.uni.edu](https://sas.uni.edu/). (<https://sas.uni.edu/>).

### **Academic Integrity:**

To ensure academic integrity and to follow [UNI policies on Student Academic Ethics](https://policies.uni.edu/301) (see: IV. Academic Ethics Violations), students will not plagiarize, misrepresent, fabricate, or cheat. Unless otherwise instructed and approved by the instructor, students will take quizzes and exams **individually**, without collaboration with other parties and/or using notes or other texts. Similarly, students will submit work (papers, presentations, and other assessments) that is their own work (in regard to violations of these ethics policies, see: V. Academic Ethics Sanctions). (<https://policies.uni.edu/301>).

### **The Learning Center @ Rod Library:**

The Learning Center @ Rod Library provides free tutoring for a variety of different areas (i.e., writing, math, science, business, Spanish, college reading, and learning strategies). The Learning Center @ Rod Library is open for walk-in assistance Monday-Thursday, 10 AM-10 PM and is free of charge for all UNI students. If you are unavailable during normal tutoring hours, online tutoring is also available through Smarthinking. You will need your CATID and passphrase to gain access. Access the [Smarthinking platform](https://tlc.uni.edu/online) (<https://tlc.uni.edu/online>). For more information, go to [The Learning Center](https://tlc.uni.edu) website (<https://tlc.uni.edu>), email [TheLearningCenter@uni.edu](mailto:TheLearningCenter@uni.edu), call 319-273-6023, or visit the TLC desk located on the main floor of Rod Library.

In addition, the Office of International Engagement offers free coaching sessions with experienced staff, in-person and online, for international and multilingual students. Students can schedule time with an advisor for in-person assistance or simply walk in for services during established coaching times at The Learning Center in Rod Library. More information can be found on the [OIE Academic Coaching Website](https://internationalengagement.uni.edu/academic-coaching).  
(<https://internationalengagement.uni.edu/academic-coaching>)

## Course Technology

### Online Component:

This course is completely online, utilizing Blackboard Ultra for instruction, materials, and communication. This online component can be accessed through the [UNiLearning Suite](http://elearning.uni.edu/) (<http://elearning.uni.edu/>)

All of the handouts and information for this course will be available in Blackboard Learn Ultra. Students are advised to check the website and their email for communication. Any changes to the course syllabus or schedule will be announced through Blackboard. Assignments are due as specified in the course schedule and on the course Blackboard page in Blackboard Ultra. Students are responsible for learning how to use Blackboard for on-time submission of assignments. Blackboard Ultra tutorials are also available:

- [Blackboard Learn Help for Students Ultra Course View](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra) website  
(<https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra>)

### Best Practices for Taking Online Exams and Quizzes in Blackboard

1. Firefox or Chrome: recommended browsers for taking quizzes and exams.
2. **IMPORTANT:** The mobile app on your phone is NOT recommended for taking quizzes or exams. Students can experience errors in their answers and may be unable to submit tests.
3. If your quiz or exam is timed, plan to take the quiz or exam in a single sitting.
4. Please use a reliable (high-speed) internet connection. An Ethernet connection is preferable to a wi-fi connection.
5. If you are enrolled in a course that uses a proctored exam, separate instructions will be provided by your instructor.

If you experience technical difficulties when taking a test or quiz, immediately notify the Office of Continuing and Distance Education at 319-273-7740 or by emailing the name of the course, the instructor's name, and a description of the problem to: [cesp-consult@uni.edu](mailto:cesp-consult@uni.edu).

### Technology Requirements and Digital Literacy:

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course. You are required to have access to and the ability to use:

- UNI Gmail account



- Google Drive
- Zoom or Google Meet
- Microsoft Office (UNI offers options for [Installing Microsoft Office on a Personal Computer](https://servicehub.uni.edu/docs/display/SH/Installing+Microsoft+Office+on+a+Personal+Computer) for free for current UNI students, faculty, and staff, using their CatID) (<https://servicehub.uni.edu/docs/display/SH/Installing+Microsoft+Office+on+a+Personal+Computer>)
- Reliable (High-speed) internet connection. An Ethernet connection is preferable to a wi-fi connection
- Firefox and Chrome browsers are recommended.

## **Blackboard Ultra Support for Online Courses:**

If you experience any technical problems with Blackboard Ultra or any tools used in Blackboard Ultra, please contact the **Division of Online Education and Individual Studies** at 319-273-7740 (local) or [cesp-consult@uni.edu](mailto:cesp-consult@uni.edu). Course support is available Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Please note: When you contact the Division of Online Education and Individual Studies, **please provide the following so we may assist you with speed and accuracy:**

1. name of your instructor
2. course name and number (i.e., MATH 1110)
3. section number.
4. You may also include the name of the assignment or test for which you need assistance.