

Before sending this form to the Registrar's Office, please make a copy for yourself and your supervisor. Thank you!

INDEPENDENT STUDY/INDEPENDENT RESEARCH APPLICATION

Student Number 162094 Name Emily H. Johnson Year in College: Soph X Jr Sr

Email address johnso61@stolaf.edu Advisor Kari Lie Dorer

International Student: Yes No *For WRI, please see backside for requirements*

Subject	Independent Study (298)	WRI	Term/Year	Faculty Supervisor
<u>Educ</u>	<u>Independent Research (398)</u>	<u> </u>	<u>Fall 2019</u>	<u>Heather Campbell</u>

Course title to appear on transcript (32 characters maximum)

E a r l y C h i l d h o o d / N o r w a y a n d U . S .

Complete all sections below (attach additional pages if needed):

Major goals of this course and why it should be done independently (guidelines on back):

see additional pages.

Previous Preparation for this course (list specific courses taken):

see additional pages.

Core resources/bibliography:

see additional pages.

Outline of specific work to be done in IS/IR and how work will be supervised (frequency of meetings, etc) and evaluate:

see additional pages.

IS/IR Supervisor Signature Heather Campbell Date: April 6, 2019

If WRI checked above, do you agree to conduct IS/IR as a WRI experience? YES NO

Department Chair/
Interdisciplinary Program Director Signature Whitney Lee Date: 4/8/2019

Advisor Signature Kari Lie Dorer Date: 4/9/2019

Check one: X on-campus off-campus Int'l off-campus

Int'l & Off-Campus Study Office Signature Date:
(Signature only needed if doing International IS or IR)

Required information if doing off-campus or Int'l Independent Study/Independent Research:

Location Name Street address
City, State/Country, Zip Phone #

Please note college policy for IS/IR: <http://www.stolaf.edu/catalog/1415/academicreg/course-reg.html#ISIR>

On or before the deadline to add courses:

1. Submit the application to the Registrar's Office in Tomson Hall. Make a copy for your own records. The Registrar's Office will add the course only after this form has been submitted and approved. After the last day to add a course, a late add petition to add the course is required and, if approved you will be charged a handling fee of \$50.
2. Please note: The student must have some prior course work or other background learning relevant to the proposed independent project.
 - To attempt IS (298) at least two prerequisite courses are required.
 - To attempt IR (398) course, five prerequisite courses are required
 - First-year students may not take IS/IR courses.
3. IS/IR does not fulfill a General Education Requirement (unless approved for WRI). See department chair/program director for information whether the IS/IR will apply towards your major.

GE Guidelines for Applying Writing (WRI) to Independent Study/Research

Students: You must also include a separate rationale that specifically addresses all of the intended learning outcomes for WRI, taking into account the guidelines: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/files/2013/12/WRI.pdf>.

WRI will not be approved if you do not provide a rationale.

Faculty: When approving WRI for an independent study/research check the WRI approval line next to the faculty supervisor signature line on the form.

Guidelines for Writing in Context courses:

1. The course helps students write effective prose in a particular community of knowledge.
2. The course incorporates writing as a principal and integral part of learning.
3. The course must provide instruction in writing and must require students to revise their work in response to instructor feedback.

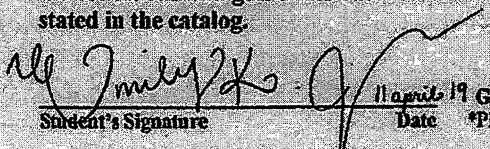
Explain how you will meet the following intended learning outcomes through your Independent Study/Research:

The student will demonstrate:

1. The ability to write effectively in a form appropriate to a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary course of study.
2. The ability to write as a means for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating.
3. The ability to engage in writing as a systematic, iterative process, using flexible strategies for generating drafts, responding to feedback, revising, editing, and proofreading.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED BELOW:

I have read the requirements for Independent Study or Independent Research and understand and agree to the conditions and guidelines outlined on this form and other conditions pertaining to this application as stated in the catalog.


Student's Signature

11 April 19
Date

Graded ☒ S/U

*Please choose a grading option after your supervisor has signed this form.

Registrar

Date:

(Registrar's signature added upon final approval. Submit form to Registrar's Office after obtaining above signatures.)

Emily Johnson '20

Independent Study/Independent Research Application Form

11 April 2019

Early Childhood/Norway and the U.S.

Major goals of the course:

- Investigate and compare the educational philosophies that influence the implementation of pedagogical practices in U.S. and Norwegian kindergartens
- Trace PISA scores since the implementation of federally mandated testing in the U.S. (2001) and the implementation of the Framework Plan in Norway (2006)

Reasons why this work should be done independently:

- Strong interest in early childhood (thinking about getting an elementary teaching license) and Norwegian culture
 - no classes are offered at St. Olaf specifically combining these topics
- Preparation for a Fulbright research grant to study the topic more extensively

Previous preparation for this course (list specific courses taken):

- Norw 111 (Beginning Norwegian I), 112 (Beginning Norwegian II), 231 (Intermed Norwegian I), 232 (Intermed Norwegian II), 253 (Advanced Conv & Comp)
- Educ 170 (Urban Schools and Communities), 260 (Foundations in Education), 290 (Educational Psychology), 372 (Counseling/Communication in Schools)
- Psych 241 (Developmental Psych)
- Offc 246: Denmark II
 - Child Development in Scandinavia
 - Child Development in Scandinavia Practicum

Core resources/bibliography:

Änggård, Eva (2010). Making use of "nature" in an outdoor preschool: Classroom, home and

Fairyland. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 20 (1), 4 – 25.

Einarsdottir, Johanna et al. (2006). *Nordic Childhoods and Early Education: Philosophy,*

Research, Policy, and Practice in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

Gilliam, Laura, et al. (2017). *Children of the Welfare State: Civilising Practices in Schools,*

Childcare and Families. Pluto Press.

Government.no (2014). *Early Childhood Education and Care*. <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarden/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/>

Heckman, J. J. (2006). Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312 (5782), 1900-1902. doi: 10.1126/science.1128898

Kindergartens (Maple Grove, MN and Norway).

Klein, Alyson (2015). *No Child Left Behind: an Overview*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html>

Kowalski, Jordyn, et al. (2017). "*Det Er Lov.*" *Rules and Routines in a Norwegian Kindergarten*.

Louv, Richard (2008). *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. New York: Algonquin Books.

Moser, Thomas, et al. (2010). The outdoor environment in Norwegian kindergartens as pedagogical space for toddlers' play, learning and development. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18 (4), 457-471.

OECD (2018). *Excellence and Equity in Education*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>

OECD (2018). *PISA 2015 Results in Focus*. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

OECD (2018). *Policies and Practices for Successful Schools*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en>

OECD (2018). *Students' Well-Being*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en>

Olin, M. (2017). *Barndom* [Motion Picture]. Norway: Speranza Films.

Ragnhild Hollekim (Bergen, Norway).

Ringsmose, C. et al (2017). *Nordic Social Pedagogical Approach to Early Years*. Switzerland:
Springer International.

Outline of specific work to be done in IS/IR and how work will be supervised (frequency of meetings, etc.) and evaluate:

- Outline
 - integrate an extensive literature review regarding American and Norwegian perspectives about the “best practices” in kindergarten pedagogies, i.e., what the ideal early childhood institutions should look like
 - interview professionals in the early education field: American and Norwegian kindergarten teachers about educational philosophies and practices
 - conduct classroom observations in the U.S. and in Norway: based on a review of the literature, develop a structured observation tool in order to record aspects of teaching and learning reflective of the teacher’s philosophies and pedagogies employed
- Frequency of meetings: Once a week. Develop a timeline at the beginning of the semester for grading my work in the course, review of the literature, the observation tool and interview protocol. Independent research and work on my own throughout the week, and share my findings/feedback with Heather at meetings.
- Evaluation
 - write a research paper stating my findings (and submit the paper for publication to an appropriate journal for undergraduate students), along with a public presentation on the results of my research in Spring 2020

Emily Johnson '20
11 April 2019
Rand Scholar Application

The Developmental Role of Early Childhood Institutions in American and Norwegian Societies

Foundational Basis

Early childhood institutions, a locus of childhood, play an integral role in developing children into future members of society. Specialized staff are trained to take care of children in age-appropriate ways, and children are exposed to the morals, behavior and etiquette of the dominating cultural society. Predominantly characterized by social relations, identification and belonging, creativity, emotions and bodily needs (Gilliam), early childhood care is an important part of life in both the U.S. and Norway. Recent research suggests that early life experiences greatly impact development; our cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development have critical periods during 4-6 years of age. Investing money into preschools leads to long-term benefits both for the children and economy (Heckman).

Globalization and international competition in education, specifically children's performance on standardized tests, have become a topic of high importance in recent decades. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) releases Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) information as a way to internationally compare student performance. Every three years, 15-year-olds from 72 developed countries, including both Norway and the U.S., take this standardized test. In the most recent data from 2015, Norway scored above the U.S. in math (19th vs. 39th), reading (9th vs. 24th) and science (24th vs. 25th) (OECD). The difference in the provisions of early childhood education between the

U.S. and Norway could account for some of the performance gaps between the two countries; therefore, there is a need for a comparison between the countries' early childhood institutions.

Cultural Philosophies on Education

The majority in power determines what is valued in society, and the primary educational content is influenced by political intervention. Normative societal and cultural values are clarified and emphasized through child care and education (Gilliam), primarily through interactions with adults. Cross-culturally comparing early childhood institutions—what academic and social values the children are taught in practice—will clarify the dominant Norwegian and American principles of education.

A major American educational reform, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was signed into law in 2001, partly due to the existing educational achievement gaps within the U.S. and between other developed countries. Comprised of mandated testing in reading, math and science annually in 3rd-8th grade and once in high school, states then initiated specific standards in order to prepare students for these standardized tests. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB and placed less emphasis on standardized tests, yet most of the school hours are still spent on reading, math and science (Klein). The effects have even trickled down into kindergartens and preschools: American early childhood care now has classroom time focused on academics and school readiness, with less of an emphasis on creative play and outdoor education.

Contrastingly, Norway does have seven basic development and learning goals outlined in 2006 through the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (Government.no), yet free play and nature are viewed as foundations of the “ideal childhood” in Scandinavia (Änggård). *Friluftsliv* is a large part of Norwegian culture, and a common saying regarding the

prevalence of outdoor play is <<Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlige klær.>> (“There’s no bad weather, only bad clothing.”) Drawing upon this cultural value, “forest kindergartens” are common in Norway, where children as young as 3-6 years old are left to use axes and knives and play largely unsupervised outside, even by an open fire. *Barndom*, a 2017 film, clarifies the Norwegian philosophy on child care and education: the film follows a group of 6-year-olds for one year at a Norwegian forest kindergarten, highlighting the importance of nature, creativity and play (Olin).

Questions, Hypotheses to be Explored

As part of my Rand Scholar research, I hope to investigate what educational philosophies influence the implementation of pedagogical practices in U.S. and Norwegian kindergartens, and how those philosophies and practices compare. Furthermore, I would trace PISA scores since the implementation of federally mandated testing in the U.S. and the implementation of the Framework Plan in Norway. With my current level of preliminary background research, I would hypothesize that American early childhood institutions prioritize academic readiness, whereas Norwegian educational care values a more well-rounded, whole-person approach due to the prevalence of creativity and free play. Similarly, I would hypothesize that implementation of standards impacts PISA scores, yet in which specific aspects will be clarified with further research.

Research Envisioned

My research would first integrate an extensive literature review regarding American and Norwegian perspectives about the “best practices” in kindergarten pedagogies, i.e., what the ideal early childhood institutions should look like. In addition to integrating Nordic and American research publishings on early education, through compendiums such as *Nordic Social*

Pedagogical Approach to Early Years, Professor Ragnhild Hollekim from Bergen, Norway will be teaching a St. Olaf course in Interim 2020 titled “Child Well-being in a Nordic Context.” If I am unable to take that class on-campus, I can personally interview Hollekim. Specific questions would be developed at a later point in time, yet I envision a discussion about how Nordic values and philosophies shape the education system.

In addition to integrating pedagogical theories, my Rand Scholar research would also include interviews with professionals in the early education field. I have connections to kindergarten teachers in Minnesota; in Fall 2019, I would conduct an in-person interview with each teacher. Although specific questions would be further developed at a later point in time closer to the actual interviews, I envision asking about what specifically they’re required to teach the children according to the state and national standards: What do they spend most of the day doing with their students—is the primary focus on academic development, such reading and math readiness, or on social and motor development? *How* do they integrate the required curriculum into the classroom? How would they describe their students’ relationships with school: do they enjoy it, or do they already feel pressure from a young age to perform well academically? What are the teachers’ beliefs and philosophies about the purpose of education: do kindergartens exist to shape the development of the whole person, or primarily for future academic and school readiness (with the responsibility on parents/outside resources for other aspects of development)? In addition, with the help of Dr. Kari Lie Dorer, my advisor and the Norwegian Department Chair, and her connections, I envision asking those same questions to kindergarten teachers in Norway.

As a final component of my research, I would conduct classroom observations in the U.S. and in Norway. Based on a review of the literature, I would develop a structured observation tool in order to record aspects of teaching and learning reflective of the teacher's philosophies and pedagogies employed. For a approximately 10 hours per teacher, I would record actual observations: the structure of the class (how the day is organized), general interactions between staff and children or between peers (who is given attention, and whether that attention is positive or negative), how the physical space is organized (what's on the wall and in the rooms) and aspects of pedagogy (the teacher's ability of classroom management, transitions, student behavior, expectations of the students and any teacher assistants). I would conduct the classroom observations with the same teachers that I interviewed.

In Interim 2020, thanks to the funds from the Rand Scholar, I would participate in the Oslo Internship Reflection Seminar (NORW 296) and observe the Norwegian kindergarten classrooms during January and Interim Break. I have intermediate level Norwegian language proficiency, so I would be able to follow along with most of what happens in the Norwegian kindergarten. I spoke with Dr. Kari Lie Dorer, the interim program director; she recommended a specific humanitarian organization based on my interests, Multikulturelt Initiativ- og Ressursnettverk (MiR). A St. Olaf student interned there this past interim, and most of his internship commitments were during the afternoons and weekends. Therefore, I could observe Norwegian classrooms in the mornings throughout the month of January, along with observing full-days during Interim Break. Consistently observing the same classrooms would lead to more astute and insightful observations.

Format of Completed Project

In Spring of 2020, I would give a public presentation on the results of my research. In addition, I would write a research paper stating my findings and submit the paper for publication to an appropriate journal for undergraduate students. As a Biology and Norwegian major and Nordic Studies and Educational Studies concentrator, kindergartens combine my academic foci and are of special interest to me. The Rand Scholar research would be a culmination of my studies during my senior year at St. Olaf, and I would not be able to complete this in-depth of research on my own without the accompanying funding. I would form valuable connections through the Rand Scholar interviews and classroom observations, and I am interested in further pursuing this research on Norwegian early childhood at a higher level in graduate school and/or as a Fulbright Scholar.

Bibliography

- Änggård, Eva (2010). Making use of “nature” in an outdoor preschool: Classroom, home and Fairyland. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 20 (1), 4 – 25.
- Gilliam, Laura, et al. (2017). *Children of the Welfare State: Civilising Practices in Schools, Childcare and Families*. Pluto Press.
- Government.no (2014). *Early Childhood Education and Care*. <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarden/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/>
- Heckman, J. J. (2006). Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312 (5782), 1900-1902. doi: 10.1126/science.1128898
- Klein, Alyson (2015). *No Child Left Behind: an Overview*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html>
- OECD (2018). *PISA 2015 Results in Focus*. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>
- Olin, M. (2017). *Barndom* [Motion Picture]. Norway: Speranza Films.
- Ringsmose, C. et al (2017). *Nordic Social Pedagogical Approach to Early Years*. Switzerland: Springer International.

Additional Primary and Secondary Sources (many more to come)

Einarsdottir, Johanna et al. (2006). *Nordic Childhoods and Early Education: Philosophy, Research, Policy, and Practice in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden*.

North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

Kindergartens (Maple Grove, MN and Norway).

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Louv, Richard (2008). *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*. New York: Algonquin Books.

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OECD (2018). *Policies and Practices for Successful Schools*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en>

OECD (2018). *Students' Well-Being*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en>

Ragnhild Hollekim (Bergen, Norway).

April 8, 2019

Rand Selection Committee and Dan Dressen
St. Olaf College

Dear Selection Committee:

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Emily Johnson. I have known Emily since she was a first year student, and I am excited to be planning an independent study with her for the Rand Fellowship. I have always known Emily to be passionate about elementary education, but I think that her experience in Denmark this semester has cemented her desire to study more about best practices for our earliest learners, and I find her research project to be interesting and appropriate for an undergraduate student.

As I mentioned, I've known Emily since she was a first year student. She enrolled in an experiential Interim course I taught in the cities – EDUC 170: Urban Schools and Communities. It was clear to me then that she was going to pursue a career in elementary education – possibly in the classroom – as her passion for teaching young learners was clear. Even as a first year student, she instinctively knew how to be involved in the classroom and collaborate with her host teacher. She has continued to work with elementary students, including an internship at a forest kindergarten in Denmark during her study abroad semester, similar to the one she proposes to include in her study in Norway.

Unfortunately, we do not have an elementary education program here at St. Olaf, so Emily chose to study Biology and Norwegian with a concentration in Educational Studies. She's had several psychology courses as well. This research proposal would provide Emily with knowledge about best practices in both the U.S. and Norway for elementary education. It would blend her interests in teaching with her interest in the Norwegian language and culture and help her to discern whether or not she may wish to pursue a teaching license. Additionally, she and I have discussed the possibility of applying for a Fulbright fellowship, and this would be excellent preparation for that proposal as well.

While we could certainly move forward with the IR without the Rand Fellowship, an integral component of the project would be missing without the funding for her to conduct observational and interview research in Norway. This aspect of the research will help her develop skills in qualitative research and assist in the comparative nature of the study. I am excited to work on this project with Emily!

I think that she is qualified to conduct the research (as it will be guided inquiry), and she certainly has strong interest in this field. She is an excellent student (as can be evidenced by her transcript), and I know that she would well represent the Rand Fellowship. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Heather M. Campbell, Ph.D
Associate Professor, Education Department

April 9, 2019

To whom it may concern:

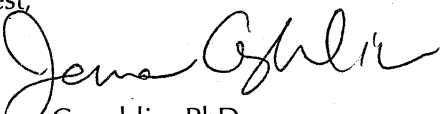
I am writing to you in support of Emily K. Johnson, who is applying for the Rand Scholar Award. Emily is an exemplary student both academically and socially. She truly represents the liberal arts student, having combined three different areas of study, Biology, Nordic Studies, and Education, to pursue a meaningful vocation of educating children in a holistic manner that includes their relationship to the natural world. She has created a research project that has both scholarly rigor and social relevance. Furthermore, I believe Emily has the educational background, social and cultural competency, and personal character traits to carry out her proposed project successfully.

I first met Emily during the fifth semester course in Norwegian that I teach here at St. Olaf. Although Emily had spent no time in an immersive language context in Norway, while many of her classmates had, she demonstrated a confidence and ability to persist despite the challenges she faced. I believe she will carry this confidence and persistence into her research project and use it to facilitate making appropriate connections in Norway and persevering through any social or intellectual roadblocks she may face. She was also responsible, effective at communicating, and good at working in teams with others—qualities that suggest she would be able to carry out her research independently, work effectively with partners in the US and Norway, and communicate the results of her research to a broader audience in an engaging manner.

In addition to language proficiency, the course in which I taught her also requires students to learn about Norwegian government, media, politics, and society, as well as its position in the world. Emily has gone on to study abroad in Copenhagen, where she has been learning about Nordic models of childhood. The first-hand experience and knowledge of Nordic society and culture that she has acquired over time should serve her well in carrying out her project, not only in terms of good scholarly framing and analysis, but also cultural awareness and sensitivity. Further, her study of Norwegian, biology, and educational studies makes her particularly suited to doing scholarly research across both disciplinary and cultural lines, as she is proposing to do by looking at outdoor play as part of the Norwegian pedagogical model.

Given my own knowledge of Norwegian society and culture, I believe Emily's project to be both valuable and feasible; I also feel confident in her ability to carry out the project independently and respectfully and that she will serve as an effective ambassador to the community, both for St. Olaf and for Norway as a subject of scholarly inquiry. In short, Emily is an excellent candidate for the Rand Scholar Award. Please contact me if you require further information.

Best,


Jenna Coughlin, PhD

Visiting Assistant Professor of Norwegian