**296.092 Undergraduate Independent Study**

**OPTION B**

**Title: Changes in Media Ownership in the U.S. since 2000**

**Reason for Independent Study rather than scheduled course:**

This independent study builds on previous research (spring 2013) undertaken by students in the Leadership Class (552), in preparation for a Media and Law symposium at UNC. That research looked the dramatic change in ownership of news organizations in the state of N.C. since 2000. This independent study will build on the regulatory interests of two students who have taken Digital Media Economics this past fall. It will expand on previous research and explore how ownership of news organizations in the U.S. has changed during a similar time period. The changing ownership (further consolidation of media outlets and the purchase of many newspapers by private equity and investment firms) has significant implications for the free flow of news and information in a democracy.

**Tangible product**

The students will build a database tracking changes in media ownership that can be updated in future semesters by students in the Leadership in a Time of Change class. In addition, they will produce papers summarizing their findings that will be posted on the businessofnews.unc.edu website and published in other outlets, such as NC DataNet.

**Grade will be based on:**

1. Caliber of their research and creation of a credible database
2. Papers they produce for either the website or other publications

**Description of program of study:**

This study will require that students devote at least five hours a week to researching and building the database. I will meet/confer weekly with them on their progress, and make adjustments in reading and research assignments.

 Initial reading assignments: Knight Commission on Informing Communities (co-authors Ted Olson and Marissa Mayer) and the FCC Report: The Information Needs of Communities (Waldman). Plus, transcripts of hearings by the FTC and FCC on this issue 2010-2012.