This is a named option in the Civil and Environmental Engineering M.S. (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/civil-environmental-engineering/civil-environmental-engineering-ms/) 

The M.S. CEE-Research degree program takes approximately two years to complete. M.S. research degree candidates will choose a pathway for their program of study: thesis or advanced independent study. Students who do not have a bachelor’s degree from an ABET accredited engineering program, or from a recognized international institution, may be required to complete deficiency coursework in addition to completing either the thesis or advanced independent study curriculum requirements. Selection of a pathway is dependent upon the educational objectives of the candidate.