
LING 400: Senior Honors Thesis Seminar

Class Meetings Mondays 3:30pm-6pm*
 ICC 104

Professor Jennifer Nycz
 jennifer.nycz@georgetown.edu
 Office hours: Tuesdays 2-4pm and by appointment
 Claim a spot here: <https://calendly.com/jn621>

Required Texts Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William Fitzgerald. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press. (Previous edition is fine, too)

Other Readings will be made available on the course Canvas site.

Course description. Linguistics 400 is required for all linguistics majors writing a senior honors thesis. The goal of this course is to provide additional support and guidance as you write your thesis. Your thesis mentor will be responsible for overseeing the content of your research and for evaluating your final thesis. In this class, the instructor and your peers will provide guidance and feedback on the research and writing process, helping you to get organized, break down the project into manageable stages, avoid mistakes, present your ideas clearly, and keep on schedule as the year progresses. Using a textbook, published models, peer review, and workshop-format discussions of preliminary work, we will discuss both progress and problems at each stage.

The seminar will meet “half-time” – approximately every other week during the fall and spring semesters (see provisional schedule below, and please mark your calendars). You will receive 3 credits for LING 400, with an IP grade for fall to be replaced by a letter grade upon successful completion of all course requirements in the spring. Credit for LING 400 will count toward Linguistics major requirements.

Class Format: This course primarily uses a discussion/workshop format. Attendance and participation are expected.

Note: This is an evolving document. It outlines activities that are related to keeping the group productive and on track. You should work with your individual mentor throughout this process as well – for instance, she or he might feel that you need to focus on a particular section of your literature review right away, in order to know what kind of data you really need to collect.

SEMESTER 1 (FALL): PLANNING AND BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH

*Note: This semester, our class will often end before 6pm. Next semester, as the thesis deadline approaches, and we will have more drafts and data to workshop, we will meet for the full 3:30-6:00 timeslot.)

Most of the written work in this class will consist of outlining and drafting the thesis itself, commenting on peer drafts, and writing article summaries.

Directions for article summaries. For each one, read one article (or it could be a book chapter or several chapters from the same book) that you believe will be a key source for your thesis. Write a one-paragraph summary and a one-paragraph comment on the article. This should not be more than one page, single-spaced. At the top of the document, put your name, and the full reference for the article.

In the summary, detail what the author(s) did, what the findings were, and why these findings are important. You should define key terms the author introduces or uses, if these are critical to understanding the main point of the article/chapter. (Use your own words; do not use the article's abstract! Always use quotation marks and indicate page numbers for direct quotations).

For the comment (which should be in a separate paragraph), you can indicate why the article is important for your thesis, identify something especially useful about it, address a surprising finding, (dis)agree with a methodological choice, or do something else.

Title each summary document as follows: YourLastName.AuthorNameYearOfPublication. So if I were writing a summary of a 1972 article written by William Labov, the document's title would be Nycz.Labov1972. Post the document AND the pdf of the article you read on Canvas, if it is available. Label the pdf with the first author's last name and the date of publication (e.g., Labov1972). (If you read a book chapter that is not available in pdf, don't worry about posting it.)

You will write 6 article summaries over the course of the term – these will ultimately help you write your literature review!

Course Schedule (subject to change!)

Wednesday, August 30th, 3:30-5:00: Introductions, Overview of the year ahead

Monday, September 4th: Labor Day (no class)

Monday, September 11th, 3:30-5:00: Defining a research problem; Thinking about data

- Read CoR Chs. 1-4
 - Read Robson Ch. 6 (on Canvas)
 - 📎 Article summary #1 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)
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Monday, September 18th: No class

- 📎 Article summary #2 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)
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Monday, September 25th, 5:00-6:00: Ethical research (feat. Dr. Cynthia Gordon, representing the IRB)

- CoR, 'The ethics of research' (p. 273–276) and 'Quick tip' (p. 83)
 - Bell Chapter 3 (on Canvas)
 - 📎 Complete CITI training (requires online reading and quiz completion)
 - 📎 Either email me, or bring into class, evidence that you completed the CITI training
 - 📎 Preliminary research problem statement (Post to Canvas by 2:00pm so I can print copies for class)
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Monday, October 2nd, 3:30-5:00: Literature review

- CoR Chapters 5 and 6
 - Bell Chapter 6 (on Canvas)
 - 📎 List of 8-10 sources that you believe will be important for your thesis [okay to include the 2 sources you've summarized] (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)
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Monday, October 9th: No class (mid-semester holiday)
✍ Article summary #3 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, October 16th: No class
✍ Article summary #4 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, October 23th, 3:30-5:00: **Arguments**
➤ CoR Chs. 7-10.
✍ Preliminary literature review outline (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, October 30th, 3:30-5:30: **Analysis Strategies**
➤ Macauley Ch. 4 (Canvas)
✍ Article summary #5 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)
✍ Draft paragraph(s) for your data and methods section (post to Canvas by 2:00pm)

Monday, November 6th: No class
✍ Article summary #6 (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, November 13th: No class
✍ Literature review draft due (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, November 20th: TBD
✍ Feedback on your classmates' literature reviews due (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

Monday, November 27th: No class

Monday, December 4th, 3:30-5:00: **Workshop: Progress and Problems**
✍ Revised draft of your data and methods section (Post to Canvas by 3:30pm)

SEMESTER 2: WRITING UP YOUR FINDINGS

Our Spring meeting schedule is forthcoming, but it will be many Mondays, from 3:30-6:00 (roughly 2 times per month, and we will meet the full allotted time). We will use one of these class periods for public presentations of your research and a celebration! Note that the final, non-negotiable deadline for having your written senior honors thesis to your mentor is April 20*. Your individual mentor might ask for it even earlier, though, so check with her/him. Your thesis must be approved by your mentor, and this approval must be reported me so that I can submit a grade to meet the College's deadline, in order for you to graduate.
