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Independent Degree Project Seminar Series in Linguistics

The seminar series is given specifically for students writing their degree project in English linguistics. It deals with academic writing, central aspects of theory and methodology and how to act as the opponent of another project at a defence seminar. Complementary to your individual supervision sessions, these seminars provide a forum for developing your degree project further.

The seminar series consists of the following:

1. *General thesis information and peer review* seminars
2. *Writing Academic English for degree projects* seminars
3. *Methods for linguistic degree projects* seminars and workshops

Overview

1. General thesis information and discussion

The first seminar introduces the seminar series and informs you about your allocated supervisor, and in the second to last seminar you will have the opportunity to participate in a peer review.

2. Writing Academic English for degree projects

These seminars in the degree project series aim to prepare you for writing your final thesis in English. The main goals are to help you recognise features of this genre and develop strategies to apply these insights to the writing of your own thesis. Thus, the course activities will be based on the comparative analysis of sample theses. There are four two-hour sessions which require preparation.

3. Methods for linguistic degree projects

The methods seminars introduce you to essential concepts and methods to support the work on your own degree project, and to help you discuss a peer's degree project in the final defence seminar. The seminars also provide ample opportunity to discuss your own projects.

Students are expected to actively participate in the seminars by doing reading and writing assignments and taking part in classroom discussions and activities.

Learning outcomes

The seminar series will address the following official intended learning outcomes of the course:

- Independently identify, formulate and use applicable methods to solve problems within the field of English linguistics;
- Produce oral and written reports of the study, discussing its aim and results;
- Observe recognised principles of research ethics.

It will do so by giving the students the opportunity to:

1. General thesis information and peer review:

- Orally and in writing discuss their degree project;

2. Writing Academic English for degree projects:

- Analyse the structure and content of academic texts in English linguistics;
- Apply adequate linguistic devices involved in structural and stylistic variation in academic texts on linguistic topics;

3. Methods for linguistic degree projects:

- Understand basic concepts and methods in English linguistics in relation to their own degree project;
- Consider research ethical norms.

Course materials

Excerpts from sample theses handed out in class.

A sample thesis in English Linguistics written by a student at the Department of English in a previous term (available on DiVA: http://su.diva-portal.org/ > select Advanced Search – Student Theses)

Further reading

Groom, N., & Littlemore, J. (2011). *Doing applied linguistics: A guide for students*. London: Routledge. Chapter 5. (Available on Athena)

Swales, J. (1990). Research articles in English. In *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings* (pp. 134-165). New York: Oxford University Press.

Handouts and tasks (see seminar series plan)

Seminar series plan

	Seminar	Preparation before the seminar
1	**Introduction to degree project & supervisor allocation**	-
2	**Introduction to academic writing** Academic writing The rhetorical triangle Overall structure of research-based writing Writing a title	-
3	**Qualitative methods** Overview and discussion of relevant qualitative approaches to your DP	Read Chapter 5 in Groom, N., & Littlemore, J. (2011). *Doing applied linguistics: A guide for students*. London: Routledge. (Available on Athena)
4	**Quantitative methods** Overview and discussion of relevant quantitative approaches to your DP	-
5	**Writing introductions**	1. Brainstorm a potential topic for your project: write a statement of the topic, and a provisional title for the degree project. Bring your ideas to class for discussion. 2. Post your working title on Athena. Add a short reflection (150 words max.) on why you chose this formulation. In your reflection consider what we discussed in class. 3. Respond to a classmate's post in terms of the effectiveness of the title. Remember to be specific in your comments both on what works well and suggestions for improvement (choose a post with no comments) 4. Find a sample thesis from our department on DiVA. 5. Read the Introduction of your sample thesis.
6	**The body of the thesis & peer review** The Method section Results Peer review of your draft introduction	1. Write a draft of your introduction and post it on Athena by the date specified. You should try to include the following rhetorical moves: • Establishing territory: topic, theories, previous literature; • Creating a niche: specific issue/angle, methodological and theoretical aspects worth considering; • Occupying the niche: statement of purpose, thesis, proposed angle of analysis (theoretical or methodological). 2. Prepare for the peer review by reading the draft(s) you've been assigned. 3. Read the Methods and Results section of your sample thesis. 4. Brainstorm 1-3 potential research questions for your degree project and make notes on why these are relevant, how they can be answered, and what data is needed to answer them. Write down your ideas and bring them to class.
7	**The body of the thesis cont.** Discussion Conclusion Wrap up and next steps	1. Read the Discussion and Conclusion of your sample thesis. After the seminar: Post the final draft of your introduction. The deadline is in the General information document.

8	**Categorisation and working with data** Basic concepts and procedures for data categorisation and working with data	
9	**Statistics** Short introduction to statistics for English linguistics degree projects	-
10	**Peer review**	1. Post your thesis draft on Athena. The deadline is in the General information document. 2. Carefully read your assigned partners' drafts (see Peer review folder). Use the instructions found in the Peer review section of Athena to decide what to comment on. Make notes and bring them to the peer review.
11	**How to be an opponent** Explains how the opposition works and how to ask questions	-