

381: Guidelines for final project proposal and presentation

LSA Linguistic Institute, Summer 2019 – University of California, Davis

1. Final project proposal (due on Thursday, July 19)

This is the final assignment of the class (worth 20% of the course grade), and the one that all of the smaller homework assignments have been building up to.

Outline a proposal for a future hypothetical study of your **focus computer-mediated communication** (i.e. your topic or case-study of interest). Please note that we are not asking you to collect any data – in fact, we need to overtly tell you **not** to do so for 381, because we do not have an ethics protocol that covers student work for this class. :)

Point form is fine, or a more essay-like write-up, of about 2-4 pages double-spaced with standard font-size and margins.

Your proposal (one per group or individual) should include all of the following elements, though not necessarily in this order. Note that we expect a wide range of projects and some of these may be more relevant or less so depending on the details.

1. The **variable(s) or phenomena** that you want to examine. This could be a conventional linguistic variable (or a set thereof), a frequency count, a qualitative study of a discourse-pragmatic phenomenon, etc. The most important aspect here is that it be **justified** and **not overly broad**.
2. The **population or group** you want to look at. (Optional: if it is a network or community of practice, what are the signs that it qualifies as such?)
3. Following Herring (2007)'s classification system, which **medium factors and social factors** do you anticipate will be particularly relevant based on your central research question? (Optional: is there anything about your topic that does not fit Herring's breakdown well?)
4. At least a few scholarly works that you're building off. This should not be a full bibliography, 3-4 articles is fine, and using articles from this course is also perfectly acceptable. Write a few sentences for each article about how your research relates.
5. One or more clearly stated **hypotheses** and any big assumptions that each hypothesis rests upon. In accordance with these, draw or create a **graph** corresponding to something you would *expect* to find. (Note: falsifying data for actual results sections is scientifically bogus; rather, what we're asking you to do here is to map out one example of what you anticipate finding.)
6. Methodology.
 - i. Number of speakers/listeners/participants/data points (e.g. tweets)
 - ii. Ways of studying the phenomenon (survey, corpus, experiment?)
 - iii. Factors you will look at (gender, age, platform, etc.)

- iv. How you will analyze the hypothetical data. Note, this does not mean you have to give us a detailed description of the statistics, but think about questions such as a) if it would make sense to run some inferential statistics, b) if you would present aggregate data as count, proportion, means, etc., c) if more inferential analysis doesn't make sense, what sort of qualitative findings would you use?
7. Ethical considerations that you would need to take into account.

Handing in the proposal: by email to at least one of us (watch for a reply confirming receipt).

2. Presentation (in class on Thursday, July 18)

Note: if there are logistical/health-related reasons why presenting could cause undue hardship for you and/or your group members, we're happy to talk about alternatives; feel free to get in touch.

5% of the course grade. A **very short** (seriously, 3-4 minutes) overview of what your proposal is. The phenomenon, platform, methodology, and hypothesis – super quickly. :) This is meant to be informal and mostly to give everyone a sense of the amazing research premises to be found within the class!

Slides/handouts are not necessary, but if you would like to display slides, please send them to us at least 24 hours before the beginning of the class (so by 1 PM on Wednesday the 17th).

Important notes

If you are working in a group, make sure to put everyone's name on the proposal!

You can **absolutely** use the first person, especially if your proposed study is ethnographic and/or relates to your own experiences.

If your CMC case study is about something very **new**, you still need links to the literature and a hypothesis – do your best to build a hypothesis off something at least semi-comparable, or a conjecture in the literature about the future of CMC, or so on.

You are expected to cite all existing scholarly works and refer to them in accordance with standard academic practice. (Any established style is fine – APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. – as long as all of the details are there.) The sources can be papers on the syllabus, works we've referred to but not read, and/or any works you've encountered elsewhere. The most important part is that there should be ties to the linguistic/sociology/etc. literature.

Your research is your own intellectual property; we will not exploit it.

We're happy to help, and/or just bounce ideas around – just let us know. Drop by office hours or come make an appointment for another time.

If you'd like to hand in this assignment in a more creative format, we're potentially receptive, but please talk to us first. :)