Long Assignment for

**Linguistics**
English 301

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English Department

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Introduction for Faculty Colleagues

The course is ENG 301: Linguistics, a course that introduces students to the basics of IPA phonetic transcription, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and cultural uses of language (dialects, slang, jargon, etc.)

This assignment sequence will be given over the course of the semester and will require students to demonstrate increasingly complex comprehension of the course material as well as relate the course activities to their research area. The individual aspects of the project will be discussed and modeled in class and through handouts (identifying suitable research topics, posing research questions, researching, writing a literature review, writing an abstract, and drafting/revising). Peer review will occur in several stages and a conference with the professor is required to go over a revised draft.

My aim for the project is to ask students to become familiar with academic writing in its various genres (lit review, abstract, drafts, audience, etc.), resources for conducting language research (field, web, and library research), a specific area of language inquiry (see suggested general research areas), and the process of revising a writing project in consultation with peers and faculty. Some attention will be paid to preparing research for presentation at a disciplinary conference (Sigma Tau Delta, SURF, NCUR, etc.)

Important features of the assignment are the multiple low- and higher-risk assignments and the goal to involve students in forming research questions for rather broad topics in language studies. Writing a literature review and an abstract will give students experience in these specific genres of academic writing that they will be able to use in other classes and research. The peer/instructor review aspect has several benefits: a) peer review enables students to learn from one another (by seeing how a colleague approached this assignment); b) both forms of review encourage students to take the rubric very seriously; and 3) the draft conference with the professor offers them the opportunity to discuss their work with me as well as writing, research, and drafting strategies. Finally, the sequenced nature of the assignment helps the professor to foreground the way that the subsequent assignments build on the earlier ones.

This is a revised assignment. In previous 301 courses, students picked a topic, gave it to me a few weeks into the semester, had the opportunities to share drafts with
me (but usually didn’t), and then received my feedback late in the semester with a “nearly finished” draft (their words). Of course, most were clearly not finished, and others were lacking in content, form, style, and research; but at this late date, students didn’t have enough time to revise successfully or learn how to perform some of the early building blocks to good research. I often assumed that upper-level students “knew” these things, but recently, I have had younger students and students in more varied majors. I cannot afford to assume their expertise any longer. As well, many of our students, majors and non, are eager to present their research at local, regional, and national conferences and pursue graduate school. It occurred to me that I could offer them much better structure for pursuing research in this class that could possibly lead to a presentation, and would certainly lead to a more deliberate and logical approach to posing research questions, researching, and writing/revising.

Rubric used to evaluate completed project is attached.
The Assignment I Distribute to Students
ENG 301 – Linguistics
Research Project

Reading. Research. Inquiry. Results. Sharing. The process of doing research and sharing that research with others can be daunting and frustrating. The thing to remember is that it is a process. You’ll have moments of success and dead ends. You’ll read a lot of information that you’ll be able to use and much that perhaps you can’t. Please don’t go into a research project with the idea that you can do it in a couple of weeks or that the research you do will be finite or all-inclusive. It won’t be either. In order to help you better understand the process and the products that result from your research, this assignment will extend over the semester and will be divided into several assignments.

Each component is designed to guide you through the research process by identifying research topics/questions, explaining your rationale to the class and instructor for selecting this area of research, drafting research questions, preparing a literature review, writing an abstract, preparing an initial draft for peer review, preparing a revised draft for instructor review, and ultimately assembling all of the components into a final research project. Included with each draft will be an assessment of your progress/final product (form to be provided). Each of these components will be useful in any research you do in the future.

The components of the assignment are detailed below, along with how each will be evaluated and how many points each is worth in the overall score of 100 points. You will find various rubrics for how I and your classmates will evaluate some of the components as well as handouts on Moodle that will model some of the assignments. We will be discussing each component in class as well.

The specific course objectives satisfied by this project are as follow:

- Students will learn to appreciate the complexity of the English language and its context in the global community through their course readings and research topics.
- Students will learn how to research and write about language issues by preparing several “scaffolded” assignments that culminate in a substantial research project.

Overview of assignments and due dates

First three weeks of semester
general introduction to language research and topics

Assignment 1: Sept. 16
Prepare a document to bring to class that explains the importance of your topic and why you are interested in researching it. Include any preliminary research you have conducted thus far. Length: ½-1 page (or as long as you need) Possible points: 10

Assignment 2: Oct. 2
Bring a draft of your research questions thus far and possible thesis. Length: 3-5 questions, minimal Possible points: 10
Assignment 3:  **Oct. 9**  
*Literature Review* is due (Moodle handout of instructions and sample entry) Possible points: 15

Assignment 4:  **Oct. 21**  
*Abstract* is due (Moodle handout and sample)  Possible points: 10

Assignment 5:  **Oct. 30**  
*Initial draft for peer review* (bring 3 copies to share with your group). Length: at least 4 pages, typed, double-spaced with proper citations and works cited page  Possible points: 15

Assignment 6:  **Nov. 13**  
*Revised draft packet is due*. This rough draft should be at least 8 pages long, double-spaced, in 12 point font with an introduction and conclusion, clearly worded thesis, clear organization, adequate coverage of the topic; draft may lack polish and final research but should be “finished” enough for instructor to have a clear idea of progress. Packet will include a pocket folder with the following: revised abstract, latest rough draft with Works Cited page, copies of non-web sources (only what you cite in your paper), and assessment form. Possible points: 15  
**Required conference with instructor prior to Nov. 20**

Assignment 7:  **Dec. 2**  
*Final draft packet is due*. Final draft packet will include the pocket folder with the following: Final revised research paper with Works Cited page, multiple drafts to show progress (including the rough draft above), copies of non-web sources, and final assessment form. Possible points: 25

**Nuts and bolts for final draft**

Form: Typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font  
Title page, works cited, parenthetical documentation (MLA or APA format)

All papers must be properly document in-text, and page numbers must be provided for any material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, even with APA format. *Any evidence of plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the paper and possible failure of the course. Please familiarize yourself with the Elon University Honor Code regarding procedures and penalties regarding plagiarism.*

I encourage field research on these projects (interviews, observation, taping, surveys, etc.). I will be more than happy to assist you with interview questions, survey construction, tips for interviewing, etc.

- **Option 1**: Construct a research question in some area of linguistic/language studies.

**Suggested Topics (merely suggestions)**

A study of a dialect (regional or social): African-American varieties, Gullah, American Indian, New England, etc. This option requires detailed historical, phonological, morphological, and lexical analysis.

Differences between British or Australian English and its American cousin (historical, phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical)

Bi-lingualism and the challenges bi-lingual students have in the classroom (should be narrowed down)
Linguistic challenges encountered by speakers whose native language is not English
Nonverbal communication (signing, body language, etc.)
Issues and current research in animal communication research (chimps, gorillas, dolphins, whales, etc.)
Slang, jargon, or euphemisms in a particular sport, hobby, occupation, social group (e.g. computer, law, education, surfing, football, frat/sorority groups, to name a few)
Slang terms used for the same term (e.g. women, money, drugs, etc.). This topic could include an analysis from a historical perspective and is an excellent topic for field research.
Child language acquisition, language and the deaf child, etc.
Language used in advertising
Language controversy in a religious, scientific, political etc. issue (e.g. evolution, abortion, political correctness)
The purpose and creation of constructed or artificial languages (Esperanto, Klingon, Na'vi, e.g.)
Language used in political campaigns.
Language and the brain (aphasia, dyslexia, etc.)
Endangered languages and related cultural issues

Use your textbook to help with topics. Come and see me. Do a little research. Most of these are fairly broad, so you'll need to narrow them down.

- **Option 2**: You may examine a literary dialect used by one author in his/her works and discuss how it is different than examining a spoken dialect. If you choose this topic, see me for further instructions. Literature written with characters from a specific culture or region is the best to research: e.g. Caribbean, Appalachian, New England, and African/African-American, Native American or indigenous, or fantasy worlds (cf Cloud Atlas); many American, British, and Continental authors are good candidates. You might look at syntax or style, or you might focus on the actual grammatical or lexical structure—or all of the above. This takes a lot of detailed analysis and careful reading but can be very rewarding if you are especially fond of a particular writer.
### RUBRIC for Final Research Project IN ENG 301: Linguistics

#### Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grasp of material</td>
<td>Demonstrates depth, originality, and creativity in discussing subject</td>
<td>Demonstrates a clear and thoughtful understanding of subject</td>
<td>Demonstrates an adequate understanding of subject</td>
<td>Understanding of subject is not sufficiently demonstrated</td>
<td>No in-depth analysis of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting evidence from sources</td>
<td>Excellent use of specific examples and citations from sources to illustrate analysis</td>
<td>Good use of examples from sources; some generalization without specifics</td>
<td>Minimal use of examples; mostly generalization</td>
<td>General examples, but no use of specific citations from sources</td>
<td>Very few general examples; lack support from sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Structure

| Introduction                  | Strong thesis statement that sets the stage for a compelling analysis        | Clear, focused thesis that sets up an interesting analysis          | Thesis statement is adequate, but vague or general                   | Thesis statement is disjointed, unclear, or unfocused; intro paragraph is brief | No thesis statement and/or very brief or no intro paragraph               |
| Paragraph Structure           | Paragraphs are well-developed and follow a clear organizational path        | Paragraphs are well-developed, but organizational path may be unclear | Underdeveloped paragraphs and unclear organizational path            | Undeveloped paragraphs and no clear organizational path              | No clear development of paragraphs or organization                       |
| Transitions                   | Create a smooth, elegant flow of ideas                                      | Clearly move from one idea to the next                              | Inconsistent, need polish                                           | Awkward; interrupt flow of ideas and impede clarity                | Missing, no attempt to tie ideas together                                |
| Conclusion                    | Insightful statement clearly evolving from the analysis                     | Thoughtful ending that ties together ideas presented               | Sums up the analysis clearly but lacks insight                      | Simply restates ideas in the introduction                           | Missing, or unrelated to analysis                                         |

#### Polish

| Style                         | Expresses ideas fluently and precisely using effective vocabulary and sentence variety | Expresses ideas clearly and well using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety | Expresses ideas clearly but lacks sufficient vocabulary and sentence variety | Contains inappropriate or misused words, making it difficult to read and understand; little sentence variety | Has severe problems with language to express ideas; no attention paid to sentence variety |
| Mechanics                     | Contains no typos or misspelled words                                         | Contains 1-2 typos or misspelled words                              | Contains 3-5 typos or misspelled words                              | Contains 6-9 typos or misspelled words                              | Contains 10 or more typos or misspelled words                            |
| Grammar                       | Demonstrate facility with grammatical                                         | Generally demonstrates facility but may                             | Generally demonstrates facility but has                             | Contains major errors in grammar: run-                              | Pervasive errors in grammar, resulting in                                |
### Rules of Standard Written English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variety and number of sources</td>
<td>Uses an above-average variety and number of sources</td>
<td>Uses a variety and number of sources</td>
<td>Minimal variety and number of sources</td>
<td>Below average variety and number of sources</td>
<td>Faulty documentation/no sources; plagiarized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of sources into text</td>
<td>Sources are cited in a variety of ways and integrated seamlessly into the analysis</td>
<td>Sources are cited in some ways but may not be as well-integrated</td>
<td>Sources are “stuck in” and minimal</td>
<td>Little to no integration of sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format of in-text citations</td>
<td>All citations are cited in-text in the appropriate form.</td>
<td>Most citations are cited in-text in the appropriate form.</td>
<td>Some citations are cited in-text in the appropriate form.</td>
<td>Citations are generally not in proper format</td>
<td>No citation for cited sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format of Works Cited page</td>
<td>WC page is in the appropriate form and alphabetical</td>
<td>Most WC entries are in the appropriate form and alphabetical</td>
<td>Some WC entries are in the appropriate form and may or may not be alphabetical</td>
<td>Most WC is not in the appropriate form or alphabetical</td>
<td>No WC page</td>
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### Overall Impression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impression</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
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<td>Engaging, persuasive, precisely crafted, and a pleasure to read</td>
<td>Well-organized, thoughtful, and interesting; easy to read</td>
<td>Good ideas, clear effort, a little unpolished or awkward to read in places</td>
<td>Very difficult to read because of stylistic, content, and grammatical weaknesses</td>
<td>Does not fulfill the assignment or is incoherent and filled with errors in content and/or grammar</td>
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