

Final Project Guidelines¹

LING135 | Fall 2023

Important Dates

1. [Proposal](#): due **Tuesday, October 31** at 11:59pm (Week 8)
2. [Data Workshop](#): on **Tuesday, November 7** at class time (Week 9)
3. [In-Class Presentation](#): **Thursday, November 9th or Tuesday, November 14** (Week 9/10)
4. [Final paper](#): due **Saturday, November 18** at 6:00pm

Overview

The goal of the final project for Introduction to Sociolinguistics is to give you an opportunity to do sociolinguistics! As such, it will require you, along with your partner, to gather some sort of original data, to analyze that data in light of themes and topics in the course (as well as novel sources you will find on your own), and to write up your findings in a short paper. I have provided seeds of good projects as we have progressed throughout the term; however, the best projects come from things you are intrinsically motivated to question. Do you spend a great deal of time online and want to study the speech communities you encounter there? Are there groups you participate in that have particular communication norms that would be a good source of data? Do you want to update or replicate a study we have read in class? Perhaps you'd prefer to do a rapid survey like Labov's. Any of these would make excellent projects.

As noted in the syllabus, you must receive a passing grade on this project in order to pass the course.² This project will be graded on traditional rubrics (meaning you can receive partial credit), and is worth 50 points in total. You must earn at least 32.5 points to pass our class.

This project will be completed in 4 stages: a proposal, a data workshop, an in-class presentation, and a final paper. Each component is detailed below.

Proposal (10 points)

Tuesday, October 31 at 11:59pm

This is a one page (max) description of your project. Why is your project interesting? How will you do it? A successful project proposal will describe:

1. The main question you are asking (Do men and women exhibit different linguistic behavior on TikTok? Do people of different ages have different terms for heavily gendered occupations? How do women of color perform whiteness in their standup comedy?)

¹ Much of this final project is modeled from a similar assignment written by Jessi Grieser.

² Regardless of how many points you have accumulated throughout the term.

2. Your method for collecting your data (Gather Facebook posts from 15 male friends and 15 female friends; survey 5 people each in 3 different age brackets about gendered occupations; watch and annotate r-lessness in five episodes of a reality TV show.)
3. An annotated bibliography that includes a citation (in APA or your citation style of choice) and 2-3 sentences summarizing the contents of each source.³ You must include a **minimum of five references**, three of which we have not read in class. For our purposes, a “scholarly reference” will most likely be an article in a peer-reviewed academic journal, or a book (or dissertation) chapter.⁴ Note that you do not have to have read each of your sources in its entirety (yet)! Oftentimes the abstract will be enough to tell you if a paper will be relevant to your project.

You may always ask our library liaison for help with your research in this class. **Adam Lewis** is the library liaison for Linguistics. Librarians help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an online appointment with your library liaison](#) or chat with a librarian online 24/7. You can also [email and call](#). For more information on hours and librarians, [visit the Gould Library website](#).

Data Workshop (5 points)

Tuesday, November 7 during class

On this date, you and your partner will have collected the majority of your data and will bring three hard copies of your data to class. During class, we will workshop the data in small groups—everyone will have an opportunity to comment on connections they see, other sources they can provide, and interesting features in your classmates’ data. We will discuss effective ways for you to collect and present your data before this workshop.

In-Class Presentation (15 points)

Week 9/10 during class

Together with your partner will give a 10-12 minute presentation on your project on the last two days of class. Three additional minutes will be reserved for questions (for a total maximum of 15 minutes per group). Slides should be used to enhance your presentation. Your presentation will include your research question, an overview of the existing research that motivates your research question, a summary of the data you have collected, and your (tentative) results.

In addition to presenting your own projects, you are expected to be present for and engaged in your classmates’ presentations. This includes asking insightful questions during the question period and giving feedback that may be helpful as your classmates write their final papers.

[You can signup for your final presentation slot here.](#)

³ The bibliography is not included in your one page limit!

⁴ If you find a source outside of these categories in the course of your research, please run it by me first.

Final Paper (20 points)

Saturday, November 18th at 6pm

You and your partner(s) will submit one group paper. The paper will be 7-10 pages long (double spaced), excluding figures, tables and references. It should contain the following sections:

1. Introduction: Define the topic and motivate your research question. This is where your literature review goes.
2. Methods: Describe how your data was collected.
3. Results: Clearly report the results of your study. Use tables and graphs, if relevant. Avoid too much interpretation of the data here – just present the data and save the discussion for the Discussion.
4. Discussion: Interpret your results. Say whether your expectations/hypothesis was supported or not. Propose how your research could be tested and supported in the future with more data (your fantasy study). Discuss any unexpected results or additional questions that appeared during your study.
5. Conclusion: Relate your study to the bigger picture of sociolinguistics.

Using and citing literature:

At a minimum, you must cite five scholarly sources in your final paper.⁵ Your paper will be formatted in APA using in-text citations and a reference page at the end.

Nuts and Bolts:

Only one paper will be submitted per pair. You should aim for 7-10 pages, double spaced, with reasonable fonts and margins.⁶ The finished paper must be submitted as a PDF to Moodle by Saturday, November 18th at 6pm.

A note on writing style: This is a formal research paper, so you should practice your academic writing that approximates SAE.

⁵ Theoretically these will be the same sources you included in your annotated bibliography. However, if your project takes a different turn, that is also fine.

⁶ Typically this is 10-12 point font, 1 inch margins.