

Department of Latina/Latino Studies
Senior Research Project

The senior research project is intended to serve as the intellectual capstone of the Latina/Latino Studies experience. It offers you the opportunity to use the strong writing, analytic, and research skills you have developed during your college career to carry out a research project under the supervision of a LLS faculty member. The goal of the senior research requirement is to give you the opportunity to conduct an extended paper that is more ambitious than what is required in ordinary coursework. Suitable topics include exploring aspects of US Latina/o history, literature, culture, music, economics, politics, or sociology, and any analysis in which a Latina/o subject matter is a significant item of comparison.

(Note: Other projects may be accepted in lieu of a paper. The exact nature of such projects should be developed and agreed upon by you and a LLS faculty member.)

Eligibility

All LLS majors must complete a senior research project. Those who are eligible (minimum 3.25 overall GPA and at least 3.5 in the major) may choose to write a senior honors thesis instead (see LLS Undergraduate Advisor for information).

Senior Research Project Advisor

The student is responsible for finding a professor who will act as his or her senior research project advisor. You might want to choose a former instructor whom you admire and feel comfortable with. Faculty members supervise senior research projects on a voluntary basis, but many will be pleased to assist students with a paper topic pertaining to their field of study or interest. The senior research project advisor must be a member of the Latina/Latino Studies Department faculty (this includes affiliates). Information on each of the faculty can be found on the LLS website (<http://www.lls.illinois.edu/people/>).

The senior research project advisor is essential. The advisor offers the student informed, constructive criticism at all stages from the formulation of a feasible topic to the completion of the actual paper. He or she provides advice and, if necessary, training in the necessary research skills. The senior research project advisor will also read and evaluate the finished product, but will not do any of the actual research, writing, or revising.

It is important to establish a good working relationship with your senior research project advisor at the outset, one in which you both understand the mutual responsibilities. You both must agree on the scope, length (18-25 pp.), and format of the paper, the frequency of advising sessions, and a timetable for completion.

Senior Research Project Format and Preparation

The standards of your major field of study will determine the format of the senior research project. In preparing the final version of the paper, however, please follow the guidelines below.

1. The paper must contain a Bibliography.
2. The paper must be typed, preferably on a computer, and easily readable. Use good quality paper for copying the senior research project.
3. Write the paper in 12-point Times or Times Roman.
4. Use sheets of paper of standard size (8-1/2 x 11 inches) with one-inch margins, type only on one side of the paper with double-spaced text.
5. Should the document require figures or graphics on separate sheets of paper, reduce their size such that they fit on standard size paper with one-inch margins. Figures and graphics may also be embedded within the text.

6. Pages should be numbered at the center of the top or bottom of each page or at the upper right-hand at the beginning of the margin.
7. The Title Page should be arranged in accordance with the model shown on the final page of this document.
8. Follow the title page with a 250-word abstract, headed simply "Abstract." An abstract is a concise summary of the purposes, organization, methodology, and conclusions of your paper. It is meant to tell your readers at a glance what your paper is about so that they can determine whether or not it is relevant to their research and reading interests. Normally, an abstract states the purpose and scope of the paper, outlines its organization, describes the research methods used, and states its conclusions. At the end of the abstract, list 4 keywords that best capture the major themes of the paper (e.g., Keywords: immigration, illegality, neoliberalism, resistance)
9. All papers should contain the following components in the following order:
 - a. title page
 - b. abstract (with 4 keywords)
 - c. body of the work
 - d. endnotes (if endnotes are used instead of footnotes)
 - e. bibliography
10. The length of the paper should be between 18-25 pages, excluding footnotes, bibliography, cover page, and so forth.
11. The style of documentation will vary depending upon your discipline and should be worked out between you and your senior paper advisor. Normally, the standards provided in *APA*, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style* should be used for papers in the humanities and social sciences.

Students must document all material that is drawn from outside sources. Facts, quotations, paraphrases of scholars' views, and background historical information all must be properly documented. There are no exceptions to this rule!

Procedures and Timetables

Getting Started

During the spring semester before you senior year, you should consult with the Latina/Latino Studies undergraduate advisor to discuss requirements and procedures. At this time, you should also think about how you will go about meeting the senior research project requirement. We offer two ways for you to meet the requirement:

1. LLS 490. This class offers an independent study arranged between you and a faculty member based on your common theoretical and/or topical interests. You and a faculty member should arrange a scheduled time to meet to discuss readings and research related to this topic. The result will generally be a single long research paper (18-25 pp.). Normally, you will report to the supervising professor regularly about the project (for example, once every week, every two weeks, or every three weeks, whether in person or over e-mail).

Ideally, you should choose a professor to work with (basically your senior research project advisor) during the spring semester before you senior year. After choosing an advisor, and in consultation with him/her, you would then make a decision as to which semester you will write the paper. You must sign up for 4 units of LLS 490 during the chosen semester. (It is also possible to write the senior research project over the course of two semesters, generally fall and spring of your senior year. In this case, you would sign up for 2 units of LLS 490 each of the two semesters). Basically, you would be working on the paper strictly as an independent study project.

2. Any Existing 300/400-Level Course + LLS 490: With an instructor's permission, you can adapt selected 300- or 400-level LLS courses (see LLS Undergraduate Advisor for information) in which you are enrolled (normally, during your senior year) to meet the senior research project requirement. You will work closely with the instructor,

who will in effect serve as your senior research project adviser, to adapt the course to fulfill this requirement by beginning and completing a research/writing project relevant to the course; this project may be a longer and more detailed version of an existing course requirement, or may be a new project unrelated to the course assignments, though still related to the course content. Either way, you must attend all class meetings, do all regular coursework, and, additionally, expand or complement the course material to complete an expanded research and/or writing project, as agreed upon by you and the professor of the course at the beginning of the semester. In most cases, the result will be a single paper longer than an ordinary class paper (18-25 pp.); other final projects can be arranged in consultation with your professor. Normally, you will report to your professor regularly about the project. In addition to being enrolled in the course, you would be expected to sign up for 4 units of LLS 490 with the same instructor. The additional units of LLS 490 would be for the writing of the senior paper.

You should contact the professor with whom you would like to work during the semester prior to attending the class to ensure that the faculty member agrees to serve as your advisor.

Completing the Senior Paper

Your completed senior research project must be turned in to the LLS office for final approval no later than the last day of instruction (during the semester in which you finish writing the senior paper).

The senior research project must be presented unbound in a manila envelope. A copy of the Title Page must be attached to the front of the envelope.

Inserted into the envelope must be a certification sheet signed by the instructor in charge (your senior research project advisor) and by the chair of Latina/Latino Studies. You can get this form from the LLS undergraduate advisor.

Oral Presentation of Senior Research Project

At the end of the school year, you will participate in the Latina/Latino Studies Symposium, where you will make an oral presentation of your senior research project. The length of your presentation should be 5-10 minutes. This is a formal presentation. Thus, plan to either read from a prepared text or speak from a clear outline, and have well-designed PowerPoint slides to accompany your presentation. Practice your talk ahead of time and time it to make sure you can stay within your allotted time. Your presentation should include (although not necessarily in this order): your primary research question or problem, the motive or import of your study, your methodology or how you went about answering your question or developed a response to a problem, a summary of the main point of your argument and interpretation of evidence, and if appropriate, the steps you would take next with your project given further time, access to other research material, etc. You should be prepared to answer questions.

Evaluation

Senior research projects will be read and commented upon by the senior research project advisor. They will be graded on the following scale.

- “A” – Superior
- “B” – Good
- “C” – Fair
- “D” or “F” – Unacceptable

Sample Title Page

Each copy of the search research project must be accompanied by a cover page in the following format:

LATINA/OS AND THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION

by

John L. Doe

Senior Research Project
for the
Degree of Bachelor of Art
in
Latina/Latino Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

2012