

**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.

**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 Instructor, Faculty Resources, and LLS Writing Specialist**

The instructor of LLS 490 serves as the principal advisor for senior research projects. The instructor offers the student informed, constructive criticism at all stages from the formulation of a feasible topic to the completion of the actual paper. They provide advice and, if necessary, training in the necessary research skills. The LLS 490 instructor also reads and evaluates the finished product, but will not do any of the actual research, writing, or revising.

The instructor may direct students to other faculty members in LLS who have expertise in areas relevant to a student's senior project. These faculty will serve simply as resources, providing expertise and guidance (for example, they may point you to relevant literature or offer advice about proper methodology for your project). However, they will not be involved in reading or grading the paper.

**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 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 suggested length of the paper is between 12-20 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 start thinking about topics for your research project. The research project will be written as part of **LLS 490 Research and Writing Seminar**. This capstone seminar, designed for advanced majors in LLS, will guide students through the process of writing a senior research paper relevant to the field of Latina/Latino Studies. Students will develop research skills through discussions, writing exercises, and workshops.

### *Completing the Senior Paper*

Your completed senior research project must be turned into the LLS 490 instructor no later than the last day of instruction (during the semester in which you finish writing the senior paper). All final edits to the paper must be completed and approved by the instructor by the end of finals week.

The final copy of the senior research paper must then be sent to the undergraduate advisor. The advisor will do a final copy edit of the paper (to check for formatting errors) and create a bound copy of the paper to include in the LLS departmental library.

## **Oral Presentation of Senior Research Project**

Towards 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 8-10 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**

LATINA/OS AND THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION

by

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

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

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