

The English 400-Level Handbook



M.L. Van Nice, [Plinitude](#), 1994. ¹¹_{sep} Based on Pliny the Elder, [Historia naturalis](#) [Natural history]. Venice, 1469.
<http://www.sil.si.edu/Exhibitions/Science-and-the-Artists-Book/>

2024

400-Level English General Information

**400-Level Coordinator:
Grace Moore, Arts (Burns) 1.S.12, 479-8629
grace.moore@otago.ac.nz**

Introduction

Welcome to 400-level studies in English. This year you will extend and deepen your studies, concentrating on one discipline (or two, for those in combined Honours) and pursuing scholarly interests along more focused lines. This will be a rewarding and a challenging year; it will also be an intensive year. You will be expected not only to attend all classes, but to actively prepare for and participate in class discussion.

Our 400-level programme has two main components: 1) three taught classes and 2) a dissertation equivalent to the points-value of three further papers, which will involve independent research and writing under a supervisor's guidance.

During the year you will attend a series of classes introducing you to the skills, resources, and processes involved in writing a dissertation, and you will also meet regularly with your supervisor.

Course topics reflect the research expertise and enthusiasms of teaching staff more closely than is possible at undergraduate level. They offer the opportunity to explore specialised aspects of the field, and to develop your own skills in independent research. The 400-level year emphasises a research ethos, prepares you to contribute to a research culture in the English & Linguistics programme and the discipline, and offers skills—information searching and gathering, critical analysis, integration and writing, oral and written presentation—which lay the foundations for postgraduate study, as well as being invaluable in a wide range of employment contexts.

Although this is a demanding year, we hope the rewards of advanced work in smaller and more interactive classes, closer links with classmates and staff, and participation in departmental activities and social events will be enriching.

General Guidelines

Each of your 400-level papers in English has a course outline describing the nature and purpose of the course, the structure of the year's study, assessment topics, and resources. You should also download a copy of the Department's Guidelines and Procedures document, available here:

https://www.otago.ac.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0026/318545/english-and-linguistics-procedures-and-guidelines-653725.pdf

Read ahead

Your participation in classes will be more successful and rewarding if you keep up with the reading. In many cases it is advisable to read ahead of actual class schedules: in the case of especially long works, so that you don't fall behind in one class through meeting the internal assessment deadlines of another and so that you can make early informed choices with regard to seminar or essay topics.

Plan ahead

Note due dates for assessment, and plan ahead to meet these. Some courses may have set internal assessment dates; others may have a selection of dates depending on the topic chosen; others may have a general due date towards the end of the paper. If you're able to make your own choices about topic and submission date, or if there is a general submission date towards the end of the course, do not allow everything to pile up and expect to prepare the whole year's coursework at once.

Do not hesitate to consult me or your lecturer if you are experiencing difficulties. Students find 400-level work to be very intense, but there is support for you if you are feeling overwhelmed. For more information on consideration for health or other reasons, see the section on **Questions and Problems, below**.

Work consistently on your 490 Dissertation

By arranging and keeping to a regular meeting time with your supervisor, and setting schedules for the completion of research and writing tasks throughout the year, you will avoid the last-minute panic of the end-of-year submission date. Do not leave your dissertation on the back burner until late in the year, but keep at it steadily. You should have only 'fix-up' editing and corrections to be thinking about in the final weeks of the second semester.

Check your email regularly

It is *your* responsibility to email your supervisor or paper coordinator in advance if you cannot attend a meeting, lecture, or seminar. Staff also expect students to check their university email account at least daily or have it forwarded to another service. All emails sent to the student university email account are assumed to have been noted and acted upon; failure to receive a notification sent by email will not be an excuse for any missed deadlines, relocated meetings or other changes.

An ENGL 490 Dissertation is required as part of the 400-level Honours and Postgraduate Diploma course of study. You will work with the support and advice of a supervisor on a topic that interests you, related to an area with which you have gained familiarity through undergraduate study, or derived from an area pursued in one of the taught papers at 400-L, and for which the Department can offer appropriate supervision.

ENGL 490 Introductory Classes are held in Arts 1.W.1 on Fridays, 12.00–12.50 pm. Please see the attached schedule of seminars.

Specific Information about the ENGL 490

An ENGL 490 dissertation is equivalent to three taught papers, and is **15,000-20,000 words in length**, including footnotes, bibliography, and any other supporting materials. Appended primary sources or other materials solely for the information of the marker are not included in the word count.

Students and supervisors should establish a basis and timeframe for regular supervisory feedback. Normally, you should expect to have meetings weekly or fortnightly for up to an hour, depending on agreed work patterns. All work submitted for feedback must be written in full sentences, not in note form, and should comprise an agreed level of completion (e.g. a whole section, a 'chapter').

A student-supervisor agreement is due no later than Friday, 8 March

A self-review and an indicative bibliography, which will form the basis of a progress report to be completed by your supervisor, **must be submitted to your supervisor by Friday, 19 July.**

A full draft of the dissertation (**a substantially complete manuscript of all chapters, carefully written and proofread**) must be submitted to the supervisor for feedback by **Friday, 13 September.** The final version must be submitted by **Friday, 18 October 2024.**

Submission date for the Dissertation is 18 October 2024

You must submit an electronic copy of your 490 through TurnItIn.

Submission and Assessment of Written Work

All written work must conform to the English & Linguistics programme's Guidelines and Procedures.

You must keep hard or electronic copies of all work submitted for assessment during the year, to be available for external moderation of Honours results.

If you are considering further postgraduate work, either at Otago or elsewhere, your marks will have a significant bearing on your applications for local, national, or international scholarships. To ensure the fairness and equitability of internal departmental assessment, and to achieve comparable standards across university English departments at this level, each English department enters into a mutual external assessment relationship with another New Zealand university.

Any marked internal assessment for the year (essays, tests, etc.) not already submitted through TurnItIn must be returned to the department at the end of the teaching year in case it is required for external moderation.

Make sure you take photocopies of your **marked** internal assessment work for your own study purposes before handing the originals back in to the departmental office by the last teaching day of the year.

It is important to understand that all 400-level marks are provisional until after the process of external moderation.

If you are on a borderline when your overall grade is calculated, an external moderator will read any examination scripts and your internal assessment work, to consult on a final result.

All written work, including the dissertation, will be assessed according to the required standards of research, structure and argumentation, and written presentation.

All 490 projects are assessed both by your supervisor and by an internal examiner in the English & Linguistics programme. All dissertation marks are also moderated by readers from another New Zealand university. The department determines your final mark based upon written evaluations from both internal and external readers. External examiners' reports will not be available to students. However, anonymous internal reports will be provided to students. You can find more information about the policy on external moderation here (same file; different formats):

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanities/otago059991.pdf>

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanities/otago059984.doc>

A Warning Against Plagiarism

Students should make sure that all submitted work is their own. Plagiarism is a form of dishonest practice and is defined as copying or paraphrasing another's work, whether intentionally or otherwise, and presenting it as one's own (approved University Council, December 2004). In practice this means plagiarism includes any attempt in any piece of submitted work (e.g. an assignment or test) to present as one's own work the work of another (whether of another student or a published authority). Assignments submitted electronically may be checked through the software "Safe Assign" or Turnitin for evidence of copied material. A match with other written material may be interpreted as plagiarism if it is not properly cited according to departmental bibliographical standards. Submission of an assignment requiring your student ID and password is an admission that what you have submitted is your own work.

Any student found responsible for plagiarism or any other form of dishonest academic practice in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations which may result in various penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases, exclusion from the University.

For the full policy please refer to the 2024 English–Linguistics Policies and Procedures guide.

Academic and Other Support

Central Library Access

The English & Linguistics programme has a librarian, Genevieve Scanlan, available to assist you. Please make use of her expertise. You should phone or email Genevieve to make an appointment. She will also run a hands-on workshop on library tools in Semester 1. Her email is genevieve.scanlan@otago.ac.nz

Please avail yourself of the interloan facility; you can request full books or you can ask for individual chapters of books, which will be delivered to you in pdf format. If you come across books not owned by the library that are likely to be of general interest, please ask your supervisor to request that the library purchase them. If the book is likely to be important to your research, be sure to make such requests early, as purchasing and processing take time.

Class Representatives

Because of the smaller number of 400-Level students, we have one or two representatives for the whole group, rather than one from each paper. It is advisable to have a full-time student in English taking a range of papers, and perhaps a second representative taking different papers, to facilitate the widest contact with the group. However, it is important that the representatives make themselves known and available to be contacted easily to facilitate full awareness of the concerns of all students.

The class representative(s) for ENGL 400 is

Māori and Pacific Island Support and Liaison Contacts

There are a number of sources of support and liaison available at school, division and university levels. All contacts are listed in the English–Linguistics Policies and Procedures Guide, but please see the 490 coordinator (Grace) if you would like to be directed to a support service.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Information and Support Service is available to help, by contacting the Disabilities Office (ph. 479-8235; fax 479-5873; or email disabilities@otago.ac.nz). There is also an Otago University Disability Information and Support Website at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities/>

Questions or Problems

Your 400-level representative will be available to take questions, comments, and concerns to the staff-student committee. However, if there are individual matters you wish to discuss relating to specific papers, you are also welcome to take these to the convener of the specific paper, or to Grace Moore as the 400-level coordinator. The 400-level coordinator can also advise you on more general problems concerning your course of study. Do not hesitate to come to us with your concerns. If appropriate, we can also advise you of other avenues available.

Extension Policy for 400-Level Students

If you become ill or have other problems that prevent you from attending class or making progress on your internal assessment or your dissertation, **please keep documentation of such problems. If at the end of the year you need special consideration for any reason, it is vital that you have such documentation.**

If you need to apply for an extension, immediately contact both your supervisor and the 400-level coordinator. Extensions (with the requisite documentation) will be granted until the last day of teaching. Extensions after the last day of classes can only be granted by the Pro-Vice Chancellor. As noted above, extensions are only granted under special circumstances and are not available merely due to pressure of work.

The Future

Scholarships for Postgraduate Study

Around the middle of the year, information becomes available about the range of scholarships available for local and overseas study, and the methods and deadlines for application. This information is publicised through notices (often email notices) and displays organised by the University Postgraduate Office. As noted above, your marks will have a significant bearing on applications for local or overseas scholarships, so it is imperative that you perform at your highest abilities in all your 400-level papers.

Under ordinary circumstances we do not allow 400-level students to tutor, owing to the demanding nature of their course of studies. As this is an important year, we advise you to keep your outside commitments to a minimum.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

Appendices:

- 1) Schedule of 490 seminars
- 2) Student–Supervisor Agreement
- 3) Self-Review Form
- 4) Progress Report Form
- 5) Sample title-page for your 490 dissertation

ENGL 490 Schedule

Seminars are to be held in Arts 1.W.1 on Fridays, 12.00–12:50 pm. They will be convened by the 400-level coordinator, but will consist of topics and discussions led by a range of members of staff. These seminars are designed to help you learn important skills of research, writing, editing, and oral presentation as you develop your 490 topics.

If you are enrolled in ENGL 490, you will present your work at two public events: a brief presentation of your topic (7–8 minutes) on Friday, 28 April, and a fuller presentation of your working argument (12–15 minutes) at a mini-conference on Monday, 17 July.

If you are enrolled in ENGL 590, you will present your work at a Coursework MA event. The 500-level coordinator will send you more details.

DATE	TOPIC	Presenter(s)	Due dates & deadlines
1 March	Introduction(s)	GM	
8 March	Topic Formation	GM	Student–supervisor agreement due
15 March	Library resources	Genevieve Scanlan	
22 March	Research processes	Tom McLean and Lynley Edmeades	
29 March	<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>no class</i>	
5 April	<i>Mid-Semester Break</i>	<i>no class</i>	
12 April	Presentation skills	David Ciccoricco	
19 April	Presentation workshop	GM and students	
26 April	Presentations	All of you	Presentation
3 May	Incorporating feedback	GM	
10 May	How to edit your own work	Michael Cop	
17 May	Referencing and proofreading	GM	
24 May	From topic to argument	Jacob Edmond	
31 May	Structural Writing Strategies	Jacob Edmond	

Student–Supervisor Agreement, English 490

**Students must submit signed agreements to 400-L Coordinator
by Friday, 8 March 2024**

Name of Student:

Name of Supervisor:

Brief statement of topic:

Meetings will take place at the following intervals (usually weekly or fortnightly during term time).

Comments on drafts of work will be returned by the supervisor within the following timeframe:

Please indicate any agreed requirements for submission of work (e.g. standard for written drafts; requirements for summaries of reading, &c).

If the staff member is to be away for any significant period during the year (3 weeks or more), please indicate arrangements for supervision.

Date:

Student:

Supervisor:

400-level coordinator:

ENGL 490 Self-review & Bibliography

The self-review must be submitted to your supervisor by 19 July.

Student:

Supervisor:

Topic:

Research questions / argument: What is your working argument?

Brief outline of thesis, including work in draft, work completed and work yet to be submitted to your supervisor:

Progress on research:

How has your research developed over the course of the year? What have you accomplished and what remains to be done? Please include a timeline for completing the work by the deadline of 18 October (remember to include turnaround time for feedback from your supervisor).

Indicative bibliography:

Please attach a list of 6–8 secondary sources that you have included or will include in your dissertation. Summarise each briefly and indicate its significance for your work.

ENGL 490 Progress Report*[to be completed by supervisor by 19 July]***Name of Student:****Name of Supervisor:****Topic of Dissertation:****Please attach the student's self-review and indicative bibliography****Progress**

The topic is clearly and appropriately formulated _____

Supervision meetings have taken place with agreed regularity _____

Primary and secondary research is progressing satisfactorily _____

Written work has been submitted for feedback on time _____

Feedback is appropriately responded to in subsequent work _____

Is the student's self-review & bibliography satisfactory? Please comment :

Have there been specific problems with progress? Y/N

Comment:

If yes, have measures been agreed to address the level of progress?

Yes _____

No _____

Measures agreed to:

Are there any foreseeable problems that are likely to interfere with completion by the due date?

Yes _____

No _____

Comment:

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Student's signature:

ENGL 490 Dissertation

TITLE

(A picture, if you wish)

YOUR NAME

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honours

English and Linguistics
University of Otago
October 2024