

The English 400-Level Handbook



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

REVISED FOR 2019

400-Level English General Information

**400-Level Coordinator:
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Introduction

Welcome to 400-level studies in English. This year you will extend and deepen your undergraduate 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 and practise your own skills in independent research. The 400-level year emphasises a research ethos, prepares you to contribute to a research culture in the department 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.

Classes are normally held in Room 1.W.1 of the Arts Building.

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:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/english-linguistics/otago223601.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; 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, don't allow everything to pile up and expect to prepare the whole year's coursework at once.

Your lecturers cannot give individual extensions for pressure of work, as all 4th year students experience these pressures. But do not hesitate to consult me or your lecturer if you are experiencing difficulty coping. 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 sorting out 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. Don't 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, class coordinator, or level coordinator in advance if you cannot attend a meeting, lecture, or seminar. If you have changed your email address since course approval, please give the new address to the level coordinator. A complete email list of students doing 400-level papers allows us to let you know of up-coming events and items of interest. We also make use of the 400-level notice board in the general reception area.

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 1.W.1 on Fridays at 12.00-12.50pm.
See the attached schedule

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 on 8 March.**

A self-review and an indicative bibliography, which will form the basis on a progress report to be completed by your supervisor, **must be submitted to your supervisor by 26 July.**

A full draft of the essay (**a substantially complete manuscript of all chapters, carefully written and proofread**) must be submitted to the supervisor for feedback by **Friday 6 September**. The final version must be submitted by **Monday 7 October 2019**.

**The due date for submission of the Dissertation is 7 October
2019**

You must submit two hard copies of the dissertation to the Department for binding and marking. You must also submit an electronic copy of the dissertation to the 400-level coordinator.

Submission and Assessment of Written Work

All written work must conform to the Guidelines and Procedures guide.

You must keep hard or electronic copies of all work submitted for assessment during the year.

If you are considering further postgraduate work, either here 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.

All marked internal assessment for the year (essays, seminar summaries, tests) must be returned to the department at the end of the teaching year (by 11 Oct)

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 your examination script and your internal assessment work, and the matter will be resolved.

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 department. 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, internal reports with examiners' names redacted will be available to students on request. Students are encouraged to request these reports, especially if they intend to revise and expand their 490 projects for future MA or PhD research.

You can find more information about the policy on external moderation here:

<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" 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 2019 English-Linguistics Policies and Procedures guide.

Facilities/Access

The English and Linguistics Department has some facilities to which you have access as 400-level students. Please ask the Departmental Administrator (Liz Lammers) if you have any questions.

Departmental Library

There is a small library (1.C.13) off the departmental open reception area which houses a number of reference works and standard editions. It is kept locked when not in use, but you may have access by asking for a key at Reception. Please note that the Library is sometimes booked for tutorial consultations and is not available at that time. These bookings are recorded on a timetable on the door. It is a reading and reference library only, and materials cannot be taken out of that room.

Folder

A folder with your name on it is available in the file cabinet in the Reception area. Check your folder for announcements and flyers

Kitchen

Most two-hour seminars will have a brief break halfway through. You can make coffee or tea in the small kitchen on the north landing of the first floor. This is a very small space with limited resources, and as part of the privilege of using it, you are expected to keep it clean and tidy. Please note that the Humanities common room is not open to fourth-year students (this is a Divisional rule and not subject to change by the Department).

Central Library Access

The English Department has a librarian, Alexander Ritchie, available to assist you. Please make use of Alexander's expertise. You should phone or email him to make an appointment.

Alexander will also run a hands-on workshop on library tools in Semester 1. His contact details are: alexander.ritchie@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/are

Māori Support and Liaison Contacts

There are various sources of support and liaison available at school, division and university levels. The Department of English has a Māori liaison contact person — Nicola Cummins. You are welcome to contact her with any concerns or questions you have (nicola.cummins@otago.ac.nz). The Humanities Division Kaiāwhina Māori is Ana Rangi (ana.rangi@otago.ac.nz).

Pacific Island Support and Liaison Contacts

There are various sources of support and liaison available at school, division and university levels. The Department of English has a Pacific Islands liaison contact person — Rochelle Simmons. You are welcome to contact her with any concerns or questions you have (rochelle.simmons@otago.ac.nz). The Humanities Division Pacific Islands Support Officer is Inano Walter (pacificsupport.humanities@otago.ac.nz).

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 you have 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 Dr Rochelle Simmons as level coordinator. The level coordinator can also advise you on more general problems concerning your course of study. Don't 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.**

Special consideration for due dates for the 490 or for significant internal assessment in Honours must be accompanied by the Health Declaration Form, including section B (to be completed by Student Health). The form is available here:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/prodcons/groups/public/@otagoexaminationsoffice/documents/webcontent/otago007621.pdf>

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 by the department up 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 for 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 earlier, 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.

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

HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

Appendices:

- 1) Full schedule for Honours year and 490 seminars
- 2) Title page for your 490 dissertation
- 3) Student Supervisor Agreement
- 4) Self-Review Form
- 5) Progress Report Form

ENGL 490 Schedule

Seminars are to be held in Arts/Burns 1W1 from 12.00-12:50 pm. They will be convened by Dr Simmons, 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.

You will present your work at two public events: a brief presentation of your topic (7-8 minutes) on 3 May, and a fuller presentation of your working argument (12-15 minutes) at a mini-conference on 19 July.

Please note the various deadlines for student-supervisor agreements, self-reviews, and progress reports.

DATE	TOPIC	Staff member	Due dates & deadlines
1 March	Introduction(s)	RS	
8 March	Topic Formation	RS	Student-supervisor agreement due
15 March	Library resources	AR	
22 March	Research processes	Panel presentation from various staff (JE, TMcL, GM, CP)	
29 March	NO CLASS		
	MID-SEMESTER BREAK		
12 April	NO CLASS		
19 April	Oral presentation skills	SM	
26 April	Presentation workshop	RS	
3 May			Presentations
10 May	Incorporating feedback	RS	
17 May	From topic to argument	RS	
24 May	How to edit your own work	NC	
29 June	Referencing and proofreading	PT	

Student-Supervisor Agreement, English 490

Students are to submit signed agreements to Dr Simmons by Friday 8 March

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:

Second Reader:

ENGL 490 Self-review & Bibliography

The self-review must be submitted to your supervisor by 26 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 6 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 2 August]

Name of Student:

Name of Supervisor:

Topic of Dissertation:

Please attach the student's self-review and indicative bibliography

Progress

	Y/N
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 being appropriately responded to in subsequent work	_____

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

Have there been specific problems with progress? Comment:

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

Yes _____

No _____

Comment:

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:

Date:

ENGL 490 Dissertation

TITLE

(A picture, if you wish)

YOUR NAME

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of [either]
Bachelor of Arts with Honours / [or] Postgraduate Diploma

Department of English & Linguistics
University of Otago
October 2019