

**Final project (& article summary) information****I. Overview and deadlines**

Here is an overview of the assignments related to the final project in this course:

| Assignment                  | Grading breakdown           | Deadline                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Article summary             | 5% of <i>course</i> grade   | Tu Nov 8                              |
| Final project:              | 25% of <i>course</i> grade  |                                       |
| • Proposal                  | 10% of <i>project</i> grade | Tu Nov 15                             |
| • Presentation              | 25% of <i>project</i> grade | Tu Dec 6 <i>and</i> final exam period |
| • Paper (at least 10 pages) | 65% of <i>project</i> grade | Final exam period (Tu Dec 13, 4pm)    |

In general, there will be no extensions for any of the sub-parts of the paper. If there are special circumstances, please talk to me as early as possible, *before* the deadline in question.

**II. Structure of the project**

The projects for this course will fall into one of two general types. Both types will involve *both Japanese language data* and *linguistic theory*, but the relative emphasis differs.

- Most students will carry out a **data-focused project**, where you collect data yourself (from recording or interviewing native speakers; from web sites; from Japanese-language books, magazines, audio, or video; etc.) and present a linguistic analysis of some aspect of that data.
  - You could collect data in order to more fully test a linguistic claim or proposal that has been discussed in class, in a reading, or in a source that you find.
  - You could examine the data you have collected in the context of a linguistic area that has not been covered in class.
  - In either case, your project will have at least one **linguistics reference source** as a starting point, to provide a framework for your analysis of the data. Also, the data that you collect will be **quantitative**: you will start with a hypothesis about how often patterns will occur, and you will test that hypothesis by collecting, categorizing, and quantifying data.
- Linguistics graduate students will carry out a **theory-focused project**, where you summarize two (or more) competing linguistic models or proposals and show how successfully each deals with some phenomenon in Japanese.
  - This may also involve original data collection, but if your paper has a sufficient linguistic-theory component, you may use examples or data sets compiled by linguists in prior work, to see if those examples can be better handled by a different model.
  - Other students who have significant linguistics background in a particular area, or who wish to challenge themselves by working with linguistics research papers, may also consider this type of project. But you must confer with me *before* the project proposal is due if you think would like to try a project of this type.

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### III. Choosing a topic

If you don't already have a topic in mind, here are some suggestions for how to find one. I will be happy to talk with you about topic ideas and help you brainstorm (*before* the proposal deadline!)

- If you are studying Japanese, think about some aspect of the language that particularly puzzles or interests you and use that as a starting point to look for topics.
- If you are studying linguistics outside this class, think about what area of linguistics interests you most, and look for phenomena in Japanese that fall within that area.
- Take a claim that has been made in class about some aspect of Japanese structure and think about how you would collect data to test that claim for current native speakers.
- Look through the optional advanced readings to see if a topic there sparks your interest.
- Look at the books on reserve for this course.

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### IV. The project proposal

Your proposal should describe the **research question** that will be addressed in the project and explain what **procedure** will be followed to try to answer that question. When I read your proposal, I will check to see whether the proposed project is of an appropriate scope, and if not, I will make suggestions for ways to adjust it.

The proposal should include:

- One or two paragraphs explaining what **research question** your project will ask and what information it will use to try to answer the question.
  - You must **back up your research question or hypothesis with a citation** from the linguistics literature. Interested in examining the vowel devoicing rule? Find a journal article that examines vowel devoicing and use its results or claims as a starting point for your own research question or hypothesis. (See: Article summary assignment.)
  - For a data-focused project, what kind of data will you examine? How will you collect or otherwise obtain your data?
  - For a theory-focused project, what area of linguistic theory will you be working in? What are the different theoretical approaches or proposals you will be comparing?
  - Remember to include **linguistics concepts and terminology** from class in your discussion whenever possible. Show me what you have learned this semester.
- A list of at least **three references** that seem relevant (not including required course readings, but optional advanced course readings are allowed). With each reference, give a brief **explanation** of why it is or seems to be important for your project.
  - One of these references may be the article you use for your article summary (see below).
  - Not all of these references have to appear in the bibliography of your final paper, since your focus may shift somewhat as your work progresses. (However, your final paper must cite at least one linguistically relevant source; at least two for a theory-based project.)

Details about expectations and grading for the paper and presentation will be provided separately.

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## V. The article summary

- **Choosing an article**

Once you have a (potential) topic in mind for your final project, your next step is to find a *published* linguistics article that is related to your topic. There are several ways that an article might be “related to your topic”; here are some examples:

- An article about Japanese linguistics that is necessary background for your project topic
- An article about a linguistic analysis of another language, or about a more general linguistic topic, that you plan to use for analyzing Japanese as part of your final project
- An article about Japanese linguistics or general linguistic theory that presents a viewpoint that you plan to argue for or against in your final project

The “Suggested Readings” sections at the end of each chapter of Tsujimura (2007), *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* (on reserve for the course), are a good place to start looking for relevant articles. For tips on other ways to search for linguistics articles, see: <http://www.unc.edu/~jlsmith/refsearch.html>

I am happy to consult with you about your article choice. You are **strongly recommended** to confirm your article choice with me *before* you begin writing your article summary. Note that the article must be published; finding it online is fine, but it must have a bibliographic citation (although this may be a citation to something in an online conference proceedings or an online research archive such as the Rutgers Optimality Archive or LingBuzz).

- **Writing the article summary**

The **goal** of the article summary is for you to demonstrate to me that you understand and can clearly explain what the author’s (main) point is and what evidence or argumentation the author uses to make that point. You may not have space to summarize everything discussed in the article; decide what is most important in the context of your final-project topic.

The article summary should be approximately **4–6 pages long, double-spaced**. It should be in your **own words**, except for short quotations if necessary (which should be indicated with quote marks or block-quote indentations). Don’t just put together five pages of excerpts from the article—instead, **convince me that you understood it** yourself.

There is no official **length requirement** for the chosen article. Basically, any article is acceptable if the main point (or one of the main points) can be discussed and the supporting evidence explained in about 4–6 double-spaced pages. As a rough estimate, an article shorter than 10 pages may not give you enough information to work with, but in the end it will depend on how much information is in the article.

Remember to **submit your article** (or a URL, or a PDF by e-mail) with your article summary! Electronic submissions (a URL, or a PDF file) are strongly encouraged if available. If you are submitting a hard copy of the article, you are encouraged to consider making reduced/double-sided copies.

- **Grading criteria** for the article summary are provided separately on the course web site.