

QPW Spring 2021 Syllabus

January 5, 2021

1 Course information

Course #: 16.615.690
Time & place: Thursdays 1:10-4:10 pm, on your couch
Zoom info: [Link](#)
Password: doughnuts
Website: On Canvas
Instructor: Adam McCollum
E-mail: adam.mccollum@rutgers.edu

2 Course overview and goals

The purposes of QPW are twofold. The primary purpose is to guide and support your work towards satisfying the program requirements regarding qualifying papers. The secondary (but related) purpose is to introduce you to skills useful to your development as a scholar and as an academic.

2.1 QP

The department has established clear milestones for your qualifying paper, with deadlines that must be met in order to remain in good standing with the program. In the spring, these center around nishing a nal draft of the QP and defending before your committee. Beyond the departmental requirements, the QP represents a chance to establish yourself in the research community with a proceedings paper or, in the best-case scenario, a journal article. To this end, we will spend course time developing, presenting, and critiquing your ideas so you can establish a focused research project that not only communicates to the department that you are capable of conducting scholarly work, but also contributes to the scientific community.

2.2 Professional development

In working on the QPs, we also get an opportunity to work on other skills that will benefit you as an academic (and hopefully as a human, too!). In this iteration of QPW we'll spend a lot of time working on our writing skills. Good writing can make the difference between a publication and a really frustrating rejection letter. Good writing can also make the difference between a really influential publication and one that languishes on some rarely-searched corner of the internet.

Clear writing is typically a reflection of clear thinking. But the road to clear thinking is hard, and really depends on one's willingness to change their view of themselves and the world around them. Therefore, I hope to push us all to clearer thinking by pushing us to clearer writing, which is also hard work. If our argumentation becomes clearer and more concise over the term, then I will conclude that our thinking is probably moving in the right direction, too.

3 Structure of the course

3.1 Class meetings

We will regularly spend a little time (5-10 minutes each) discussing the progress of your QP research. As a graduate seminar, participation in class is a crucial part of the course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to actively discuss any homework or assigned reading. If you absolutely have to miss a class, **please contact me beforehand**.

3.2 Grading

Your grade in this course will depend in equal parts in your participation in the coursework and in your progress in your QP research. Possible grades are Pass/Satisfactory and Fail/Not Satisfactory. If you engage with the content and people in class, then I don't expect we'll have any issues with grades. As is standard, this class will be conducted in accordance with University policy on academic integrity. Please refer to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

3.3 Schedule

Week 1 (1/21)	Overview of the course; discussion of our QP projects
HW	Begin thinking about who you are as an academic? Here are some questions to get you going. What topics/questions are you interested in? How are/would you like to address those questions? What is the scope of your work? What kind of researcher are you?
Week 2 (1/28)	Imposter syndrome
HW	Write at least half a page on your experience with imposter syndrome and more generally, how you think you fit as a linguist. Do you feel like you belong? Why or why not? Also feel free to address how you have battled or want to battle feelings of insecurity.
Week 3 (2/4)	How to write a paper (Step 1): How to read a paper
HW	Read, take notes on, and make an outline of the structure of the paper we decided to read together in class today.

- Coll. Attend Ed Flemming's colloquium talk on 2/5 and be ready to discuss the structure of his talk.
- Week 4 (2/11) **How to write a paper (Step 2): Determining what kind of paper you want to write**
- HW Think about what kind of paper you want to write.
- Week 5 (2/18) **How to write a paper (Step 3): Writing an outline**
- HW Make an outline of your QP. Someone will read and comment on this in class next time, so it needs to be sufficiently explicit and thorough to make this possible.
- Week 6 (2/25) **Commenting on each other's outlines**
- HW Revise and turn in your outline based on the feedback you got.
- Week 7 (3/4) **How to write a paper (Step 4): Write the background section**
- Coll. Attend Rajesh Bhatt's colloquium talk on 3/5 and be ready to discuss the structure of his talk.
- Week 8 (3/11) **How to write a paper (Step 5): Write the analysis section**
- Week 9 (3/18) *****Spring Break, woohoo!*****
- Week 10 (3/25) **How to write a paper (Step 6): Write the conclusion**
- Week 11 (4/1) **How to write a paper (Step 7): Write the introduction**
- HW Turn in a draft of your QP. The more you have finished the more you'll benefit from this, I promise. Turn this in on Canvas.
- Week 12 (4/8) **Critiquing each other's papers**
- Week 13 (4/15) *****No class*****
- Coll. Attend Danny Fox's colloquium talk on 4/16 and be ready to discuss the structure of his talk.
- Week 14 (4/22) **QP presentations**
- Week 15 (4/29) **QP presentations**
- QP The deadline to submit the final draft of your QP is 5/1.
- Week 16 (5/6) *****No class*****
- QP The deadline to defend your QP is 5/15.