

5723VKO1Y: BA-Eindwerkstuk Seminar*

AY2025-2026 (Spring)

Instructor: Dr. Steven Denney (s.c.denney@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Workgroup 103

Lipsius 2.05

Fridays 09:15-11:00

Course Description

The thesis seminar is designed to guide students through each stage of the thesis-writing process: developing and refining a research question; identifying and engaging relevant literature, data, and sources; selecting appropriate theoretical frameworks and research designs; applying suitable methods; and organizing a coherent and persuasive thesis.

The bachelor's thesis, a 10,000-word research paper ($\pm 10\%$ margin), is not just a requirement but a significant academic achievement. It represents the culmination of your undergraduate studies in Korean Studies, requiring substantial independent research and writing. As the final major academic endeavor of the undergraduate curriculum, the thesis presents a rewarding challenge and a great opportunity for academic and personal growth.

Attendance in this course is mandatory. A thesis cannot be submitted outside the seminar context. Time management is crucial for meeting deadlines, and students must consult with their individual supervisors outside of the course during the periods designated.

Course Objectives

Students are expected to accomplish the following aims of the course:

- Engage with academic debates and scholarly discussions.
- Read selected literature in academic writing and research.
- Communicate research findings effectively in both written and spoken English.
- Participate actively and knowledgeably in seminar discussions.
- Apply current research methods relevant to their research project.

Students will develop the following academic skills:

- Specify a research question appropriate to the field of Korean Studies.
- Formulate a well-defined research problem based on a thorough literature review.
- Locate and compile specialized literature using traditional and digital research tools.
- Critically evaluate the quality and reliability of sources in English and Korean.
- Design and conduct a supervised research study, using relevant methods and techniques.
- Draw evidence-based conclusions from the research conducted.

* The syllabus is subject to change. Students will be appropriately notified.

Evaluation

- 10% for participation in class, including peer review of the work(s) of others
- 20% for Assignment 1 (*revised proposal*)
- 35% for Assignment 2 (*full design draft*)
- 35% for Assignment 3 (*empirical draft*)

Assignment Deadlines

- **March 13** – Assignment #1 due (updated proposal) on Brightspace (BS)
- **April 03** – Assignment #2 due (preliminary drafts) on BS
- **May 06** – Assignment #3 due (empirical draft) on BS
- **June 01** – Final manuscript due

Academic Honesty Policy & GenAI

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Borrowing an idea or using a sentence from another individual's work without providing a proper citation will result in course failure. Please talk to the instructor early in the semester if you have any questions or concerns about this.

You may use generative AI tools in this course only in ethical, responsible, and transparent ways, and always in accordance with Leiden University Faculty of Humanities guidelines. Unless explicitly permitted for a specific assignment, AI-generated content may not be submitted as your own work; any approved use must be disclosed and properly cited. More guidance will be provided in the course.

Disability Accommodation

No student should be prevented from learning due to a disability, either of a physical or mental nature. If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please meet with the course instructor early in the semester so you can discuss accommodations, in addition to obliging the formal process through the university (see the study advisor).

Required Reading

Readings are listed in the class schedule (below) and can be accessed online via the university library or are otherwise provided by the instructor.

Attendance Policy

A strict attendance policy is in effect:

- Missing more than three sessions during the semester may result in being barred from further attendance and may lead to your paper not being graded.
- Any absences must be communicated in advance.
- Dispensation from the attendance policy for extenuating circumstances can only be granted by the Board of Examiners after consultation with the teacher.

Assignments Overview

Assignment 1: Revised Research Proposal

Preliminary Requirement: At the start of the term, students submit a brief outline (250-500 words) of their initial research idea. This preliminary submission should include:

- A tentative research topic or area of interest.
- A basic research question or problem you intend to explore.
- Any initial thoughts on potential sources or data.

Assignment Overview: For the first assignment, you will submit a revised and systematically developed research proposal. This proposal should build on the initial research idea and reflect the structured learning and iterative improvements from Weeks 1-4.

Content Requirements:

- Revised Research Question: Clearly state a refined and specific research question, reflecting feedback from Weeks 1-4.
- Research Problem (Gap): Provide a detailed explanation of the research problem, identifying the gap in the existing literature and its relevance to Korean Studies.
- Literature Connection: Briefly connect your research problem to the relevant academic literature identified.
- Preliminary Methodological Plan: Outline your data collection and analysis approach, specifying the types of data you plan to use and any relevant methodological considerations introduced during the first four weeks.
- Proposal Structure: Present the components in a clear and logical order, resembling the early stages of an academic research manuscript.

Length and Format:

- 1,000-1,500 words
- Follow the Korean Studies style guide for formatting.

Note: The course instructors will assess this assignment. The supervisor will assess all subsequent assignments.

Assignment 2: Preliminary Draft

The “preliminary draft” is a substantially revised version of the initial research proposal that evolved over the first four weeks. This draft will form the preliminary groundwork for the empirical section of the thesis and should demonstrate significant refinement based on the learning activities in the seminar and feedback from the instructor and/or the supervisor.

Content Requirements:

- Introduction: Present the finalized research question, a detailed research problem, and the motivation for the study. Explain the identified gap in the literature and the significance of addressing it.
- Literature Review: Provide an initial draft demonstrating how the existing literature informs the research problem and theoretical framework.
- Methodology: Detail the revised methodological approach, including data collection methods, sources, and planned analysis. Show how the data aligns with the FAIR principles, where possible (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

Length and Format:

- 3,000-3,500 words.
- Follow the Korean Studies style guide for formatting.

Assignment 3: Draft Empirical Chapter and Preliminary Findings

Submit a draft empirical chapter that applies the research design and presents preliminary findings. This draft should demonstrate how data collection and analysis have progressed and should include some initial interpretations of the results.

Content Requirements:

- Empirical Content/Chapter: Present a draft version of the empirical analysis, demonstrating how your data collection aligns with the research question and methodology. Provide an initial presentation of findings, highlighting how the evidence addresses the research problem and contributes to filling the “gap” in the literature.
- Link to Previous Work: Ensure that the empirical chapter builds on the literature review and methodology. The study’s design and the existing academic discourse should show a logical connection.

Length and Format:

- Aim for approximately 2,500 words of analysis, including data tables, figures, or quotations from primary sources where applicable.
- Submit the draft, including previous components (i.e., preliminary draft) that you will have updated by now. The submitted draft should resemble a nearly completed manuscript. **The total word length must be a minimum of 5,000 words.**
- Follow the Korean Studies style guide for formatting.

Final Thesis (Separate Assessment)

A final thesis draft of 10,000 words (with a 10% margin, including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices), formatted according to the KS style guide in the Thesis Protocol and inclusive of all components written hereto.

Note: no thesis can be submitted without being written in the context of this thesis seminar. Once a student passes the thesis seminar, this opens the door to submission of a final version of the thesis by the deadline of June 1, 2022 (BA eindwerkstuk, 10EC). This final version then undergoes separate assessment by a thesis committee, which is composed of a thesis supervisor (First Reader) and another faculty member (Second Reader). In other words, receiving a passing grade for this thesis seminar does not guarantee that the final version of the thesis will also pass. To pass this course, students must receive an overall mark of 5.50 (=6) or higher and a passing grade for assignment #3 (5.5 or higher). Students who failed the course (receiving an overall mark of 5.49 [=5] or lower) or who failed the assignment #3 must take a resit. The instructor will announce a specific due date for a resit draft, while students who receive a fail grade for this course are obliged to take another seminar in the following or a later year

The course is an integrated whole. All categories must be completed in the same academic year. No partial marks can be carried over into following years. Students may make an individual appointment with the instructor within two weeks after the announcement of the grades in order to view the results in detail.

Class Schedule

February 06: Developing a Research Question and Identifying the Research Problem

Objectives:

- Understand what makes a good research question.
- Learn how to identify a research problem or gap in the literature.
- Introduce the structure of an academic research manuscript.

Reading:

- Introduction and Part I of Mullaney, Thomas S., and Christopher Rea. *Where Research Begins: Choosing a Research Project That Matters to You (and the World)*. 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 2022. (Available as an e-book on the Leiden Library site: https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780226817354)

Class Plan:

1. Introduction to Research:

- Define the structure of an academic research paper, emphasizing the introduction, research problem, and research question.
- Discuss what constitutes a strong research question: clarity, relevance, and specificity.

2. The Research Problem (Gap):

- Explain the concept of a research gap and its importance in justifying the need for research.
- Strategies for identifying gaps in existing literature, particularly in Korean Studies.

3. Workshop:

- Students brainstorm research questions and possible gaps, followed by group discussions for feedback and refinement.

Exercise: Revise/draft a research question and identify the research problem using the submitted proposal. Provide a brief explanation of the gap your research will address (tip of the literature review)

February 13: Data and Sources – Generation, Collection, and FAIR Principles

Objectives:

- Learn about primary and secondary data collection and management.
- Introduce the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) framework for research data.

Class Plan:

1. Introduction to Data:

- Differentiate between types of data: primary vs. secondary sources, and qualitative vs. quantitative data.
- Discuss the importance of using Korean-language sources in Korean Studies research.

2. FAIR Principles:

- Define and explain each element of the FAIR principles and their relevance to research data management.

3. Data Generation:

- Discuss methods for generating and collecting primary data in Korean Studies (interviews, surveys, archival research).

4. Workshop:

- Students develop data collection plans, considering how to apply FAIR principles to ensure their research data is accessible and reusable.

Exercise: Generate a plan outlining the type of data you intend to collect, how you will collect it, and how it aligns with the FAIR principles to the extent possible at this stage.

February 20: Conducting a Literature Review

Objectives:

- Understand the purpose and structure of a literature review.
- Learn how to connect the literature review to research questions, gaps, and frameworks for analysis.

Class Plan:

1. Introduction to Literature Reviews:

- Define the literature review's role in academic research: summarizing existing work, identifying gaps, and framing the research problem.
- Discuss how literature reviews serve as a foundation for developing a research question and a theoretical framework.

2. Organizing a Literature Review:

- Strategies for organizing literature reviews: chronological, thematic, methodological approaches.
- Explain how to critically assess and synthesize literature to justify the research problem and situate the research within the existing body of knowledge.

3. Connecting to the Research:

- Show how a strong literature review links the research question, gap, and theoretical framework, forming the basis for data collection and analysis.
- Use examples from Korean Studies research papers to illustrate this connection.

4. Workshop:

- Students begin outlining their literature review, identifying key sources, and linking them to their research questions and gaps.

Exercise: Generate an annotated bibliography and a draft outline of the literature review. Include key sources and explain how they connect to the research question and gap.

February 27: Analysis and Reporting – Empirical Strategies for Data Interpretation

Objectives:

- Review methods for analyzing research data.
- Discuss strategies for reporting empirical findings in a structured and coherent manner.

Class Plan:

1. Introduction to Data Analysis:

- Overview of analysis methods: qualitative (thematic, content analysis) and quantitative (descriptive, inferential statistics). Focus on approaches that are appropriate to qualitative analysis using primary sources (e.g., newspapers)
- Examples from Korean Studies of how to apply these methods in research.

2. Presenting Findings:

- Discuss how to structure the findings section of a research paper, linking back to the research question and literature review.

3. Workshop:

- Students review examples of well-structured findings sections, focusing on clarity and the logical flow of argumentation.

Exercise: Students outline how they will analyze and present their data, focusing on connecting their findings back to the research problem and literature review.

Remainder of Course

Date	Activity	Description
March 06	FREE	No class, plan meeting with supervisor
March 13	Deadline	Assignment #1 due (updated proposal)
March 13	FREE	No class, plan meeting with supervisor
March 20	FREE	No class meeting; review of weeks 1-4 (<i>pre-recorded lecture</i>)
April 03	Deadline	Assignment #2 due (preliminary draft)
April 10	Class	Peer review of preliminary drafts
April 17	Class	Ethical concerns (AI, plagiarism, etc.) and review of KS Protocol
April 24	FREE	No class / free research time
May 01	FREE	No class / free research time
May 08	Class	Incorporating feedback in revisions
May 06	Deadline	Assignment #3 due (empirical draft)
May 08	Class	In-class review and consultations
June 1	Deadline	Final manuscript due