BA-Eindwerkstuk Seminar

Week 8: Ethical Concerns and Review of the Thesis Protocol

Dr. Steven Denney

Korean Studies
Leiden University

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Data Check-In

Today's Agenda

1. Data check-in: revisiting FAIR principles
2. AI and ethics in research
3. Discussion: your experience with AI tools
4. Review of the Thesis Protocol and Assignment #3

Context

You have submitted Assignment #2. You are deep in your research. Today we pause to address two things: the ethics of how you work, and the expectations for what comes next.

Where Are You With Your Data?

Assignment #2 asked you to present your methodology and analytical framework. Now comes the harder part: **doing the analysis**.

Honest self-assessment:

- Do you actually *have* your data—or are you still planning to collect it?
- Is it organized in a way that lets you work with it?
- Could someone else understand what you collected and why?
- Are you confident you can analyze it with the methods you described?

No judgment

If the answer to any of these is "no," that is fine—but you need to address it *now*, not in Week 10.

Revisiting FAIR Principles

In Week 2 we introduced FAIR as a way to think structurally about data. Now that you are *in* your research, let's check in.

Principle	Ask Yourself
Findable	Can you locate all your sources? Are files named clearly? Could you find a specific document in under a minute?
Accessible	Is your data backed up? Could you recover everything if your laptop died tomorrow?
Interoperable	Are your files in standard formats? Could your supervisor open and read them?
Reusable	Have you documented *where* each source came from, *when* you collected it, and *how*?

Exercise: Data Readiness Check

Take 5 minutes. Write brief answers to:

1. What data do you have *in hand* right now?
2. What data do you still need to collect?
3. Where is it stored and how is it organized?
4. What is your plan for the next three weeks to get from where you are to a draft empirical chapter?

Discussion

Let's hear from a few of you. What is going well? Where are you stuck?

Data Collection and Transparency

Your analytical framework describes *what* you will do. But your reader also needs to know:

- **How** you collected or generated your data
- **Why** you selected these particular sources (and not others)
- **What limitations** your data has—and how those affect your findings

This is not just methodological rigor. It is an **ethical obligation**: transparency about your evidence is foundational to academic integrity.

Remember

Open science does not mean you must share everything publicly. It means you must be *honest* about what you did and how you did it.

AI and Ethics in Research

Why Talk About This Now?

You are in the middle of independent research. You are writing, reading, analyzing, and making decisions every day.

Generative AI tools are widely available. Many of you may already be using them—for brainstorming, for writing, for translation, or for other tasks.

This is not a scare talk. It is a practical conversation about:

- What the university policy actually says
- What responsible use looks like
- Where the lines are

The Faculty Policy: Five Basic Principles

The Faculty of Humanities *Guidelines for the Use of GenAI in Assessment* (August 2025) rest on five principles:

1. **Integrity** — Your degree represents specific academic skills. The learning process matters more than the product.
2. **Transparency** — You must always be open about your working methods.
3. **Independence** — You must demonstrate that *you* achieved the learning objectives.
4. **Fraud** — Any action that hinders correct assessment of your knowledge is fraud.
5. **Responsibility** — You have full responsibility for what you submit.

The Default Rule

The default position is prohibition

The use of GenAI products or content in **any form of assessment** is **not permitted**, unless your teacher has **explicitly** indicated which uses are allowed and under what conditions.

Key implications:

- Permission in one course does **not** carry over to another
- If your teacher has not said it is allowed, assume it is **not**
- When in doubt: **ask your supervisor**

What You CAN Do

The following are **generally permitted**, even without explicit instructor approval:

- **Spelling and grammar checks** — Tools like Grammarly or built-in spell checkers are fine, unless language skills are being assessed
- **Machine translation of your own text** — e.g., translating a sentence you wrote from Dutch to English using DeepL

With **explicit supervisor permission** and **full disclosure**:

- Using AI to brainstorm or generate ideas (not final text)
- Using AI to help understand a concept (as a learning aid)
- Using AI to assist with coding or data formatting tasks

In all cases: disclose, disclose, disclose.

Best Practices

1. **Verify everything** — AI tools produce plausible-sounding text that may be factually wrong. LLMs generate *language*, not *knowledge*. Always check.
2. **Be aware of hallucinations** — AI tools fabricate citations, invent sources, and present false claims confidently. *Never* trust an AI-generated reference without verifying it exists.
3. **Watch for bias** — AI output can contain and reinforce stereotypes (ethnic, gender, cultural). Be critical.
4. **Keep records** — Maintain a log of all prompts and outputs. Faculty policy requires you to hand these over on request.
5. **Disclose all use** — In your thesis, describe any AI tools used and how.
6. **Treat AI as a tool, not an author** — Your thesis must reflect *your* thinking, *your* analysis, and *your* voice.

What You CANNOT Do

Prohibited uses

- **Submit AI-generated text as your own work** — including copying, paraphrasing, or translating AI output without citation
- **Upload confidential or copyrighted material** to AI tools — this includes interview transcripts, unpublished data, and others' work
- **Use AI to rewrite someone else's text** — even with paraphrasing, this is fraud
- **Reproduce AI-generated material without citation** — if you use it, cite it
- **Assume blanket permission** — approval in one course or for one task does not extend to others

When AI Use Is Permitted: How to Cite

If your supervisor explicitly allows a specific use of GenAI, you must cite it. The faculty provides citation formats:

Tool	Reference	In-text
ChatGPT	OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Sept 25 version) [Large Language Model]. `https://chat.openai.com/`	(OpenAI, 2023)
Gemini	Google AI. (2023). Gemini (Oct 23 version) [Large language model]. Google. `https://gemini.google.com/`	(Google AI, 2023)

Important

You must also maintain a record of all prompts and AI output, to be provided to your supervisor on request.

Machine Translation: A Common Case

Machine translation (DeepL, Google Translate) is **generally allowed** for translating text you wrote yourself.

How to cite it:

Example (from faculty guidelines)

"O fenomeno da traducao indireta..." [The phenomenon of indirect translation is a manifestation of the marginality of a language...] (Pieta 2013, p. 40; our translation supported by DeepL).

Not allowed:

- Using machine translation to translate *someone else's text* and presenting it as your own work
- Using translation tools when translation skill is being assessed

Plagiarism: A Brief Reminder

Plagiarism is presenting another person's work or ideas as your own. This includes:

- Using direct quotations without citation
- Paraphrasing without acknowledgment
- Appropriating someone else's arguments or structure
- Failing to use quotation marks for direct quotes
- Internet and digital sources are held to the **same standard** as print sources

Plagiarism results in course failure. See the Regulations on Plagiarism for the full policy.

The connection

The AI guidelines and the plagiarism regulations share the same foundation: **your work must be your own**, and you must be **transparent** about how it was produced.

Discussion

Scenarios: What Would You Do?

Discuss in pairs, then we'll talk as a group.

1. You use ChatGPT to brainstorm three possible ways to organize your findings chapter. You don't copy any text—you just use the structure as inspiration. Do you need to disclose this?
2. You paste a paragraph from a Korean newspaper article into DeepL and use the English translation in your thesis, with a citation for the original article. Is this acceptable?
3. You ask an AI tool to "improve the academic tone" of a paragraph you wrote. It rewrites several sentences substantially. You use the rewritten version. What are the issues?
4. You upload your interview transcripts to an AI tool to help identify themes. What concerns should you have?

Open Conversation

Let's talk honestly:

- Have you used AI tools in your research process so far?
- What for? What worked? What didn't?
- Where do you feel uncertain about the boundaries?
- What would help you make better decisions about AI use going forward?

Ground rule

This is a learning conversation, not an investigation. The goal is to leave this room with a clear understanding of the policy and confidence in how to apply it.

Break

10 minutes

Thesis Protocol Review

Where We Are

Milestone	Date	Status
Boot camp (Weeks 1–4)	Feb. 06 – Feb. 27	Complete
Assignment #1: Revised Proposal	Mar. 13	Complete
Peer review (Week 7)	Apr. 10	Complete
Assignment #2: Preliminary Draft	Apr. 03	Complete
You are here	**Apr. 17**	—
Assignment #3: Empirical Draft	May 06	In 3 weeks
Final Manuscript	Jun. 01	In 7 weeks

The trajectory

You have written a proposal and a preliminary draft. The next step is to show that you can **do the research**—collect data, analyze it, and present findings.

Assignment #3: Empirical Draft

Due: May 06, 2026 *5,000+ words*

This is a draft of your empirical chapter. It should:

- Apply the research design laid out in earlier assignments
- Present the initial stages of data analysis
- Demonstrate that data aligns with your question and methodology
- Show preliminary findings with emphasis on how evidence addresses the research problem
- Build upon and integrate with your literature review and analytical framework

Key point

The empirical chapter must be **coherently linked** to your prior sections. It is not a standalone piece—it shows a logical connection between your design and your emerging analysis.

Assignment #3: How It Is Assessed

Criterion	What Distinguishes Strong Work
Empirical Analysis	Analysis is aligned with the research question and shows insight into the data; well-supported claims
Use of Evidence	Appropriate primary data; well-selected excerpts, quotes, or figures that fully support the argument
Integration with Literature & Method	Excellent integration with prior sections; empirical chapter builds on and completes the earlier design
Structure & Clarity	Clear organization, strong transitions, academic tone and style

The full rubric is available on the course website.

The Four Assessment Criteria (Protocol)

Your final thesis is assessed on four criteria. These apply to Assignment #3 as well:

1. **Knowledge and insight** — Research question, motivation, literature review. Does the question reflect insight into key discussions in the field?
2. **Application of knowledge** — Data, methods, analysis. Is there critical analysis of primary sources? Are methods effective and justified?
3. **Reaching conclusions** — Synthesis, contribution, limitations. Are conclusions logical and well-founded? Is empirical analysis central?
4. **Communication** — Writing, structure, citations. Is the language competent? Is the structure clear? Are citations correct?

Example Thesis Structure

I. Introduction
- Research question
- Problem, gap, motivation
- Proposed research plan
- Thesis roadmap

II. Literature Review
- LR section I, II, ...*n*

III. Analytical Framework
- Design, data, and methods
- Methodological concerns and scope

IV. Empirical Findings ← Assignment #3
- Outcome I, II, ...*n*

V. Conclusion and Discussion
- Summary of research and findings
- Research contributions
- Limitations
- Future research

VI. Bibliography

VII. Appendices

Grade Descriptors: What Do the Numbers Mean?

Grade	What It Means
9–10	Outstanding; original, independent thinking; rigorous argument supported by wide evidence
8–8.9	Excellent understanding; independent thought; strong, well-organized argument
7–7.9	Good to very good; most criteria met
6–6.9	Satisfactory; reasonable argument with some shortcomings but no fundamental errors
5.1–5.9	**The faculty does not issue grades in this range**
3–5.0	Inadequate; substantial omissions

To pass the seminar: overall mark of 5.50 (= 6) or higher, with Assignment #3 at 5.5+.

Looking Ahead

The Path Forward

Week	Date	What Happens
9	Apr. 24	No class — free research time
10	May 01	No class — free research time
—	**May 06**	**Assignment #3 due**
11	May 08	In-class review and consultations
—	**Jun. 01**	**Final manuscript due**

What to focus on in the next three weeks:

1. Finish data collection (if not done)
2. Begin analysis — apply your framework to your data
3. Write the empirical chapter draft
4. Meet with your supervisor

Key Takeaways

1. **Know your data.** If you cannot describe what you have, where it is, and how you will analyze it, fix that this week.
2. **Be transparent.** About your methods, your sources, and your use of any tools—including AI.
3. **When in doubt, ask.** Your supervisor is your first resource for questions about AI use, methodology, or scope.
4. **Assignment #3 is the core of your thesis.** It shows you can do the research, not just plan it.

Resources

Course website | Thesis Protocol | Faculty GenAI Guidelines | Plagiarism Regulations