

## English Program, Department of Foreign Languages

### 3-year evaluation, ENG340

Filled out by course instructor

Course code	ENG 340: Master Thesis Preparation
Year	Spring 2021
Course instructor	Lene Johannessen
Structure and progression of the course	<p>The course runs over eight weeks, where the seminars oscillate between studying literary theory and method generally, studying and evaluating past MA theses, and fine-tuning individual thesis topics and thesis statements, two per student. The course thus ends in two completed project descriptions which are both part of the portfolio exam and are submitted to the coordinator for supervisor assignment.</p> <p>The seminars are discussion based, and students are expected to present on the various areas we focus on in most of the seminars.</p>
Correspondence between learning outcome description and teaching, learning and assessment methods.	There is consistent correspondence between learning outcome descriptions and the instruction, as far as I can tell. All students fulfilled their four obligatory assignments that go into the portfolio before they submitted their final project descriptions.
Did the course have a student evaluation? If so, what did it say?	In 2021 only one student responded to the evaluation, in 2020 there were none. My impression is that students like the course because it steers them toward their MA thesis idea, but

	<p>also because it's not a lot of work compared to other 10 courses. See below for suggestions.</p>
Possible improvements	<p>I do not think that ENG340 should continue, as it takes up 10 credits with what in my opinion is not enough content. Instead, I suggest letting three of the current ENG 340 seminars become part of the ENG350 requirements, as follows:</p> <p>In the <i>second semester</i> of the MA program, students participate in three seminars focused on thesis preparation. The content of these seminars will include, but is not limited to, reading and assessing selections from previously submitted MA theses, becoming familiarized with evaluation guidelines, studying key elements of argument and thesis statement, developing a project idea, and working with secondary sources. At the end of the three seminars students complete their MA thesis project form and submit this to the studieveileder.</p> <p>I believe the above arrangement will provide the students with sufficient preparation for their MA thesis writing, and will also level the playing field for L-students, who currently have no offer whatsoever of this kind. With three seminars added to ENG350's Work in Progress seminar in the second semester for all literature/culture students, we make sure that the entire group is on the same track, regardless of what program they are in. This also frees up 10 credits we sorely need to offer the students adequate and in-depth studies in various areas within literature and culture.</p>

# Treårsevaluering

## ENG345 Selected topic in English linguistics IV

### Sociolinguistics in Britain and Ireland

Kevin McCafferty

#### Introduction

This course is not suitable for a three-year evaluation given that (a) this topic and syllabus were being taught for the first time, and (b) the content of ENG345 changes every time it's taught, depending on who the instructor is.

The following description was made available at the end of the autumn semester 2020:

This is an advanced introduction to the sociolinguistics of Great Britain and Ireland, based on a textbook by one of the foremost practitioners of variationist sociolinguistics (Tagliamonte), combined with critical reading of recent studies from either side of the Irish Sea. We will look at the expansion of the variationist sociolinguistic approach from its initial application to phonological variation and change into other levels of linguistic variation, examining the pros and cons of doing so.

#### Course reading

The main textbook used was:

Tagliamonte, Sali A. 2011. *Variationist sociolinguistics. Change, observation, interpretation*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

This textbook provides a thorough account of variationist sociolinguistic methods and selected major findings. In addition to this book, selected chapters from the following recent collections were read:

Braber, Natalie & Sandra Jansen (eds.) 2018. *Sociolinguistics in England*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Durham, Mercedes & Jonathan Morris (eds.) 2017. *Sociolinguistics in Wales*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hickey, Raymond (ed.) 2016. *Sociolinguistics in Ireland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lawson, Robert (ed.) 2014. *Sociolinguistics in Scotland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chapters from these volumes were read critically in conjunction with the relevant chapter of the main textbook. So for example, we read Tagliamonte's chapter on variationist study of discourse phenomena alongside a couple of recent empirical studies of discourse markers in Britain and Ireland, paying careful attention to how researchers tackled the issues highlighted by Tagliamonte as problematical in relation to expanding variationist methodology to the study of discourse features.

The format worked reasonably well. With the usual kinds of variation in terms of presentation skills and attention to detail, the students tackled the task of evaluating the empirical studies quite well in general, and some of the presentations were excellent.

### **Examination and evaluation**

Teaching: 8 x 2-hr seminars; a total of 16 hours teaching. Each student took responsibility for presenting and leading discussion of one of the empirical studies in the second half of the semester.

Exam: One-week home exam.

### **Student statistics (cf. attachment)**

Six students completed the exam; all passed. The grade distribution was: 1 A, 3 Bs, 1 C, 1D.

### **Rammevilkår**

The course was run as an online seminar due to pandemic restrictions. No serious problems were experienced with the online format.

### **Studentevalueringer**

Due to oversight on the part of the course instructor, no student evaluation was carried out for this course.

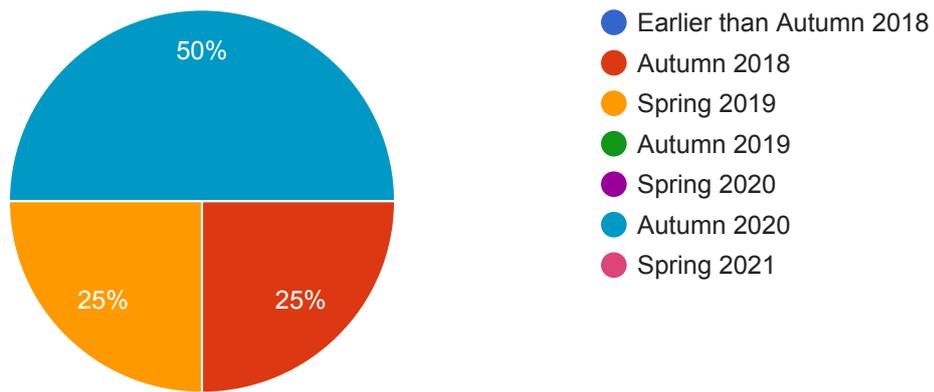
# ENG350 Linguistics Spring 2021 feedback

4 svar

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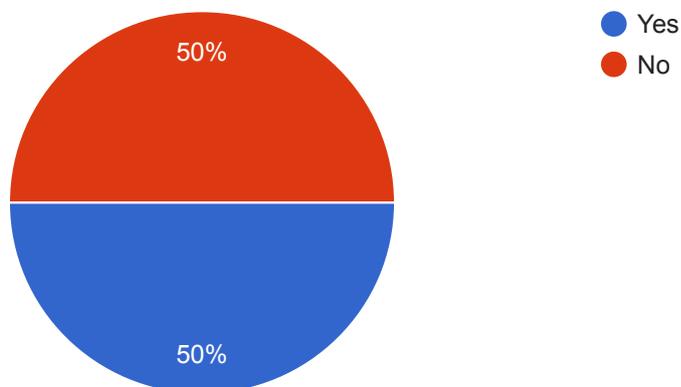
## When did you start ENG350?

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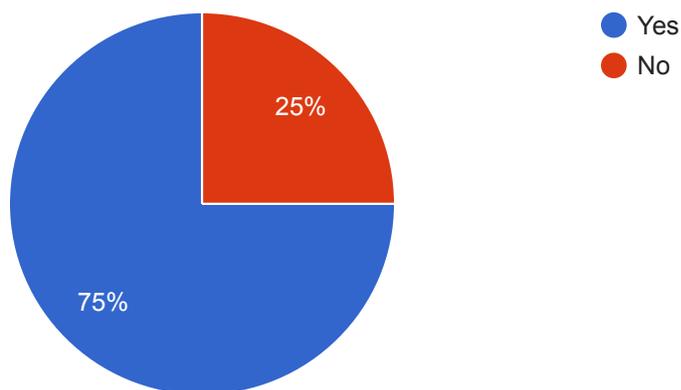
## Are you in the Lektor programme?

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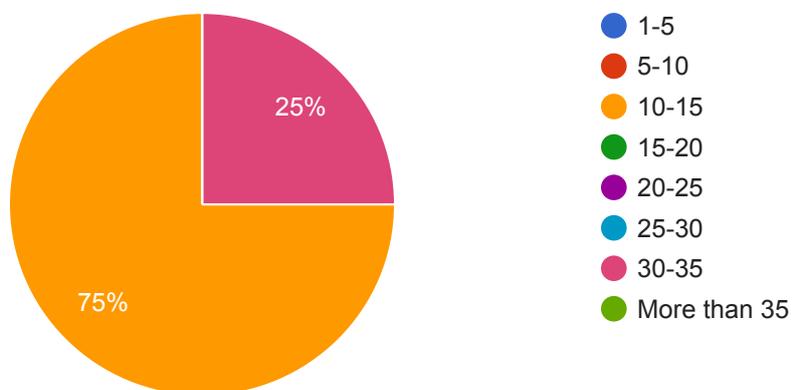
Have you completed your course work up to this point?

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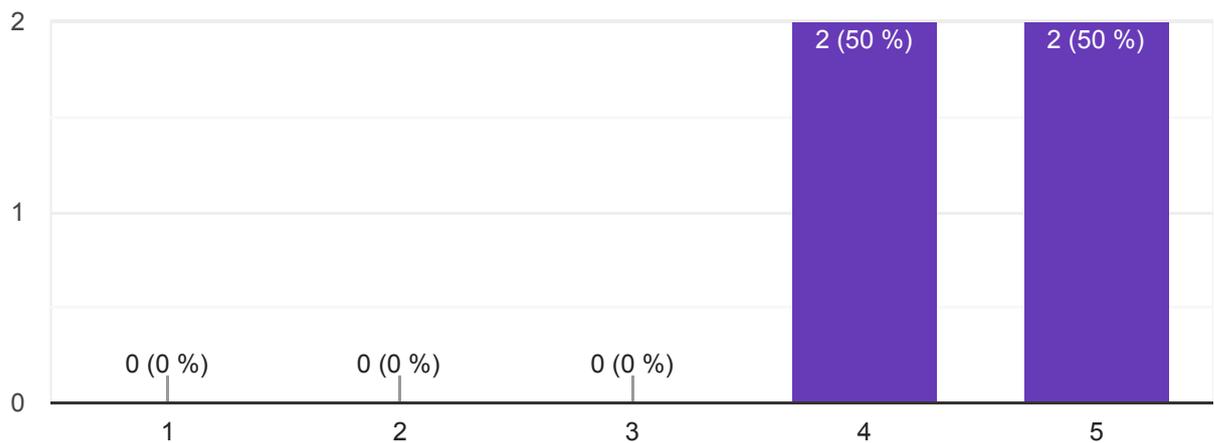
How many hours per week on average did you spend on independent study (including thesis research & writing)?

4 svar



Were you given adequate information about your ENG350 course programme?

4 svar



Do you have any suggestions for improvement on course information flow?

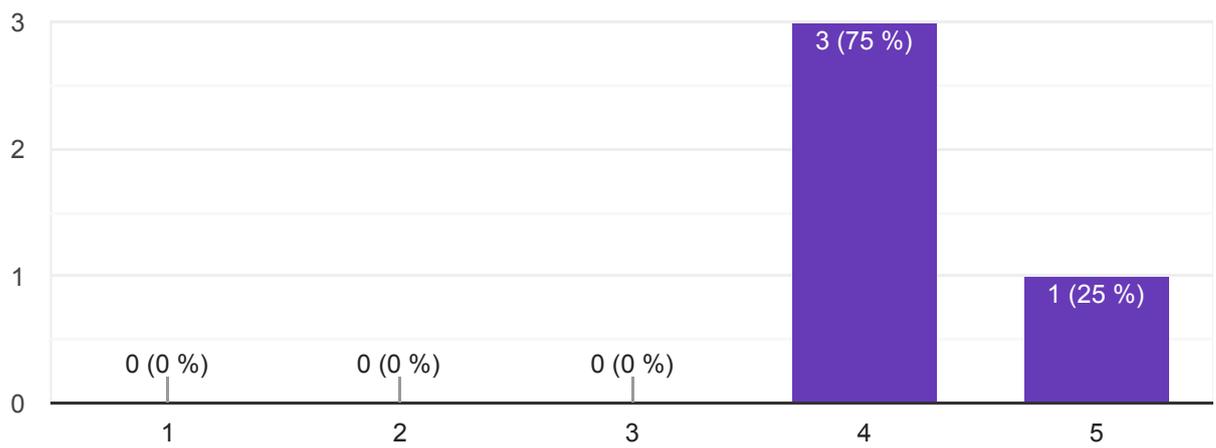
2 svar

No

Personally, I need clear, multiple reminders of various deadlines, especially what should be done on Studentweb. I've made a couple of unnecessary mistakes that have caused me a lot of stress.

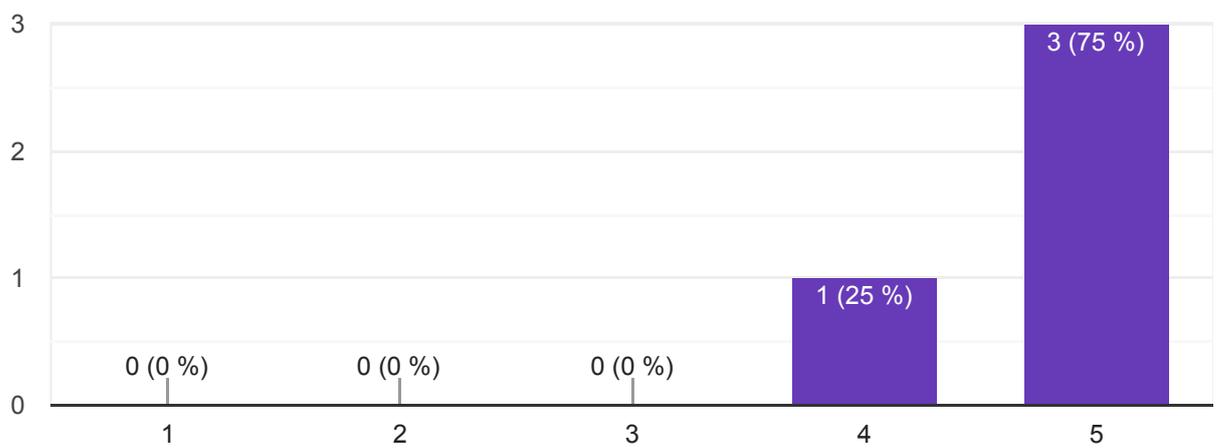
### Did the WiP seminars help you to learn?

4 svar



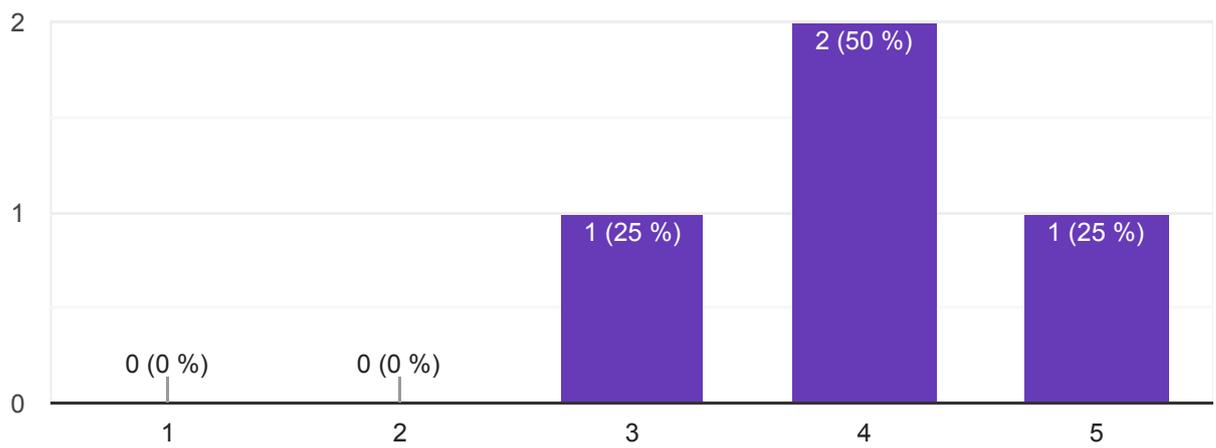
### Were the WiP seminars well organised and conducted?

4 svar



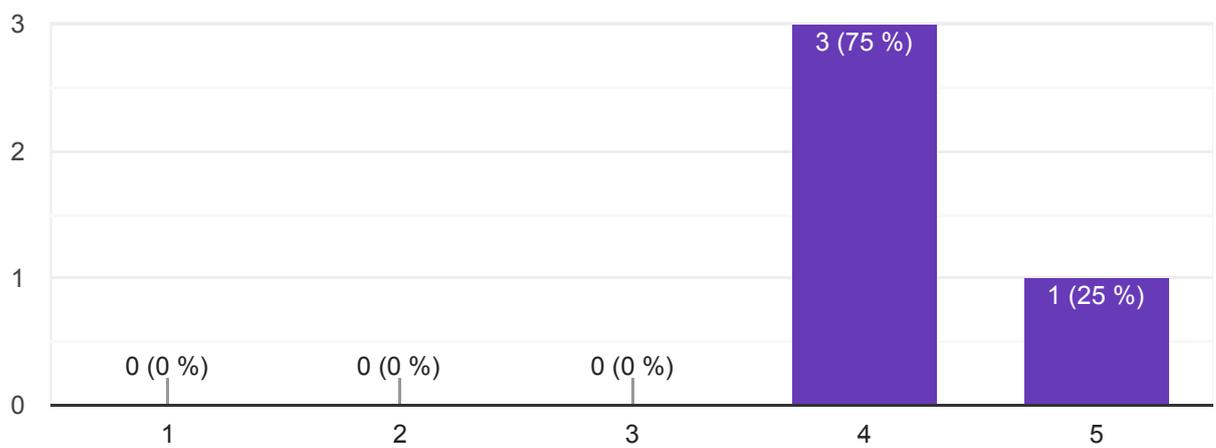
### Did the digital format of the WiP course on Zoom work well?

4 svar



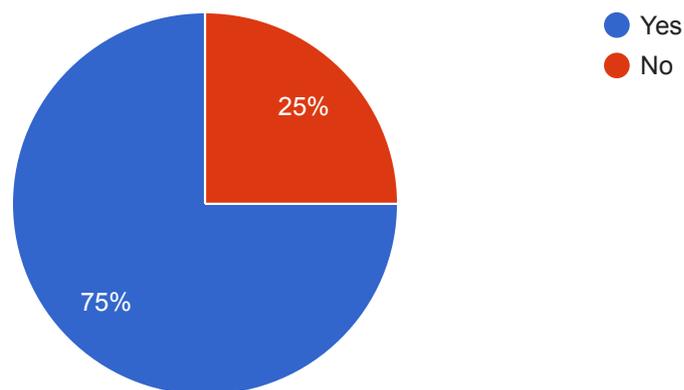
### Did student presentations and comments work well?

4 svar



Have you attended the WiP beyond the obligatory presentations?

4 svar



What aspect(s) of the WiP did you find most helpful?

4 svar

Meeting and talking to other students and staff about aspects of writing. Getting tips and learning what others are doing. Also presenting my chapter resulted in getting help with a problem.

The input from observing others go through their presentations

Insights, comments, and questions from teachers. Answering questions - gets you thinking about what kind of questions you might get to defend your thesis. Practicing presenting research findings. Strict deadlines - gets you writing. All in all, the seminars are really useful.

The comments from other supervisors and students.

Do you have any suggestions for improvement for the WiP?

3 svar

No

Nope

A downloadable MA thesis template in addition to the style sheet, like some other universities provide. I would rather spend time researching than checking paragraph and table formatting against the sheet requirements.

Who was your thesis supervisor? (Non-obligatory question.)

4 svar

Dagmar Haumann

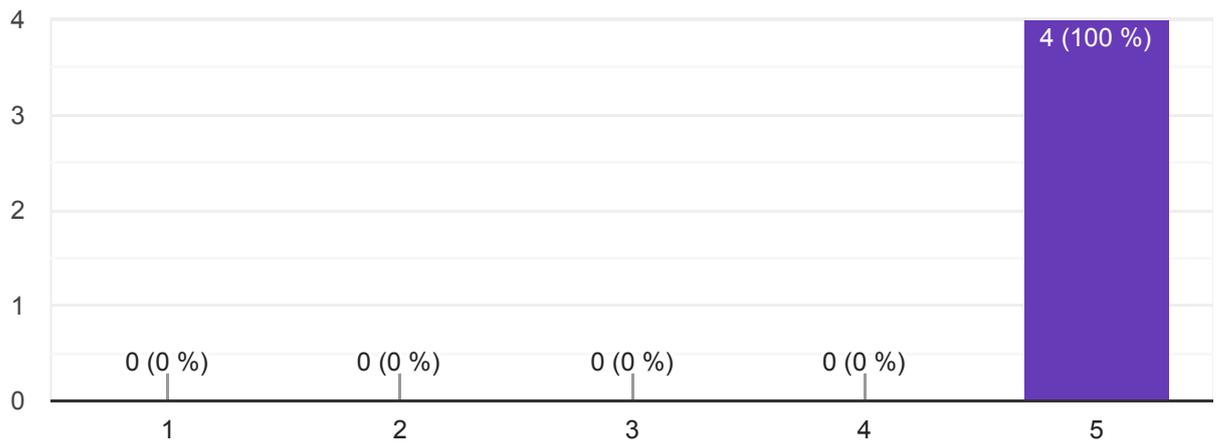
Kevin McCafferty

Jerzy Nykiel and prof. Christer Johansson

Dagmar Haumann

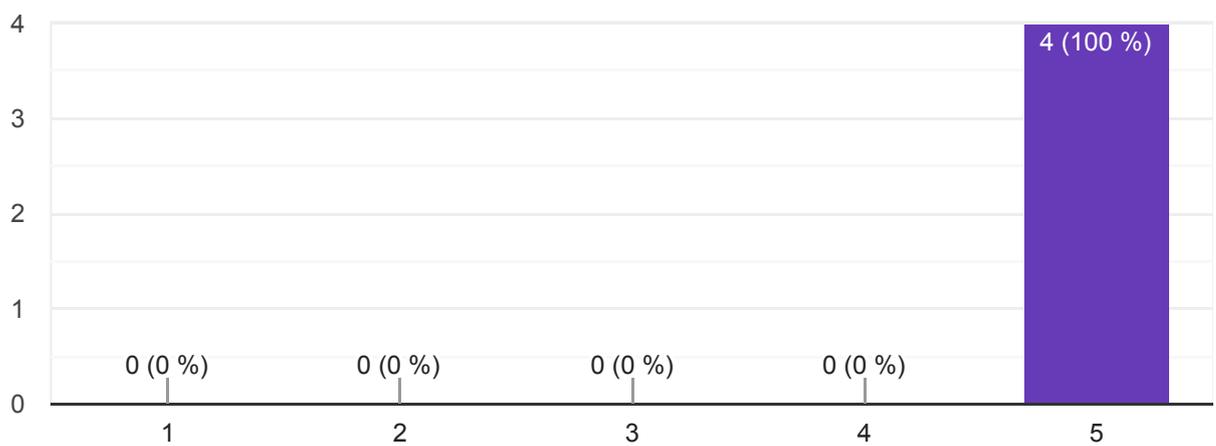
How happy were you with the information flow and practical aspects surrounding the supervision relationship?

4 svar



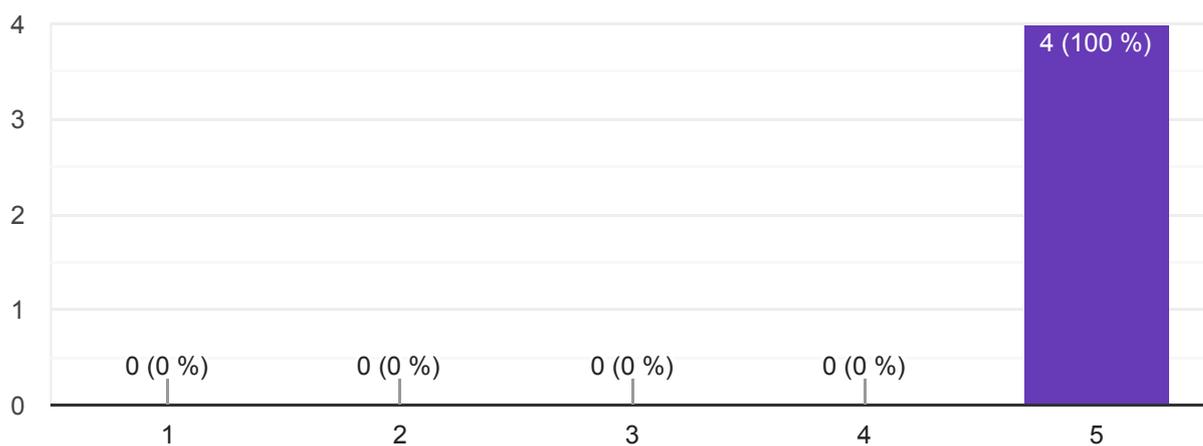
What was the overall quality of your thesis supervision like?

4 svar



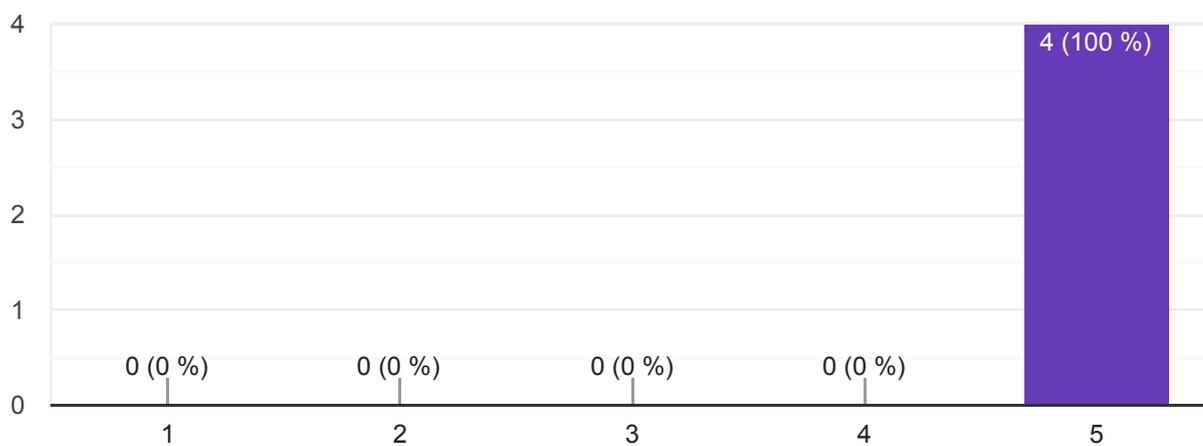
How happy were you with the frequency of supervisions?

4 svar



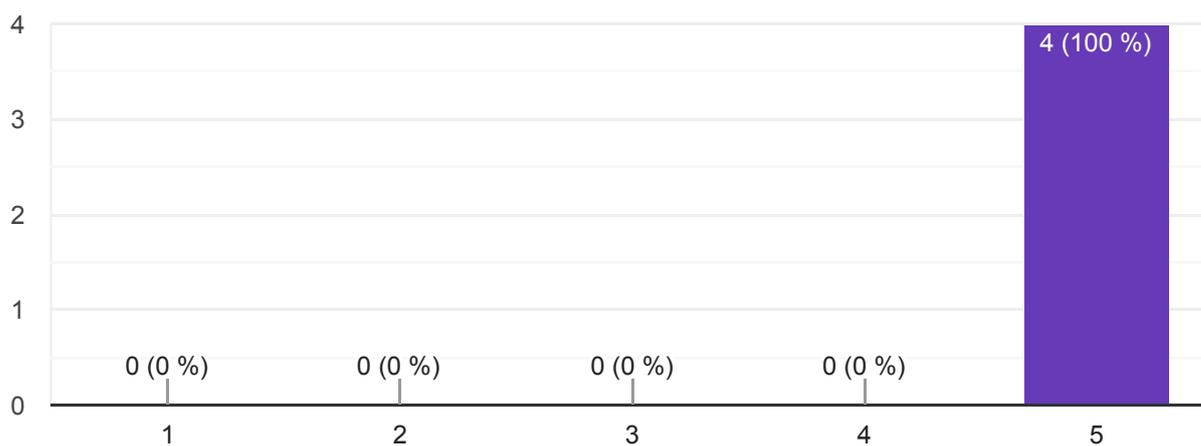
How happy were you with your supervisor's speed of response?

4 svar



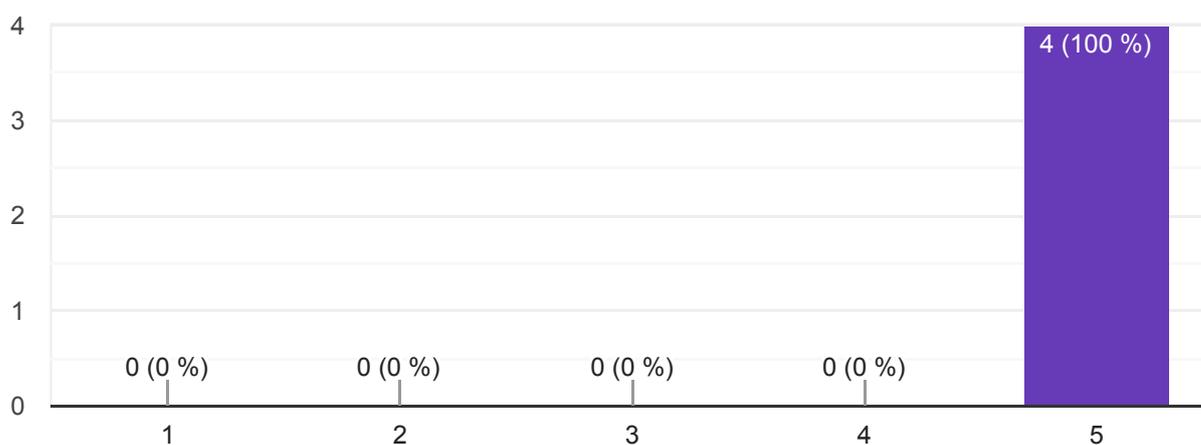
My supervisor guided me towards useful materials for my research.

4 svar



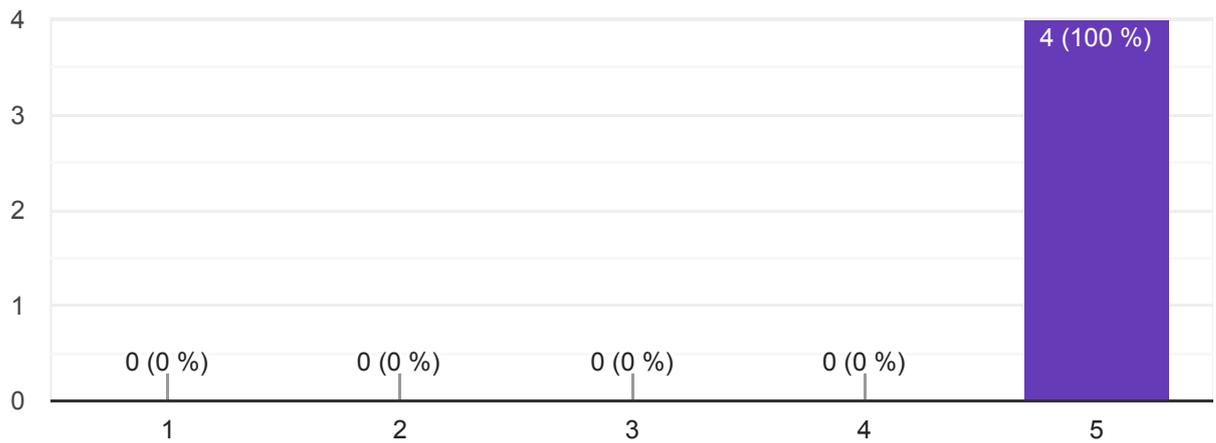
My supervisor provided useful guidance on the methodological and/or theoretical aspects of my research.

4 svar



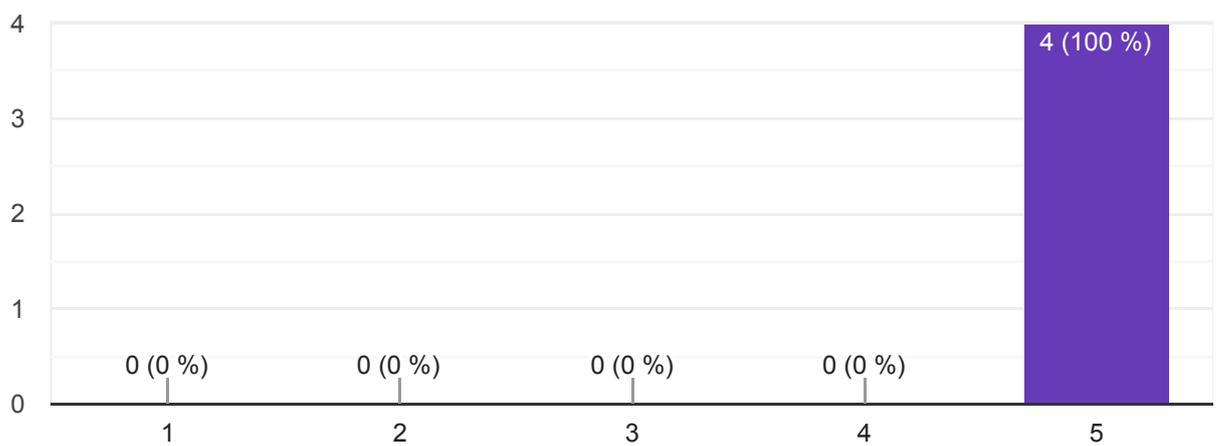
My supervisor helped to improve my conceptual thinking in a way that was useful to the progress of my thesis.

4 svar



My supervisor helped me to improve my text.

4 svar



What aspect(s) of the supervision relationship did you find most helpful?

4 svar

Dagmar has been very supportive and has always answered any questions I have had very quickly by email. Our meetings have also been very good. She has given me lots of time, and we have covered every topic that was needed and more. She is also very knowledgeable and has a great sense of humour:)

Everything! Personally, I really needed someone to ground me during stressful times and my supervisor helped by giving me thorough feedback and calming me down m

Regular meetings, frequency of meetings, accessibility. Thorough, timely and constructive feedback on written submissions. Supervisor involvement and commitment. Advice on availability of conferences and opportunities to publish research. Guidance and encouragement. Sufficient freedom to conduct independent research.

Everything! The comments were straight to the point and very helpful. Easy to get in touch with. Very understanding and encouraging.

Do you have any suggestions for improvement on the supervision relationship?

4 svar

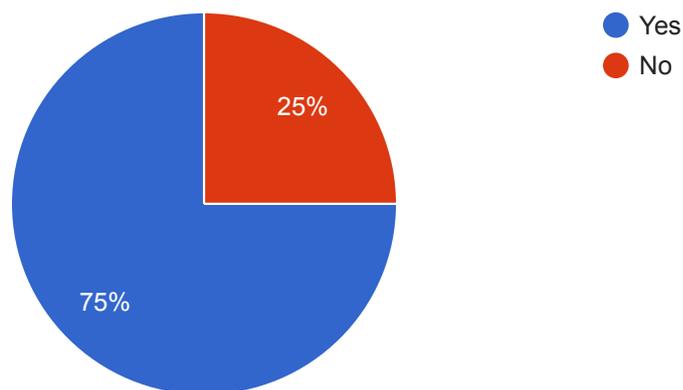
No

The relationship is great. I would like to have information from the beginning about how the paper will be graded and what it will take to get a good grade. But that is just a question I have not asked yet.

No :)

Is your thesis proceeding according to plan?

4 svar



If you are delayed or expect to be delayed with your thesis, what do you think is the main cause?

1 svar

Recruitment of participants was impossible and the laboratory was unavailable because of the pandemic.

If you are/will be delayed, what would help you complete?

1 svar

Instruction on how to research more efficiently, not go into too much detail, and make the writing shorter.

Do you have any other comments regarding ENG350?

3 svar

I think it's important making sure everyone gets the same information!

Thank you for the course. It was another good experience at the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

I really enjoyed the course. The feedback in WiP was very helpful.

I do know, however, that a few of my fellow students who had other supervisors didn't enjoy this process as much and often felt that their supervisor weren't helping them. This goes not only for linguistics, but literature as well. I know they got it all sorted out in the end, but I really hope this gets followed up because having a supervisor like, for example, Dagmar has been key to me looking back positively on this process.

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### **General remarks:**

ENG349 is a 10 credit course composed of 8 sessions. The sessions can be spread over 8 weeks (1 session per week) or over 4 weeks with 2 sessions per week. The title of the course varies and in the last three semesters the topic were as follows:

- spring 2020: Words, words, words (taught by Dagmar Haumann)
- spring 2020: Words, words, words (taught by Dagmar Haumann)
- spring 2021: Grammaticalization, lexicalization, degrammaticalization (taught by Jerzy Nykiel)

While the course proceeded as expected in 2019, in 2020 and 2021 it was affected by the pandemic situation. In 2020 the teaching took place mostly fully online on Zoom, with the first two sessions being devoted to discussions of the video content published beforehand. In 2021 seven sessions were conducted online via Zoom and one was a hybrid session with one student present in the classroom and the remaining students present online via Zoom. Typically there are few students registered for the course (2 in 2019, 2 in 2020 and 6 in 2021) but, as noted by the external MA program sensor prof. Gjertrud Stenbreden in her report from 2020, it is a general tendency in Norway nowadays. Despite the low registration numbers, typically most students attend all the sessions and participate more or less actively in the class.

Materials necessary for the students to prepare for class are posted to MittUiB before each session. In 2021 I created a module on MittUiB devoted to each session. Before each session, I uploaded to the module PowerPoint materials and a short video where I discuss select questions related to the topic of the session, and tasks which were solved and discussed in class. The students were expected to watch the video, familiarize themselves with the Power Points, and read the chapters/section specified in the semester plan. My motivation behind posting pre-recorded videos was as follows: 1) I wanted to reserve more time for analysis of data and discussion in class 2) I wanted the students to come to class prepared to some extent and watching the videos beforehand made the preparation process a little more diversified and attractive. Also, the question discussed in the video was only a short excerpt from the topic of the class so the students often reached for the textbook to get a broader context when preparing for class. 3) The videos made the teaching and learning process a little more personal in the situation where the whole course was taught online.

Two textbooks are used in the course, plus a selection of article and chapters collected in a compendium or available online (the latter only in 2019 and 2020).

### **The exam**

The exam is a week-long home exam followed by an oral exam. The home exam can be composed of parts where in one part the students always answer a few questions related to the topics discussed in class, and in the other part the students write an essay (in 2019 and

2020) or present a short analysis of the data they had collected in their research projects developed in the course of the semester (in 2021). The oral exam builds upon the home exam in that the students are asked questions where they go into more detail on some points mentioned or discussed in the home exam and clarify others.

All the students passed the exam between 2019 and 2021. The grade distribution was as follows:

- 2019:

A: 1

B: 1

- 2020:

B: 2

- 2021:

Home exam:

A – 2

B – 1

C – 1

D – 1

Oral exam:

A – 2

D – 2

E – 1

In my opinion this form of exam is an accurate assessment of the students' progress. The oral exam was an opportunity to verify the students' familiarity with some of the points they had discussed in the home exam I think it is also important that students get a chance to argue in an oral exam setting. Overall, the grades are quite good but, as can be seen in the 2021 results, on the oral part they are somewhat lower than on the written part. The reason for it is a combination of the more general fact that an oral exam is a source of some stress and requires more spontaneous answers as well as the fact that during a home exam students have access to various sources but some students use them without much reflection.

### **Learning outcomes and objectives of the Master's program in English**

The learning outcomes are formulated in a very general way but they are for the most part well aligned with the teaching forms, learning and the exam form in this course. The generality

of the terms in which the learning outcomes are formulated is a useful way of accommodating various topics dealt with in the course.

The first learning outcome states that:

‘The student has detailed insight into the theoretical and methodological area within the field covered by the course and be familiar with current research in this field.’

The course was devoted to two different areas of linguistics (morphology in 2019 and 2020, and grammaticalization theory in 2021) and throughout the semester the students read about, listened to shorts talks about, and discussed aspects of morphology grammaticalization theory and ways of collecting and analyzing data used in these two kinds of linguistic research.

The next two learning outcomes state that:

‘The student:

- can apply his or her knowledge and skills in teaching, dissemination of research and other information purposes.

- is highly skilled in expressing academic ideas in written and spoken English’

Throughout the course the students had multiple opportunities to express ideas orally in the course of discussions, and also during the project presentations in 2021. As the exam has a written and a spoken part, the students were first evaluated on the ability to formulate the relevant notions, ideas and present data analysis in a written form.

The first learning outcome of the two listed here received the least attention in the course, which, I assume, is a consequence of the fact that topics discussed in ENG349 vary from semester to semester. The course was not specifically directed at future teachers. The students however had the opportunity to gain some experience in disseminating their research by giving an oral presentation of their projects with the aid of a power point.

The last learning outcome states that:

‘The student is capable of developing his or her own competence and specializing in an independent manner.’

In the course of the semester the students developed their own competence by reading and discussing the relevant literature, taking part in discussing relevant cases and examples pertinent to morphological and grammaticalization research and individually, and conducting a small piece of their own data collection and data analysis. The exam also required a description of the students’ individual research in 2021.

The course and the topics chosen this semester sit in well with the objectives of the English Master’s program as described on the UiB websites (<https://www.uib.no/en/studies/MAHF-ENG>). The course helped the students deepen their knowledge about more and less recent

changes in standard English and gave them even more of a theoretical apparatus needed to analyze English language data

### **Student evaluations**

I have based this report on student evaluations going back to spring 2018. The student evaluations have been very consistent. Usually very few students return the evaluation sheets (2-3 people) but they are very satisfied with the course overall and its component parts, i.e. quality of teaching, level of difficulty, progression, the extent to which the learning outcomes were achieved. The students indicate that there was enough information about the course, it was easily available, they say that the progression was very good and consider the content relevant to their studies regardless of the topic. The quality of teaching received a lot of praise as well. In the 2018 evaluation, some students remarked that they would like to discuss more examples of grammaticalization. I took this into account in this run of the course as we looked into many more cases of grammaticalization. I assume that it is also reflected in the 2021 evaluation where a student praises the opportunity to do their own piece of grammaticalization research and where there are no comments pointing to any lack of illustrations of grammaticalization. In 2019 one student expressed dissatisfaction with the form of the exam which 'feel[s] like two different exams'. In light of the good final grades overall and this voice being solitary, there are arguments to say that that this form of exam works well with this course (I addressed more of those arguments in the Exam section above).

### **Final assessment**

Based on the student evaluations, the report by prof. Gjertrud Stenbreden, and the experience of the linguists who have taught the course, I think ENG349 is an important and well executed course in the Master's program offer. The last three runs of the course were quite successful and the fact that the course ran online in 2020 and 2021 didn't take anything away from it. The students were quite motivated, which materialized in very good attendance throughout the semesters, and interested and the teachers succeeded in showing the students how to use what we know about morphology and grammaticalization in data analysis. The learning outcomes, despite the generality in the way they are formulated, function well in the course where topics vary. The students indicate they the learning outcomes are achieved. The experience gained through the teaching of the course in the last three semesters, for example use of pre-recorded videos, accommodation of small research projects which students carry out in the course of the semester, should be used in the future runs of the course.

## Three-year evaluation of ENG350 Linguistics

### General

The English linguistics part of ENG350 is a work-in-progress (WiP) seminar. The primary target group is master's students in their second year, i.e., students who are currently working on their MA thesis. Students in the first MA year are also encouraged to attend, though few do so. The seminar is chaired by a member of academic staff and most other staff attend as many sessions as they can. Attendance, though not obligatory for either group, is usually quite high among staff and students in the second year, so that the WiP seminars offer a forum where these two groups can meet and interact, get an overview of the kinds of research in English linguistics that the department is actively engaged in, or enjoy academic input from outside the Department.

Seminars are usually focused on the work of one or more students in fulfilment of the requirements of the master's degree. A library-run course in literature searching is also a regular feature of ENG350. From time to time, academic staff and guest lecturers have also held research talks as part of the WiP series. Also, depending on (a) the number of students writing theses in English linguistics, (b) the staff member chairing the seminars, and (c) the perceived and/or expressed needs of students, seminars have sometimes been offered in a range of additional topics. Such sessions have in recent years included topics like statistics, referencing and formatting, abstract-writing, etc.

### Obligatory tasks

Students must complete three obligatory exercises to be allowed to take the master's exam:

- Autumn semester: presentation of master's project proposal
- Spring semester: draft chapter of thesis
- Spring semester: oral feedback to a fellow student's draft chapter

### Learning outcomes

The WiP seminar provides students with an important forum for feedback on their own projects at two important stages of the thesis-writing process. It exposes students to a range of linguistic approaches and types of data types beyond those they are using in their own projects. It also gives opportunities to hone important transferable skills: presentation skills as well as practice in assessing the application of linguistic theories and methods, interpreting results and offering constructive criticism.

## Student evaluations

At the end of the spring semester 2021 two separate evaluation forms were distributed, one by the WiP chair (Kevin McCafferty) and one by the student advisor (Hanne Svanholm Misje). The respondents were two apparently non-overlapping sub-groups, with different perspectives on ENG350, so it is useful to present the results of both evaluations here.

### *McCafferty evaluation*

The form distributed by McCafferty (see Appendix 1) was returned by four students and can be summed up fairly quickly. These students were very satisfied with ENG350, scoring almost all the questions as 4 or 5 (the latter indicating the most positive rating). They felt they had been given adequate information on the course; the WiP seminars were well organised and helped them learn; presentations and feedback worked well. The one point on which one respondent gave a score of 3 was on the question of how well the Zoom format worked.

As regards supervision, these students were well satisfied: they all scored the quality, frequency and usefulness of supervision as solid 4s on all questions asked. Their comments praise their supervisors (Dagmar Haumann, Kevin McCafferty and Jerzy Nykiel), mentioning factors like supportiveness, good and rapid feedback, accessibility, regularity of meetings, etc.

One of these students is delayed in submitting their thesis due to the pandemic situation.

### *Misje evaluation*

The form distributed by student advisor Hanne Misje was also returned by four students taking linguistics (and one writing in didactics). It is not possible to distinguish the didactics student from the others, so the following assumes that the answers are all relevant to linguistics.

These students were also very happy with the supervision but less pleased with the WiP seminar. The free comments to the question of whether the WiP had helped or not are listed here, with negative/critical comments in blue:

- It has not really helped me that much, as the focus is mainly on those who present and it is a bit too shallow to be of any meaningful help, especially in the second semester. I also found the presentation session to not be constructive and overly negative and it resulted in a loss of motivation.
- It has been useful to hear about the other MA students' projects, and to have certain deadlines during the year. The feedback to our presentations, from peers and faculty members, has also been useful. However, the seminars would have been even more helpful if they included more information about the thesis itself, which formalities need to be included, what to expect at the oral defense etc.
- Mostly the feedback, questions, and discussions surrounding my own chapter draft. The short topic presentation was not as useful although of course putting together a short description of the project helped me "boil down" and structure my thoughts a bit. Of those couple of wip seminars i attended beyond those with my own presentations, none of the students had a project similar to mine so that didn't noticeably help me.

- Nei. Fikk ikke noe særlig tilbakemelding som var til hjelp på verken første eller andre presentasjonen (annet enn fra medelev - som var bra). Syns vi kunne snakket mer om hva det er å skrive master og hva vi har gjort/ikkje fått til og fått hjelp av hverandre og andre professorer ut over de timene vi har med veileder. Særlig i stedet for foredrag fra andre professorer og de gangene vi ikke har brukt hele tiden på presentasjoner etc.
- Det er nyttig å ta del i seminarene hvor andre presenterer, ettersom man gjerne har de samme utfordringene. Det har derimot være lite informasjon utover tilbakemeldingen på kapitler. Jeg savner informasjon om formelle krav til oppgaven, for eksempel en gjennomgang av skrifttype, side oppsett, referanser etc. Vi har heller ikke hatt gjennomgang av det muntlige forsvaret av oppgaven, og hvordan dette foregår.

The students had related suggestions as to how the seminars might be improved:

- The WIP seminars are too shallow and the presentations are mostly not relevant for the thesis although it is interesting to follow the other student's work. I would recommend that the feedback sessions focus on being a bit less intimidating.
- It would have been interesting to get more input from the faculty members about writing an MA thesis and what to expect at the oral defense. Just a bit more from the staff in general, not only our own presentations.
- I honestly don't know - i think the setup and structure is nice, and my main (only?) issue was that my topic/methodology (qualitative discourse analysis, focused on metaphors) was perhaps a bit of an outlier, thus limiting the use i got out of the seminars.
- Snakke mer om våre oppgaver. Ikke flere obligatoriske krav eller presentasjoner, men samtaler i gruppen om hva vi har fått til eller ikke slik at man kan ta inspirasjon fra hverandre eller hjelpe hverandre. Det er ikke alle som har plass på lesesal og kan snakke om det der + at salen har ikke vært åpen hele tiden pga. corona.
- Mer informasjon utover tilbakemeldingene på kapitlene.

In the present format, how well presentations work is dependent on the students presenting and responding, including the quality of their work and type of presentation. Since students in our system are fairly free to suggest and even change topics along the way, most will inevitably be working on topics and areas that are unique to them and, strictly speaking, most presentations will necessarily not be directly relevant to their project.

One theme here is a wish for more of a writing seminar, with advice on the technical aspects of thesis-writing, which is surprising from a teacher's/supervisor's perspective. However, these are students who have been in the university system for at least four years. It is reasonable to expect them to have mastered the technical side of academic writing by the time they embark on a master's thesis.

Another theme is the wish for more information in general, and more specifically more information on thesis-writing, and a seminar on what an MA oral exam is like. To take the issue of what is expected of thesis-writers first, we might easily integrate a session on this at the beginning of the autumn semester that would be useful for all students. As for the need for more general information, students' needs vary a great deal, so this is something best dealt with individually in supervision. As regards, the oral exam, all students have taken oral exams before they start the MA course, and oral exams at the MA level are much like they are at the BA level – with the important exception that at the MA oral the student is likely to be more of an expert on the topic under discussion than either examiner. This is something that in my view (KMCC) is best taken up as part of normal supervision sessions.

The suggestion that students might have group discussions of their projects is an interesting and constructive one, but also one that students might implement themselves, without the need for academic staff involvement.

Another constructive suggestion is the one that comes in response to a later question:

- Mer fokus på at vi ikke vet hva vi gjør. Vi har aldri skrevet en større forskingsoppgave før og mange av oss har aldri hatt metodefag innen det vi skriver i. Kanskje det er et problem på større nivå. Men det er mye som kan diskuteres i WiP seminarene som hadde hjulpet med det.

Yes, we could offer more help with method, but this really would make sense only when a number of students are using similar methods; otherwise, we end up giving seminars in topics that very few are interested in, and these are better incorporated into supervision.

In conclusion, the WiP seminar in English linguistics might be tweaked to include:

- a general info session on thesis-writing early in the autumn semester
- a possible methods seminar or two when several students are working on similar topics and using similar methods
- encouragement for students to create a colloquium group (or groups) where they can discuss one another's work

Kevin McCafferty

Bergen, 09.09.2021

## English Program, Department of Foreign Languages

### 3-year evaluation ENG350

#### Filled out by course instructor

Course code	ENG 350, Literature and Culture
Year	Spring 2021
Course instructor	Nahum Welang, Lene Johannessen
Structure and progression of the course	<p>ENG 350 has a component called the Work in Progress seminar. <a href="https://www.uib.no/en/course/ENG350">https://www.uib.no/en/course/ENG350</a> described as follows:</p> <p><i>“Work-in-progress seminar As part of the Master's thesis, students hold three approved presentations at the Department's work-in-progress seminars for Master students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. a project presentation</i></li><li><i>2. a draft of a chapter of the Master's thesis,</i></li><li><i>3. a discussion of another student's chapter draft.</i></li></ol> <p><i>Students are expected to participate actively in their discipline's work-in-progress seminars by presenting their own work and by taking part in discussions about others' presentations. It is especially important that students take part in these seminars the two semesters they spend writing their Master's thesis, but it is also advantageous that they participate in their first and second semester.”</i></p> <p>The WiP seminar typically meets every week throughout each semester, depending a little on how many students there are in the different disciplines. In the fall semester the two first seminars are devoted to obligatory presentations of project description, with all faculty and students present for commenting. This functions as a kind of “vetting” session, where potential methodological and thematic snags can be corrected at an early point in the MA thesis process.</p>

	<p>For fall 2020 and spring 2021 the Literature and Culture seminars following the project descriptions were focused on on general issues connected to thesis writing, such as Developing Arguments, Healthy working habits and time management, Assessment Guidelines for MA theses, MA thesis structure, to mention some themes.</p> <p>Once these topics were completed, the seminar focuses on MA students’ draft presentation and peer responses, with one or two presentations per seminar, depending on number of students. For each presentation there is also one faculty member who comments on assigned presentations. The chair of the WiP provides additional comments as needed.</p> <p>At least once a year, Flattun over at UBB provides the MA students in ENG350 with a specialized library course.</p>
<p>Correspondence between learning outcome description and teaching, learning and assessment methods.</p>	<p>In WiP Literature and Culture there is consistent correspondence between learning outcome descriptions and the instruction. All students fulfill their obligatory assignments before they submit their MA thesis in May.</p>
<p>Did the course have a student evaluation? If so, what did it say?</p>	<p><b>2020:</b></p> <p>The majority of students (9) attended seminars well beyond their own obligatory presentations; the majority find the feedback they get from faculty and peers very valuable and motivating to their own work. Some point out that feedback vary a bit too much from respondent to respondent, some would like more focus on writing skills.</p> <p><b>2021:</b></p> <p>Among the respondents (8) the score for satisfaction with the WiP is very high both for classroom and digital seminars. Among the possible improvements listed are mandatory commenting from peer students, a special seminar on the format of the MA thesis, more academic writing. Satisfaction with supervision is also for the most part very high.</p>
<p>Possible improvements</p>	<p>As per student evaluations, the idea of making commenting compulsory is sound, and we might want to go back to this practice. Similarly, a fixed schedule for the more general components might be helpful, as well as adding the formatting seminar. Here, specific lessons/exercises in the <i>first</i> seminars in the fall on constructing a concise argument is key; so too is emphasis on narration vs analysis.</p>

	<p>Re feedback:</p> <p>Faculty need to be mindful about their commenting: in the first semester of MA thesis writing comments must be geared to the level at which the students are, and in the second focused on helping them along, ie. not provide the kind of criticism that make students feel they have to begin all over again. The same way there are guidelines for commenting for students, there should be some for faculty, especially since we regularly have short-term hires who are not familiar with the WiP format.</p> <p>Faculty need to encourage their students to attend.</p>
<p>Other comments and suggestions</p>	<p>The WiP has existed for as long as I can remember and is a valued part of ENG350. As far as I know we are the only English program to run this every semester, and we will continue to do so despite the occasional grumbling from admin that it uses up resources. English has a consistently good progression rate, and the MA program’s reputation elsewhere is in no small part due to the WiP. It would be very bad business, literally, to cut in this offer. I would in fact suggest that we consider <i>expanding</i> the commenting function by faculty: it used to be all faculty showed up, which did take up a lot of time, but how about two every time? The satisfaction and progression rate make the WiP a profitable practice, and should only be strengthened.</p> <p>As the report for ENG340 will show, we are currently also discussing extending ENG350 and the WiP to include a second semester component consisting in three obligatory seminars for <i>all</i> MA students (including L-students) where they focus on finding a topic, searching for secondary sources, reading sample thesis, and practicing thesis statement. This would level the playing field for “regular” and L-students somewhat, and create a better starting point for all once June comes. It would also mean having the project “vetting” seminars by mid-June rather than in August.</p>

## 3-year Cycle Course Evaluation

### ENG350 – Work in Progress (WiP) Didactics

#### 1. General Description of the Course

The ENG350 – WiP Didactics course is composed of six to eight 90-minute seminars each semester. This is a joint seminar for ENG350 students at the 5-year *lektor* education and ENG650. All members of staff in English didactics usually attend the seminars.

Large parts of the seminars consist of discussing MA project designs, chapter drafts and any problems during the MA writing process that the students want to raise. In addition, short lectures on the initial writing stage, abstracts (summaries), and how to create research gaps rhetorically have been given. The students have been invited to suggest more topics that they would like short lectures on. A library course has also been offered. The students say, however, that this course is mostly repetition of a previous course.

#### 2. Obligatory tasks and attendance

Attendance is not obligatory, but there are three obligatory tasks for ENG350 students:

1. A presentation of the MA project design
2. A draft of a chapter of the MA thesis
3. Giving oral feedback of a fellow student's chapter draft.

The course description specifies the following:

Students are expected to participate actively in their discipline's work-in-progress seminars by presenting their own work and by taking part in discussions about others' presentations. It is especially important that students take part in these seminars the two semesters they spend writing their Master's thesis, but it is also advantageous that they participate in their first and second semester.

In practice, students in their first and second semesters have not attended. Because most students enrolled in ENG650 work as full time teachers, this group of students do not attend the seminars on a regular basis. Students at ENG350 do attend on a regular basis in their two final terms.

### 3. Learning Outcomes

No specific learning outcomes are specified for the WiP didactics course, but many of the same learning outcomes that are specified for the MA will apply:

#### Knowledge

##### The graduate

- will have further developed the knowledge s/he has gained previously via specialised courses in English linguistics and/or English literature or/and culture and/or didactics.
- will have gained broad knowledge of the field in general and detailed knowledge of a limited subfield.
- will have gained basic knowledge of central problems and methodologies in the selected discipline.

#### Skills

##### The graduate

- is able to work independently and in the long term on solving problems based on his/her knowledge of the discipline.
- is able to engage with and critically assess theories, methods and interpretations within the discipline.
- is capable of acquiring and applying knowledge of new subfields within the discipline.
- is capable of carrying out a limited supervised research project in accordance with the relevant research-ethical norms.
- is familiar with the norms of academic writing.
- is capable of using the ICT tools which are necessary in order to carry out independent work within the discipline.

#### General competence

##### The graduate

- is capable of continuing to develop his/her competence and specialisation in an independent manner.
- can express problems, analyses and conclusions within the student's selected discipline in English.
- is familiar with relevant communicative genres.
- can contribute to discourse in the public arena in areas relevant to the discipline.

Except for the obligatory tasks, the learning outcome is only tested in the MA thesis.

### 4. Student evaluation

The ENG350 WiP didactics course has not been evaluated every year, and there is room for improvement on this point. The course was evaluated in the spring of 2021, but only one student responded. This student wrote that he or she wanted more information about expectations in relation to an MA and how to get started writing. A short lecture on the initial stage of writing was given, but more time will be spent on this aspect in addition to expectations on the student and supervisor's part.