

PEER REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS | Fall 2016

If you have already registered with OJS (the Open Journal System), you can skip this step. However, if you have not, you will need to register with OJS before doing anything else!

OJS REGISTRATION

Students who wish to act as a peer reviewer will need to **register as a reviewer** on the online Open Journal Systems platform. This can be done from the home page of the journal, at this link:
<https://ugresearchjournals.illinois.edu/index.php/ujlc/user/register>

PATH: Home > User > Register > Reviewer

- Check the box labeled “Reviewer” and enter your Illinois email address in the box below the check box options. Although not obvious, as it is not clearly named, the information entry form is looking for your email address, as in this example (but please select “reviewer,” not “author”):

The screenshot shows the OJS registration page. At the top is a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT, LOGIN, REGISTER, SEARCH, CURRENT, ARCHIVES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, and EUI. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Home > User > Register. The main heading is 'Register'. Below the heading is the instruction: 'Fill in this form to register with this site.' The 'Register as' section has three radio button options: 'Reader: Notified by email on publication of an issue of the journal.', 'Author: Able to submit items to the journal.', and 'Reviewer: Willing to conduct peer review of submissions to the journal.' The 'Reviewer' option is selected. Below these options is a text field labeled 'Identify reviewing interests (substantive areas and research methods):' which contains the email address 'example@illinois.edu' followed by a small 'x' icon. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Register' and 'Cancel'.

At this point, you will not see your account associated with any journal. Due to the nature of the system, someone from the Re: Search Executive Board will need to manually register you.

- Please send an email to uiucclitjournal@gmail.com and mention that you need to be added as a peer reviewer, and then we will manually add you to the journal through the system. Once you have been added, we will send you an email to let you know, and then you should see Re:Search appear on your OJS User Home as an associated journal, and you can proceed with the instructions on the next page. *If you reach your User Home as see you have been added as an Author, please email us so we can fix that!

PEER REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

About Peer Review

The peer review process models the peer review component of submission acceptance in professional and scholarly journals. This process is triple-blind, and benefits not only the Executive Board while making the acceptance decisions, but provides authors with feedback that will contribute to their projects moving forward, regardless of whether or not they publish with the journal. As a peer reviewer, you *will* be credited in the final publication of the journal!

Expectations & Deadlines

As a peer reviewer, we expect you to offer thoughtful feedback on one to two (1-2) proposals within about a week's time. **You should expect an email from Professor Lori Newcomb next Monday (11/14/16) or Tuesday (11/15/16)** letting you know which article(s) you have been assigned to (in a numbered format, e.g. Article #167), linking to a document of the proposal.

You will also receive a peer review form in a separate email with questions listed—these are the questions you are expected to respond to. The questions are also listed later in this document. If you don't receive an email with the peer review form within 24 hours of your assignment, please let us know at uiucelitjournal@gmail.com.

You may offer feedback outside the scope of these questions, but please make a meaningful effort to engage with each question listed, as these are the criteria most useful to the Executive Board. **Once you have completed your feedback on the form document provided, you will upload the document through the OJS system** (which you can do by logging in at <https://ugresearchjournals.illinois.edu/index.php/ujlc/login> using your NETID and password).

➤ **YOUR REVIEW FEEDBACK IS DUE BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20th at 11:59 PM.**

PEER REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Quality of the project's conception* – Is a central question stated clearly and interestingly? Are terms well defined, the critical context grasped, and the larger stake of the argument articulated? (Note: asserting a thesis is not required at this stage.)
2. *Originality of the project* – How does this project advance critical conversations? What distinguishes this project from other work on these texts or in this theoretical area? What do you see as the author's personal investment in this topic?

3. *Appropriate scope of the project* -- Is the project achievable in the time available, at the length proposed, and with the resources stated? If not, could it be re-scaled, or resources added?
4. *Potential impact of the project* – Is the question framed only for specialists in a certain author, or does it engage issues that might interest readers of literature more generally?
5. *Adherence to Aims & Scope* – Does the proposal clearly convey intent to engage in textual analysis as a major source of evidence for the project? Are there ways in which textual analysis could be applied to the project, but that the author has not considered?

THINGS TO CONSIDER & POTENTIAL STRATEGY (*Optional*)

It might be useful to first do a close reading of the proposal, and then answer the questions below—keep your initial thoughts brief and focus on specific parts of the proposal that catch your eye.

1. What research topics or questions are being addressed in this proposal? Note title(s) and author(s) described by the proposal.
2. Underline the one or two sentences that indicate the main focus of the project. Was it easy to find? How could it be more interesting?
3. How clear is the author in explaining his/her project? Are the primary and secondary sources being discussed relevant to the focus of the project? How could the author be more precise in articulating his/her ideas?
4. What kinds of evidence or issues will the author be investigating in their project? How does the author intend to develop his/her ideas?

When you're done, do a second read-through and think about how the author could develop the research topic(s) and/or question(s). Is there anything at stake in this proposal/is it original? Is the proposed project too ambitious or does it need further development?

A FEW FINAL REMINDERS

These are things to think about when you read the proposals. If you aren't sure what to say about a proposal, please refer back to these points for guidance.

- An explicit thesis *is not* required at the proposal stage. A well-formed, strong research question is what we are looking for.

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- Does the topic adhere to our aims and scope? Is the author engaging in textual analysis of any sort? If not, are there any possible ways in which textual analysis could enrich the project? Do you see any ways in which textual analysis could be applied usefully to the question at hand? (This is mostly a concern for submissions from majors outside of English, Creative Writing, and/or Comparative & World Literatures.)
- Do not discard the topic because *you personally* are not interested in it. If, however, you do not see the relevance or originality of the research topic, please note why in your feedback.
- In a similar vein, please do not make overt judgments on the proposal (i.e. “this is poor work” or “this proposal was good”). Rather, explain the tensions or strengths of the research question being presented. If you are interested, explain why. If you are disinterested, explain why.
- You may comment on the overall quality of the writing if it causes significant distraction from the argument; however, this should not be your focus. The quality of the ideas and significance of the argument are most important. Keep in mind that writing style can be worked on over the course of the next semester.
- Please compose thoughtful responses. Your responses do not have to be considerably long, but they should address the proposals meaningfully. Peer review feedback is not only useful to the board in making acceptance decisions, but it is useful to the writer, who may wish to expand upon the project regardless of acceptance.

Thank you for your help with the peer review process! If you have any questions, please email us at uiucelitjournal@gmail.com.

Quick Reminder!

ASSIGNMENTS DELIVERED: Monday, Nov. 14th & Tuesday, Nov. 15th, 2016
DEADLINE for FEEDBACK: Sunday, Nov. 20th, 2016 at 11:59 PM