Instructions for individual projects

Goals

Get (more) experience doing the following:

- Reading and comparing primary and secondary literature
    - Primary = original source of data, e.g. a reference grammar, or a theoretical paper that includes original data
    - Secondary = theoretical work that gets its data from an earlier published source
- Developing analyses of data in different frameworks
- Assessing frameworks' successes and failures in dealing with particular data
- Clearly and succinctly explaining data, analyses, and theoretical implications to readers
- Presenting your findings orally

Procedure

1. Identify a phenomenon that is problematic in SPE but straightforward in OT, or vice versa (or problematic for both!). It might involve...
   - Opaque rule interaction (Week 5)
   - Crucially iterative or crucially non-iterative rule application (Week 4)
   - Multiple process targets (Week 4)
   - Crucially directional process application (Week 4)
   - Constraint-specific repairs (Week 5)
   - A rule-ordering paradox; a constraint-ranking paradox (Week 5)
   - Derivational look-ahead (Week 5)
   - Sour-grapes phenomena
   - Exchange rules
   - Saltation
   - ... or something else you can think of

   How do you identify such a phenomenon?
   - Search databases like LLBA (available through www.library.ucla.edu) for terms like *iterat**, *directional*, etc. (you may need to add *phonolog** as an additional keyword)
   - Search scholar.google.com
   - Follow up an example from class or the readings
   - Think about phenomena/languages you're familiar with and see if anything comes to mind
   - Talk to me if stuck

2. Track down the ***primary source*** of the data. The source you find using the above tips will probably be a *secondary source*—i.e., it discusses already-published data. And the source cited in the work you find may itself be another secondary source. You will have to keep working backwards until you get to a real primary source, which will report either fieldwork or the intuitions of a native-speaker author.

3. Make sure your paper hasn't already been written—see below.

4. Read the secondary source for the theoretical claim, but use the primary source for data. **Be vigilant**: the secondary source may misreport or misinterpret the facts; or, when you see the full data an alternative description may become apparent.

5. Optional: if you want to, you can check data with or get new data from a native speaker (including yourself).

6. Determine and explore the theoretical implications of the phenomenon.
- Can the phenomenon, as described, be dealt with in Classic OT? In SPE? (**If the answer to both questions is 'yes, unproblematically', then this not the right phenomenon!**)
- Why exactly is the phenomenon problematic for OT/SPE (or both)?
- Are there modifications that could be made to the theory to accommodate the phenomenon?
- Is there an alternative description/analysis that makes the phenomenon unproblematic (this is where carefully reading the primary source can pay off)?

Here's an example concerning iterativity, following Aaron Kaplan's recent dissertation work.[1] Suppose some language is claimed to have a rule $a \rightarrow i / iC_0\_\_$, and the rule fails to self-feed (is non-iterative): /ibaka/ $\rightarrow$ [ibika], instead of *[ibiki]. This is problematic for Classic OT, because the MARK>>FAITH ranking *iC_0a>>IDENT(hi) that causes the rule to apply to the underlyingly /iba/ sequence should cause it to apply to the derived [ika] sequence too. It's unproblematic for SPE, assuming either that rules aren't iterative at all or that rules can be specified as iterative or non-. To deal with the phenomenon in OT, one possibility would be to change the markedness constraint into a two-level constraint forbidding [a] after an *underlying* /i/—this introduces a new type of constraint and makes the theory more powerful. But perhaps another analysis is available. For example, maybe you find that the /a/s that fail to raise are all stressed (IDENT(hi)/stress >>*iC_0a) , or the /a/s that do raise all belong to a particular affix (you could say that affix's vowel is underspecified for height, so IDENT(hi) isn't violated), or the triggering /i/ and target /a/ are always in the same foot (so the constraint is really *$(...iC_0a...)_{foot}$), or... The point is that by examining the data in detail you'll get a better idea of whether this is truly a case of non-iterativity.

How to make sure that your paper hasn't already been written
- Search Google Scholar for your secondary source. Underneath the excerpt you should see a "cited by..." link. Click on it. Now you have a list of papers that (Google thinks) have cited that paper.
- If you get too many results from the previous step (i.e., your secondary source is very famous), check the box for "search within articles citing...", type the name of the language in the search box, and click Search again. This will help narrow things down to articles that are discussing the secondary source's analysis of that language, rather than articles that just cite the overall conclusion, or are discussing some other aspect of the paper.
- Click on each of the resulting papers and search for the secondary source author's name, to see what this paper says about the secondary source.
- If the paper went back to a primary source and reanalyzed the data in such a way as to make the original problem go away, then your paper may already have been written.
  - If you disagree substantially with this paper's characterization of the original data, or its analysis, you may still have something to say.
  - If not, time to select another topic

Milestones (these are all on the syllabus)
- In Week 4 there's a bibliographic exercise due to make sure you're at least looking for sources at this point; I will post instructions.
- By the end of Week 5, you should have met with me to discuss your topic.
- In Week 6 there's a report due on what primary and secondary source you have found and what they seem to say. I will post instructions.
- By the end of Week 7, you should have met with me again to discuss your findings so far.
- In Week 9 an abstract is due.
- In exam week ("Week 11"), we'll have a mini-conference with oral presentations.
- On Friday of exam week, the paper is due.

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[1] Kaplan, Aaron. 2008. *Noniterativity is an emergent property of grammar*. UC Santa Cruz dissertation.

Tips
- Aim for 8-12 pages.
- Write for a reader who has taken 200A but has not read your sources and knows nothing about the language in question.
- Don't just make claims and present data, leaving it to the reader to check whether the data really support the claims—explain the relevance of each piece/set of data.
- How to cite
  - When you quote a source verbatim, put quotation marks around the excerpt and give the page number: *According to Smith, the rule applies with "oblique affixes, clitic pronouns, and postpositions, although certain exceptions exist in the derivational morphology." (p. 53)*
  - When you paraphrase a source or repeat an idea, claim, or fact from a source, make that clear: *Smith (1990) claims that the rule must be iterative, because...* OR *If the rule is not tagged as iterative, an unattractive duplication of the environment in the rule's structural description results (Anderson 1974):...*
  - Indicate the source, including page number, for each datum—<u>you will thank yourself later</u> if you need to re-check anything, or if you keep working on this project in the future. Just say something in your introductory section about your conventions for this: *Items from Smith will be indicated with "S" and the page number; items from Alameda are indicated with "A" the page number. Items from my own consultant Bika Niue are indicated with "N", and items from Smith's dictionary are indicated with "SD"*

simpkan	*'sheep'*	*S49, N*
montkeu	*'cow'*	*S49, A24*
sevar	*'goat'*	*SD* ← for dictionaries, you can usually omit the page #

Oral presentations
- Instead of a final exam, we will schedule a day during exam week for individual presentations, probably 15 minutes each plus 5 minutes for questions, depending on class size.
- When you're presenting, time goes by much faster than you'd think. You will need to practice your talk at least once to have any hope of fitting it in the timeslot.
- Make a handout for your talk. Unlike class handouts, where I leave questions for you to answer, your handout should lay it all out for the reader, so that someone who missed your talk could understand your argument by reading the handout.