



Summer Checklist 2025

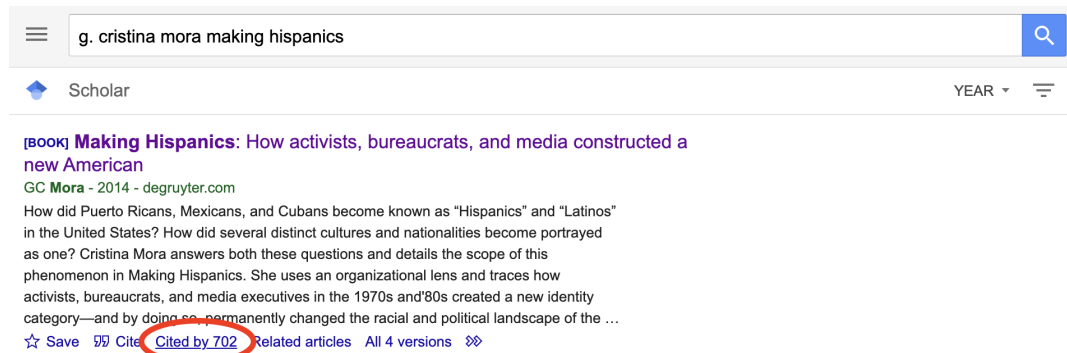
Guidelines for incoming IAPA honors students

NOTE: This document is a template. Please make a copy for yourself and edit / add / check boxes as you complete each item over the summer.

May / early June

- **Consult with your thesis advisor on your summer reading list.** Ideally, you will spend at least 4 full weeks this summer reading secondary literature, developing your understanding of your topic, refining your research question, and preparing to conduct primary research. It will be **essential** that you are on the right track with your scholarly reading. We recommend asking your advisor directly for 3-5 books, articles, or authors to start you off; then, you can “follow the trail” of works cited and/or continue to read relevant works by the authors mentioned.

Example: if your advisor recommends a particular book, examine the works cited within that book, and use the “Cited by” link underneath Google Scholar results to find more recent works which cite that book:



- **Discuss with your advisor whether your project might meet the definition of human subjects research.** If you are planning to conduct interviews, surveys, or field observations with individuals who are not “key informants” (i.e., professionals giving their professional views about a public topic), your project will likely fall into this category, and you’ll have to complete an additional step later in the summer. Regardless of whether or not your work qualifies, please familiarize yourself with federal policies for protecting human subjects and understanding [Brown’s IRB / HRPP guidelines and protocol](#).
- **Download the Reference Manager [Zotero](#).** Zotero can help you collect, organize, and cite your research. You can find links and student resources, including “how to” workshops, on the Brown library [website](#).

June / July

- **Begin reading the scholarly literature and taking notes.** We recommend starting an “[annotated bibliography](#)” document to do this. Don’t focus too much on taking detailed notes while you read; instead, read each work, then put that work away and write - largely from memory - a ~1 paragraph summary of the key research question, methods, and findings from each book/article. Later, you can organize your annotated bibliography into thematic buckets. This will serve as a starting point for your literature review.
- **Familiarize yourself with the concept of a literature review.** One of the first things we’ll do together in the Fall is to write a full literature review in order to ensure that you understand the scholarly conversation you’re entering with your work. That literature review will serve as the backbone of your first and second thesis chapters, and will guide your research strategy in subsequent chapters. It is important to get it right. Review the following guidelines closely:
 - [Brown Library guide for “Organizing and Creating Information”](#)
 - [UNC Writing Center Guide for Writing a Literature Review](#)
- **Reach out to IAPA’s wonderful research librarian, Carina Cournoyer** (carina_cournoyer@brown.edu). She can help you find additional sources to help narrow your research question(s) and identify key themes in the academic literature.
- **Meet with your advisor once or twice throughout the summer, if they are available.** We recommend preparing for those meetings by writing short “memos” (2-3 page reflections) on what you’ve been reading, how your readings might inform your thesis research, and any questions you have. It would also be helpful if at some point before the fall you and your advisor establish expectations about how often you’d like to meet. We recommend at least a bi-weekly (every 2 weeks) cadence in the fall, if possible.

August

- **Check in with yourself.** Are you enjoying reading about your thesis topic? Do you still feel that this is the way you’d like to spend your time senior year? It’s OK if the answer to these questions is “no.” If you feel you’d rather focus your energies elsewhere, or complete capstone projects without the intensity and time commitment of a thesis looming over you, that is *perfectly* fine! For some, *not* writing a thesis turns out to be a much better choice. Simply reach out to Anita (anita_nester@brown.edu) if you feel this way.
- **Complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI),** regardless of whether your project qualifies as human subjects research. Navigate to Brown’s [Human Subjects Research Education and Training page](#), and scroll down to “Registering for CITI Courses.” Follow the instructions for New Users, ensuring that you end up choosing the Group 1 training (“Social Behavioral Educational Researchers”) from the CITI page.
- **If you will be conducting human subjects research, you will also need to take the [Undergraduate Research Regulatory Determination Survey](#).** Follow the instructions provided at the end of the survey. After completion of the survey, please save the outcome message as a PDF and send it by email to regulatoryadvising@brown.edu.
- **Register for IAPA 1816A, Senior Honors Seminar.** You should request an override via C@B, and I will grant your override requests before the fall semester begins.