

Academic English Course Outline

Course Professor: Edurne Cristina Rodriguez (edurnecristinarodriguez@c4dmti.com)
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course utilizes the same breakdown components as any English exam, which are reading, writing, listening, and speaking, with special emphasis on listening and speaking. More specifically, this course will provide students with an engineering background an opportunity to meet the language facility requirements to prepare for any language test as well as build the confidence needed to excel in a western academic environment.

We will read several major works of literature and examine how these texts relate to cultural ideas and practices associated with their country of origin. This will help students focus, polish, and deepen their writing as well as their presentation skills. This is a project-based learning environment to fully integrate a communal opportunity for all students equally, to help each other and work together to dominate the speaking and listening of the English language.

Objectives:

- 1) Produce complex and well-developed pieces of writing;
- 2) Build students' academic speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills;
- 3) Interact in an academic setting with confidence;
- 4) Develop communication skills necessary for academic success;
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of university culture;
- 6) Develop strategies for delivering technical information such as engineering topics to non-technical readers;
- 7) Students will gain experience in thinking critically about the relationship of an array of topics, while perfecting all other skills;
- 8) As a Foundations course, this course is designed to help students develop foundational academic skills for university-level studies. We will therefore focus on improving the following: reading comprehension, writing clear, logical and persuasive academic prose; participating constructively and collaboratively in discussion and debate. Other skills to be developed include: time-management; note-taking on readings and lectures; preparation of essays; planning for exams; dealing with academic culture.

Course Mechanics

There is a lecture by the course professor almost every day starting **Tuesday, January 14th, 2020**, until the end of March. Students are expected to attend and to bring the relevant course materials with them. You will need to take notes in the lecture for preparing assignments and studying for exams. Some lecture slides and notes will be posted after class every day to the course website, under "Students". A link to this course will appear shortly after it's introduction, as well as a WeChat group for discussion boards. **NOTE:** this is not a substitute in any way, because it will contain limited notes and this course is based on in-class participation. On this site, you will find a breakdown of the weekly reading assignments, links to online readings, presentations, a reading guide for each text, guidelines for individual assignments, and exam review materials. You are solely responsible for accessing this material.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- A) Participation 20% (speaking and listening component)

This is based on attendance and how much an individual student takes part in class.

- B) Short written assignments 8 x 5% = 40% (writing and reading component)

Each of these written assignments are to be between approximately 1000 words in length, and is to be handed in at the beginning of class on the day its due in hard copy. Consult individual assignment guidelines for more detail.

- C) Major Presentation 25% (speaking component)

This is a 20-minute presentation that is to be prepared and presented in class on a Friday starting in February until mid-March. Consult individual assignment guidelines for more detail.

D) Final Exam 15% (writing and reading component)

There will be a final exam scheduled during the end of March that will be 3 hours long with a 10-minute break in between.

NB: all grades distributed throughout the course will follow this grading scheme:

<https://www.utoronto.ca/registrar/u-t-grading-scheme>

Lateness Policy

The penalty for late submissions is 5% per day. So, if an assignment is due on Monday and you submit it on Tuesday, you will be docked 5%, and on Wednesday another 5%, and so on. Late assignments will only be accepted for 5 days after the original due date. It is your responsibility to get your assignments to your professor.

In exceptional circumstances these penalties may be waived, on the condition that the circumstances are documented (e.g., a doctor's note, or receipts for emergency travel). Any such exception must be approved by the professor.

There is no late policy for the exam, so do not miss the exam date. If you do miss the exam for medical reasons or another emergency, you must be in touch with a member of the GGSJ centre and your professor immediately.

Academic Integrity

Violations of the policy on Academic Integrity will be taken very seriously in this course. Please make yourself familiar with this policy, and follow its guidelines:

<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

Accommodations/Accessibility

If you require any accommodation, please contact the course professor and provide the necessary documentation or a simple explanation will do as well. This includes any psychological disorders, learning disorders, or physical restrictions.

Academic Etiquette

- a) Please treat your instructors and fellow students with respect by keeping the lecture hall quiet during class.
- b) Please treat your peers with respect during discussions. This is a professional environment and you're expected to conduct yourself professionally. This is a great component of your participation grade, as well.
- c) Take care that your correspondence with your course director and professor is appropriate. For example, when sending an email, begin with Dear Professor X (or whatever title your addressee goes by), write in full sentences, and always include your own name and contact information.

Five Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Attend!** Attendance of the lecture is crucial to keeping up with the course material: not only is 20% of your grade dependent on your attendance and participation, but your professor is your most valuable source of information and assistance in understanding the course material. Go to class.
2. **Attention!** Put away your phone and use your laptop for note-taking and not for social media, etc. This is not only because it is annoying to instructors and fellow students when you are on your device (it is annoying! we can see you!), but also for your own academic development. Learning to pay sustained attention to a complex presentation is one of the key skills that you will take with you beyond the program to your life and employment. Anyone can check their phone every five minutes, but how many people can

ignore their phone for 50 minutes? Practice your powers of concentration. They will serve you well in the future.

3. **Ask!** If you are unsure about some information or a concept that we cover in class, do not hesitate to ask. If you are wondering about something, the odds are that you are not alone. Don't let questions pile up; take the bull by the horns and ask your question right away either in class, via email or in an office hour. You won't regret asking, but you will regret not asking.
4. **Acquaintances!** Make a friend or two in class, someone who can cover for you if you are sick, and someone to talk with about the course. Discussion with your peers outside of class can be really helpful.
5. **Advance = advantage!** Do the assigned readings in advance and you will understand the lecture better and be able to take full advantage of the resources. Front-end work saves back-end hassle. Read in advance, and save yourself a crash at the end of the course.