

# *Arguing in English*

## **1. Course Description**

### **a. Title of a Course**

*Arguing in English* is a course for 1<sup>st</sup>-year Master's students of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

### **b. Pre-requisites**

The course establishes some demands on students' skills in spoken and written English, and is aimed at those students who have acquired the level of English proficiency not lower than B2 in CEFR scheme.

### **c. Course Type (compulsory, elective, optional)**

*Arguing in English* is Magolego Elective Course.

### **d. Abstract**

Students enrolled in the course *Arguing in English* have to cope with four tasks before and in class: they watch video materials and go over the reading materials that their instructor sends to them a week before the class, noting both the points made, strategies applied, and the vocabulary/grammar used in those materials; they form their own opinions about the subject matter that was discussed and prepare some arguments and/or cases for the development of their opinions in class; they make a 10-minute speech in favour or against the motion announced for the class, if they act as panelists in class, OR they pose questions or contribute comments asking one particular panelist, one panel (for or against), or to all panelists to give a short answer (two or three of those); and they produce written expression of the position in the subject area of the current motion (in three situations – if they stay away from a class, in their mid-term essay, and in their final examination).

## **2. Learning Objectives**

The main learning objectives of the course “Arguing in English” are

- to familiarize students with the key aspects and specific tools of developing a debate in English
- to help them develop effective strategies for organizing their argument in the form of a monologue
- to apply appropriate language, style and means of discourse for an academic, business or media environment
- to advance their written competence in argument
- to improve critical thinking and reasoning skills.

These goals are achieved through watching debates on the Intelligence Squared platform, watching short lectures on the Ted Talks platform, reading specialized materials from academic prose and the media, and finally applying the skills observed in the recommended materials in planning and performing students' own speeches. Some of the subject areas throughout the course

require the writing of an opinion essay stating a student's attitude to the motion offered by the instructor.

### **3. Learning outcomes**

After completing the study of the discipline "Arguing in English" students should:

- understand the principles of developing argumentative reasoning;
- understand the main linguistic and cultural conventions for discussing today's world;
- be able to read, watch and critically assess argumentative reasoning in debate;
- be able to make empirical observations and theoretical generalizations in English;
- be able to apply their knowledge through participating in debates about various problems of life.

### **4. Course Plan**

1. Introduction to the course. Debating formats. What to focus on in preparation.
2. New Technologies in Education
3. Giant IT Companies in Today's Society Who We Are on the Internet
4. Who We Are on the Internet
5. Fake News
6. Precarious Times in Today's Europe
7. Dickens or Tolstoy?
8. Privacy, Convenience, or Safety?
9. Argumentative essay
10. We Have Never Had It So Good
11. Communication Today
12. Smart Technologies in Different Areas of Life
13. New Politics and New Humanity
14. Examination - Essay

### **5. Reading list**

#### **Optional reading:**

1. D. McDowall An Illustrated History of Britain. Pearson Education, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-582-74914-6
2. R. Salais Europe and the Politics of Capabilities. Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-521-83604-2
3. M.A.Марей Facets of America: American Studies for Upper - Intermediate and Advanced ESL Students. КОМПАНИЯ СПУТНИК, 2009. ISBN: 978-5-9973047-3-7
4. L. Tsoukalis What kind of Europe? Oxford University Press, 2017 ISBN: 9780198810247

### **6. Grading system**

Type of grading	Type of work	Characteristics in modules 3 and 4		
		3	4	
Continuous	Assigned reading	X	X	Reading and watching tasks for seminars.
	Home works	X	X	Analyzing arguments made in recommended materials.
	Class participation	X	X	Debates.
Mid-course evaluation	Essay	X		Written development of opinion on the topic.
Final	Exam		X	Written development of opinions on the exam topic.

*Continuous assessment:* students have to demonstrate their acquaintance with the basic facts, concepts, notions, and theories discussed on the recommended websites. By the end of the course students are expected to be able to develop their ideas in their contribution to work of their panel in a debate on the topic presented to them.

*Final assessment:* students have to demonstrate knowledge of the basic techniques, critical reasoning skills, and their ability to understand and interpret the problems discussed.

## 7. Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment

Accumulated grade ( $G_a$ ) for the student's work during the module(s) is the lecturer's assessment of the student's work during seminars - for participation in the debating panels, quality and quantity of answers and comments in the audience, or for written assignments in the form of essays.

Examination grade ( $G_e$ ) is the arithmetic mean of the grade for the mid-term essay and the examination essay.

The final grade ( $G_f$ ) is the arithmetic mean of the accumulated grade ( $G_a$ ) and the examination grade ( $G_e$ ):

$$G_f = 0.5G_a + 0.5G_e$$

The grades are rounded in favour of the student.

### Table of Grade Accordance

Ten-point Grading Scale	Five-point Grading Scale	
1 - very bad 2 - bad 3 - no pass	no pass - 2	<b>FAIL</b>
4 - pass 5 - highly pass	pass - 3	<b>PASS</b>

6 – good 7 – very good	good – 4	
8 – almost excellent 9 – excellent 10 – perfect	excellent – 5	

During *the re-examination*, the student has no possibility of obtaining additional mark to raise the grade for current or mid-term assignments.

The resulting grade for the course counts towards the certificate of Master’s degree.

## 8. Methods of Instruction

The following educational technologies are used in the study process:

- the instructor sends links to the debate on *Intelligence Squared* platform along with required reading materials a week in advance for independent studying; students register in advance to be on the panel FOR or AGAINST in class;
- group discussion and analysis of the results of home reading are followed by preliminary voting before the panelists give their speeches;
- after the presentation of all panelists the audience gives questions and/or comments to the panels, to which the latter give short answers;
- the audience vote again, and the team with the larger change in the number of voters is a winner (all panelists of this team get a 10), while in the other team all members get a 9;
- the score can be downgraded if no review of the points from the required video and reading materials were considered in the panel presentations.

## 9. Special Equipment and Software Support

The course requires a laptop, projector, and acoustic systems. For the mid-term and final-class essays students need access to computers and to the Internet.