

Syllabus
Academic Writing in English
(2 ECTS)

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Department: Faculty of Humanities, School of Linguistics
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1. Course Description

a) Pre-requisites

Students' level of proficiency in English is expected to be no lower than CEFR C1 (IELTS 7,0-7,5/ C1 Advanced Grades A, B, C) so that they can apply their foreign language competence for collection, critical evaluation and analysis of information, research, as well as educational and self-educational purposes.

b) Abstract

The course is targeted at Bachelor students of linguistics, and is designed to guide them in writing their B.A. thesis proposals to be defended at the end of the course.

2. Learning Objectives

- understanding, interpreting, and discussing academic texts in English;
- breaking a large project of writing a research proposal into smaller manageable tasks;
- developing a clear and coherent argument on research topic according to the norms and practices of academic English (stating the problem; creating a research space; writing an overview of the literature; describing methods, data, and results; citing sources);
- identifying and implementing the basic writing strategies and standards of English academic writing, including argumentation structure and data presentation, as well as compositional, rhetoric, stylistic, verbal, and grammatical devices;
- identifying and correctly targeting the potential audience by choosing appropriate style, vocabulary, and level of formality;

- developing efficient planning, pre-writing, drafting, and editing proficiency;
- gaining familiarity with the APA style guide and bibliography format;
- utilizing Zotero bibliographic manager to compile a customized collection of bibliographic sources and to generate in-text citations and lists of references;
- using a variety of freely available online sources, including dictionaries, corpora, and academic writing / ESL resources;
- peer-reviewing academic texts;
- practicing the drafting, revising, and proof-reading techniques; self-editing academic texts and incorporating peer critique.

3. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, the students will have completed the texts of the Project Proposals and have defended their projects. The project defense is delivered in the form of a short (6-8 minutes) presentation accompanied by PowerPoint slides.

4. Course Plan (tentative, may be subject to change on an as-needed basis)

Topic 1. Academic Writing: Doing it the English Way. The major factors of academic writing. Paragraph structure. What is Project Proposal? Parts of Project Proposal. Peer-reviewing techniques.
4 class hours + 6 self-study hours
 Assessment: class activity

Topic 2. Writing the Introduction: Establishing a research territory and niche. Occupying the niche. Language focus: tentative language (hedging).
2 class hours + 8 self-study hours
 Assessment: the draft version and the finalized text of the Introduction section (350-450 words).

Topic 3. Writing the Literature Review. Where should I look for sources? Focusing on analysis, rather than on synthesis. Academic integrity and citing. Language focus: the use of tenses.
4 class hours + 8 self-study hours
 Assessment: the draft version and the finalized text of the Literature Review section (700-1000 words).

Topic 4. Bibliography, citation styles, and references. Highlights of the APA citation style. Using Zotero bibliographic manager.
2 class hours + 6 self-study hours

Assessment: tentative list of bibliographic references.

Topic 5. Writing the Methods section. Showcasing the project's replicability. Describing the data and materials used, and types of analysis applied. Discussing the limitations of the study. Writing mechanics: combatting wordiness.

2 class hours + 6 self-study hours

Assessment: the draft version and the finalized text of the Methods section (~300 words).

Topic 6. Writing about the Anticipated Results. Showing the value of the expected outcomes, rather than merely exposing them. Language focus: impersonal vs. personal style.

2 class hours + 6 self-study hours

Assessment: the draft version and the finalized text of the Anticipated Results section (~200 words).

Topic 7. Writing the Abstract and the Conclusions section. The five elements of an Abstract (Context/Rationale, Problem, Methodology, and Implications). The added value of the Conclusions. How can I differentiate my Conclusions from my Abstract?

2 class hours + 6 self-study hours

Assessment: the draft version and the finalized texts of the Abstract (200-250 words) and the Conclusions (~250-300 words) section.

Topic 8. Putting it all together. Text formatting. PowerPoint presentation tips. Format of the Project Proposal Defense.

2 class hours + 10 self-study hours

Assessment: Finalized text of Project Proposal (2000-2500 words). Delivered Project Proposal presentation: spoken (~7-8 mins) and PowerPoint presentation.

5. Reading List

c) Required

- Wallwork, A. (2016). English for Writing Research Papers. Springer. (HSE electronic access <https://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2103/10.1007/978-3-319-26094-5>)
- Wallwork, A. (2013). English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises. New York: Springer. (HSE electronic access <https://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2103/10.1007/978-1-4614-4289-9>)
- Wallwork, A. (2013a). English for Academic Research: Vocabulary Exercises. Springer. (HSE electronic access DOI <https://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2103/10.1007/978-1-4614-4268-4>)

d) Optional

Useful online resources for Academic Writing proficiency

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> - Purdue University Online Writing lab (useful writing tips for academic writing, style sheets, APA and MLA formatting standards and style guides, interactive online exercises)
- <http://ocw.usu.edu/English/introduction-to-writing-academic-prose/index.html> - Utah State University online free course on Academic Writing (different writing styles and genres, “offensive” writing, writing in different contexts, stages of writing, readings, MLA format and documentation, annotated bibliographies, plagiarism, thesis writing)
- <http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/foreign-languages-and-literatures/21f-228-advanced-workshop-in-writing-for-social-sciences-and-architecture-els-spring-2007/lecture-notes/> - Massachusetts Institute of Technology Online Academic Writing course (academic language, word choice, grammar tips, paraphrasing, transitions, punctuation, writing definitions, writing in different genres: resumes, cover letters, summaries, proposals, abstracts, research papers)

Online dictionaries and corpora:

- <http://dictionary.reference.com/> - a multi-dictionary site (includes Oxford, Random House, Collins and Etymology dictionaries)
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> - Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus
- <http://www.ldoceonline.com/> - Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
- <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> - Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA)
- <http://www.academicwords.info/> - COCA resource for academic writing and reading (academic vocabulary list based on 120 million words of academic texts with various search and statistics options)
- <http://www.wordandphrase.info/academic/> - COCA resource for academic writing and reading (academic words and phrases list based on 120 million words of academic texts with various search and statistics options)
- <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> - British National Corpus

Grammar and Vocabulary exercises:

- <http://eolf.univ-fcomte.fr/index.php?page=academic-reading-and-writing-exercises> – Academic Reading and ESL/EFL interactive exercises
- <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/ilc/academic-writing/> - Academic Writing exercises
- <http://www.parapal-online.co.uk/eap.htm> - Academic Writing exercises

6. Grading System (tentative, may be subject to change on an as-needed basis)

The overall course grade is calculated as follows:

$$G_{\text{final}} = 0.8 * G_{\text{course_work}} + 0.2 * G_{\text{defense}},$$

where G_{defense} is the grade for the defense of the Project Proposal. It is composed of two grades: the grade assigned by the academic advisor for the submitted text, and the grade awarded by the evaluation board for presentation of the project during the defense procedure. The two grades are distributed as follows:

$$G_{\text{defense}} = 0.4 * G_{\text{advisor}} + 0.6 * G_{\text{presentation}}$$

$G_{\text{course_work}}$ is the grade for the work throughout the duration of the course. It is comprised of two parts as follows:

$$G_{\text{course_work}} = 0.25 * G_{\text{class_participation}} + 0.75 * G_{\text{written_work}},$$

where $G_{\text{class_participation}}$ is the in-class performance (participation in discussions, mini-group activities, etc.); **this grade cannot be retaken.**

$G_{\text{written_work}}$ consists of the grades for the following written assignments:

$$G_{\text{written_work}} = 0.12 * G_{\text{project_proposal_outline}} + 0.12 * G_{\text{introduction}} + 0.15 * G_{\text{literature_review}} + 0.12 * G_{\text{methods}} + 0.12 * G_{\text{anticipated_results}} + 0.12 * G_{\text{abstract_\&_conclusion}} + 0.05 * G_{\text{references_\&_formatting}} + 0.12 * G_{\text{abstract_\&_conclusion}} + 0.2 * G_{\text{final_text}}, \text{ where}$$

- $G_{\text{project_proposal_outline}}$ is the grade for the preliminary outline of the Project Proposal at the early stages of the course;
- $G_{\text{references_\&_formatting}}$ is the grade for compliance with the standards of the APA bibliographic citation style and the HSE formatting requirements;
- $G_{\text{final_text}}$ is the grade for the finalized version of the Project Proposal text;

$G_{\text{introduction}}$, $G_{\text{literature_review}}$, G_{methods} , $G_{\text{anticipated_results}}$, and $G_{\text{abstract_\&_conclusion}}$ are the grades for the texts of the respective parts of the Project Proposal (for more detail, see the Course Plan above).

Criteria for assessment of written work

8-10 (Excellent)

To earn **Excellent**, the text must meet all of the criteria below:

1. The paper fulfills all the basic requirements of the assignment (topic, purpose, length).
2. The paper supports its thesis with a thorough development of ideas entirely tailored to the intended audience.
3. The thesis and ideas in the paper are consistently original and insightful and demonstrate a sophistication and complexity of thought.
4. The organization of the paper is consistently logical and coherent, and the paper exhibits a mastery of basic paper components (introduction, conclusion, and body paragraph structure).

5. If sources are required, the paper accurately uses and correctly documents credible source material to add insight, sophistication, and complexity to the paper's ideas.
6. The paper demonstrates a high level of understanding and skill in the use of Standard English, style, and format.

6-7 (Good)

To earn **Good**, the text must meet all of the criteria below:

1. The paper fulfills all the basic requirements of the assignment (for example, topic, purpose, length).
2. The paper supports its thesis with a substantial development of ideas consistently tailored to the intended audience.
3. The thesis and ideas in the paper effectively combine original and insightful observations with commonly accepted ideas (generated by class discussion, for example).
4. The organization of the paper is mostly logical and coherent, and the paper exhibits a strong ability to incorporate basic paper components (introduction, conclusion, and body paragraph structure).
5. If sources are required, the paper accurately uses and correctly documents credible source material to supplement its ideas.
6. The paper demonstrates understanding and skill in the use of Standard English, style, and format, with, at most, only a few errors, rather than any pattern of consistent error.

4-5 (Satisfactory)

To earn **Satisfactory**, a paper must meet all of the criteria below:

1. The paper fulfills all the basic requirements of the assignment (for example, topic, purpose, length).
2. The paper supports its thesis with an adequate development of ideas that are consistently appropriate for the intended audience.
3. The thesis and ideas in the paper are generally clear and logical, perhaps relying primarily on commonly accepted ideas (generated by class discussion, for example).
4. The organization of the paper is generally logical and coherent, and the paper indicates competence in basic paper components (introduction, conclusion, and body paragraph structure).
5. If sources are required, the paper uses the minimum required amount of credible source material and documents it, with only occasional errors.
6. The paper demonstrates competence in the use of Standard English, style, and format, with occasional errors.

2-3 (Deficient)

To earn **Deficient**, a paper will exhibit one or more of the weaknesses below:

1. The paper only partially fulfills one or more of the basic requirements of the assignment (for example, topic, purpose, length).
2. The paper's development of ideas is insufficient to support its thesis adequately, or the ideas are not consistently appropriate for the intended audience.
3. The thesis and ideas in the paper are not consistently clear or logical, or they may rely entirely on commonly accepted ideas (generated by class discussion, for instance).
4. The organization of the paper is not consistently logical and coherent, or the paper indicates awareness of but not competence in basic paper components (introduction, conclusion, and body paragraph structure).
5. If sources are required, the paper uses sources but does not meet the minimum source requirements, uses source material inaccurately, or uses sources that are not credible; though documentation may be in place, the paper contains frequent documentation errors.
6. The paper contains consistent errors in use of Standard English, style, or format.

0-1 (Failing)

To earn **Failing**, a paper will exhibit one or more of the weaknesses below:

- The paper fails to fulfill one or more of the basic requirements of the assignment (for example, topic, purpose, length).
- The paper largely fails to develop ideas to support its thesis, or the ideas are consistently inappropriate for the intended audience.
- The thesis and ideas in the paper are consistently unclear, illogical, or incomplete.
- The organization of the paper is consistently illogical or incoherent, or the paper indicates lack of awareness and lack of competence in basic paper components (introduction, conclusion, and body paragraph structure).
- If sources are required, the paper fails to use sources, does not meet the minimum source requirements, uses source material inaccurately, uses sources that are not credible, consistently fails to document source material fully or correctly, or includes plagiarized source material.
- The paper contains pervasive errors in use of Standard English, style, or format.

7. Examination Type

No examination is administered in the course. The final course grade is computed as shown in the Grading System section above.

8. Methods of Instruction

Lectures and presentations; pair work; independent study (investigation and research); discussions; demonstration and practice; in- and out-of-class writing; self- and peer-assessment.

9. Special Equipment and Software Support

e) Software

- Zotero bibliographic manager, freeware (<https://www.zotero.org>)

f) Online databases (access via the HSE Intranet)

- ProQuest Ebook Central Database
- JSTOR

g) Classrooms and Equipment

In terms of equipment, the course is taught in a standard way, i.e. in classrooms equipped with screens and overhead projectors. Some classes are taught in computer classrooms. Access to the Internet is required.