

ELENA E. MOGUNOVA

Department of Foreign Languages and Area Studies

Lomonosov Moscow State University

E-mail: mogunova@rambler.ru

ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

- [Course Description](#), [Methodology](#) and [Requirements](#)
- [Course Outline and Syllabus](#)
- [Texts and Materials](#): Required books, Recommended books, Selected online resources

CONTENT

The course includes a weekly 2-hour class over a period of 16 weeks

The course includes active writing exercises.

There are weekly homework assignments, mid-term and final exam papers.

The course is organized around the main topics outlined below.

Some changes in content and timing may be made in order to reflect the exact needs of the students on the course (e.g.: fewer or additional topics may be covered).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Aims

This one-term course aims to develop an awareness of the theory and practice of academic writing, from structure to style. The course is designed for students of English as a second language in order to improve their academic writing skills.

- It will ground you in the process of writing, which consists of more than just picking up a pencil and writing a paragraph or an essay from beginning to end. Writing is a process that goes through many stages. Being a good writer means you continually change, add to, and improve what you have already written.
- The major focus of this course is the organization of an academic essay.
- In addition to organization you will learn other aspects of writing conventions, including punctuation, the use of connectors, and paragraph and essay format.
- Most of what you learn from this course is applicable to other types of writing in English, as you will learn the basics and improve your overall ability of written communication.

METHODOLOGY

- **Classroom activities** include a mixture of individual, pair and small group work, based on a variety of material and exercises. Students also complete pieces of writing in class and at home, which they are encouraged to self-correct on the basis of tutor comments. They are also given recommendations for self-study.
- **Homework:** students will be offered personalized self-study exercises based on the areas of academic writing that they most need to focus on. They will also be encouraged to produce pieces of continuous writing, starting from short ones and gradually achieving a success in writing essays. This writing will be marked using a marking code¹ from which the students will self-correct. Detailed comments will also be provided.
- **Marking code:**

SIGN/ ABBREVIATION	FULL FORM	EXPLANATION
WO	Word Order	Change the word order/rearrange the sentence.
T	Tense	Think which tense should have been used.
SP	Spelling	Check the correct spelling of the word in a dictionary.
ART	Article	An indefinite or definite article is necessary (or NO article).
P	Punctuation	There is a punctuation mark missing, or you have put in a punctuation mark unnecessarily, or perhaps you used a wrong punctuation mark.
C	Concord	(1) The verb does not agree with the subject (2) The relationship between words which determines whether they should be singular or plural, masculine or feminine, and what the form of the verbal group should be
PREP	Preposition	You have used a wrong preposition.
WF	Wrong Form	Search for an appropriate derivational form of the word.
WW	Wrong Word	An inappropriate word or phrase has been chosen.
St	Style	This form/word/expression is inappropriate in this context / situation. Make it more academic / formal (or

¹ The marking codes. Other examples:

<http://www.kcmurcia.es/en/school-policies/markings-code-for-written-work>

<http://people.ucalgary.ca/~rseiler/code.htm>

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/markings-students-written-work-with-correction-code.html>

		more colloquial).
?	unclear	I do not understand what you mean.
^	sth missing	There is a word (or words) missing.
PARA	New paragraph	It is better to start a new paragraph.
!	Simple mistake	You should know what is wrong here.
(tick)	good	This part is well written.
(curving line)	no need for a new sentence/ word	The idea should be joined in a single sentence / should be one word.
(wavy line)	Meaning is unclear	This part should be expressed more accurately (clearly).

Tutors use this marking code when correcting written works; however, they may not correct every mistake, but are likely to focus on the most important ones. When written works are returned, students should make the necessary corrections and resubmit them to tutors.

• *Paragraph and essay evaluation*²:

GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	EXPLANATION	SCORING	TOTAL SCORE: 100
Content/Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has excellent support • is unified • follows the assignment • is interesting to read 	very good: 25-23 good: 22-20 average: 19-17 needs work: 16-0	max. 25
Organization	Paragraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has topic sentence with clear controlling idea • has supporting sentences • has concluding sentence • has coherence and cohesion 	very good: 25-23 good: 22-20 average: 19-17 needs work: 16-0	max. 25

² Evaluation criteria for academic writing students. Other examples:

http://www.u-bunkyo.ac.jp/center/library/image/EIBUN185_193.pdf

<https://kielikeskus.jyu.fi/opetus/englanti/international-students-and-masters-programmes/international-masters-programmes/general-assessment-criteria-for-academic-writing-assignments-in-international-masters-programmes>

<http://www.hartwick.edu/academics/majors-and-minors/arts-and-humanities/english-home/writing-competency-handbook/checklist>

	<p>Essay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has introductory paragraph with clear thesis statement • has body paragraphs with good organization • has concluding paragraph • has coherence and cohesion 		
Grammar/ Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates control of basic grammar (e.g.: tenses, verb forms, noun forms, prepositions, articles, etc.) • shows sophistication of sentence structure with complex and compound sentences 	<p>very good: 25-23 good: 22-20 average: 19-17 needs work: 16-0</p>	<p>max. 25</p>
Word Choice/ Word Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates sophisticated choice of vocabulary items • has correct idiomatic use of vocabulary • has correct word forms 	<p>very good: 15-14 good: 13-12 average: 11-10 needs work: 9-0</p>	<p>max. 15</p>
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has good paragraph or essay format • demonstrates good control over use of capital letters, periods, commas, semicolons, etc. • demonstrates control over spelling • doesn't have fragments, comma splices or run-on sentences 	<p>very good: 10 good: 9-8 average: 7-6 needs work: 5-0</p>	<p>max. 10</p>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1.	Weekly homework assignment	20%
2.	Attendance ³ and Class participation	20%
3.	Theoretical footing quizzes	10%
4.	Mid-term paper (essay - 2 pages minimum, typed)	20%
5.	Final theory test	10%
6.	Final paper (essay - 3 pages minimum, typed)	20%
	TOTAL	100%

³ In order to benefit fully from the course, we strongly recommend 100% attendance. If you have to miss a class, please inform the tutor beforehand.

COURSE OUTLINE

The main topics to be covered are:

- Writing in English. Academic Writing: Introduction
- Characteristics of Good Writing
- The Writing Process
- The Paragraph
- From Paragraph to Essay
- The Essay
- Language accuracy. Structure and Mechanics

COURSE SYLLABUS (example)

Week 1:

- Writing in English
- Introduction to Academic Writing
- Academic vocabulary

Week 2:

- The paragraph: basic organization (the topic sentence, the body, the concluding sentence)
- Sentences and Punctuation. Connecting sentences
- Paragraph format

Week 3:

- Characteristics of Good Writing
- Coherence
- Cohesion
- Unity
- Using commas in lists

Week 4:

- The Writing process
- Analyzing assignment
- Brainstorming
- Organizing your ideas
- Writing the first draft
- Rewriting the first draft
- Writing the final paper
- Adverbial clauses

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required books:

- **Course book:** Boardman C., Frydenberg J. (2008) *Writing to Communicate 2: Paragraphs and Essays* (3rd edition), Longman

Further reading. Recommended books:

- Oshima A & A Hogue (2006) *Writing Academic English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman
- Jordan R (1999) *Academic Writing Course*. Harlow: Longman
- Peck, J. & Coyle, M. (1999) *The Student's Guide to Writing: Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling*. London: Macmillan
- Redman, P. (2001) *Good Essay Writing: A Social Sciences Guide*. Sage/Open Univ.
- Bailey S. (2011) *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students (3rd edition)*. London: Routledge
- Gillett A, A Hammond & M Martala (2009) *Inside Track to Successful Academic Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Education
- Morley J, P Doyle & I Pope (2007) *University Writing Course*. Newbury, Berkshire: Express Publishing
- Pears R & G Shields (2010) *Cite them right: The essential guide to referencing and plagiarism* 8th edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Porter D (2001) *Check your Vocabulary for Academic English: A workbook for students* 2nd ed. London: Peter Collin
- Swales J & C Feak (2004) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Weissberg R & S Buker (1990) *Writing Up Research*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Selected online resources:

- The OWL at Purdue - Online Writing Lab
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- The Writing Center- University of Wisconsin at Madison - Check out "The Writer's Handbook"
<http://writing.wisc.edu/>
- Advice on Academic Writing - Writing at the University of Toronto
<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>
- Using English for Academic Purposes. A Guide for Students in Higher Education
<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>
- The Writing Centre - University of Toronto Web Resources
<http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/home/>
- Writing Handouts - University of Illinois at Springfield
<http://www.uis.edu/ctl/writing/handouts.html>
- Materials for Students - Dartmouth Writing Program
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/toc.shtml>

- Academic Phrasebank. The University of Manchester.
<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Guide to Grammar and Writing - Capital Community College
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
- Common Errors in English - P. Brians, Washington State University
<http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/index.html>
- Style guide for student recruitment communications
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/pams/audit-design/style-guide>
- Various aspects of Academic Writing:
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html>
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- Writing a Masters Dissertation
<http://www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/writing/diswriting/intro.htm>

Course Feedback:

mogunova@rambler.ru