

Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa

60702 - How to Write a Research paper: Theoretical and applied perspectives to Academic writing

Course 2010 - 2011

Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

How to write a research article in English is one of the three compulsory subjects in the first semester. It deepens into those theoretical and applied aspects of academic writing that cannot be approached at a Degree level. Therefore, it is recommended that the student is sufficiently familiarised with general communication strategies for academic writing in English.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

COURSE SCHEDULE

SESSION 0.	An overview of academic English.
SESSION 1.	English in today's research world.
SESSION 2.	Academic writing in context: audience, context and style.
SESSION 3.	The process of writing a research paper.
SESSION 4.	Types of research articles: the IMRD structure vs. the argumentative essay.
SESSION 5.	Computer session: online laboratories and websites for research writing.
SESSION 6.	Writing the introduction of a research paper.
SESSION 7.	Methods and approaches to scholarly research.
SESSION 8.	Rhetoric and argumentation: persuading the audience.
SESSION 9.	On the writing of abstracts
SESSION 10.	Minor or occluded genres in academic and research contexts.

PRESENTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT 1.	English in today's research world	Deadline:(pending confirmation)
ASSIGNMENT 2.	Computer tools for academic writing	Deadline:(pending confirmation)
ASSIGNMENT 3.	Writing the introduction section	Deadline:(pending confirmation)

ASSIGNMENT 4.	Argumentation techniques in discussion and conclusion sections	Deadline:(pending confirmation)
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PRESENTATION OF THE 3,000 WORD ESSAY: last day of the first semester.

Home

Learning outcomes that define this course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

1:

The student can use the basic critical tools to understand and analyse literary, filmic, cultural and linguistic texts in English.

2:

The student is capable of testing the explanatory power of the most relevant critical approaches to English texts through their application to a corpus of literary, film, cultural and linguistic texts in English within the field of the Humanities.

3:

The student is capable of developing skills in the use of English in a scholarly and critical environment.

4:

The student can provide a critical response to literary, film, cultural and linguistic texts in a research context and in the broader social context.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

This subject is specifically designed to help graduate students to understand and put into practice the theoretical principles of academic writing in English. It relies on a genre-based approach, which allows drawing attention to communicative purposes, structures and styles of different types of academic texts.

Competences

General aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The aim of this subject is to provide students with an introduction to the rhetorical conventions for information organisation in research articles in the humanities and to understand the use of recurrent lexicogrammatical and discoursal resources in the light of the so called contextualisation criteria of academic prose. In addition, this subject provides an introduction to methods of analysis and applications of theoretical frameworks for the analysis of texts in English. Together with the subject "Approaches to the study of the literary text in English" and "Issues in film studies" (also compulsory subjects in the first semester), this subject seeks to familiarise students with the basic critical tools for the analysis and interpretation of texts in English and, in turn, seeks to foster the use of the English language in a critical and analytical context. This subject also sets the grounds for writing essays in the optional courses of the second semester. With an applied slant, the subject also sets the grounds for understanding the courses "Metalinguistic resources in English academic texts" and "Computer tools for

research, professional and teaching purposes".

Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

The aim of this subject is to provide students with an introduction to the rhetorical conventions for information organisation in research articles in the humanities and to understand the use of recurrent lexicogrammatical and discoursal resources in the light of the so called contextualisation criteria of academic prose. In addition, this subject provides an introduction to methods of analysis and applications of theoretical frameworks for the analysis of texts in English. Together with the subject "Approaches to the study of the literary text in English" and "Issues in film studies" (also compulsory subjects in the first semester), this subject seeks to familiarise students with the basic critical tools for the analysis and interpretation of texts in English and, in turn, seeks to foster the use of the English language in a critical and analytical context. This subject also sets the grounds for writing essays in the optional courses of the second semester. With an applied slant, the subject also sets the grounds for understanding the courses "Metalinguistic resources in English academic texts" and "Computer tools for research, professional and teaching purposes".

After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

- 1:** Developing and applying original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context.
- 2:** Understanding and applying acquired knowledge to solve problems related to professional and social contexts as well as to broader multidisciplinary contexts.
- 3:** Being able to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express informed critical views and provide conclusions in the form of written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- 4:** Ability to carry out a piece of research in an autonomous way, once the student has acquired the required critical and methodological skills.

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

The proposed goals of this subject are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and applied background in order to facilitate them the preparation of a research article in English within the field of English Studies. Similarly, the specific aims of this subject are essential skills to carry out the research process (i.e. presenting the information organisation conventions in research articles, as well as their lexicogrammatical, discoursal and stylistic features, and presenting the application of research methods and frameworks for the analysis of texts in English) are crucial skills for successful research writing and research publishing in the field of English Studies.

The ability to develop and apply original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context is a fundamental skill to conduct successful research in the field of English studies. The same applies to the ability to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express a critical view and provide conclusions in both written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialised and non-specialised audiences, and the ability to conduct work (research) in an autonomous way.

Evaluation

Assessment tasks

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

1: Throughout the course, students will do several tasks in which they will analyse and discuss different theoretical aspects (specific to each task) about academic writing within the field of the Humanities. These learning tasks will involve writing short critical essays and presenting orally. By this means the teacher will be able to assess the student's learning progress. The aim of these tasks is to raise students' awareness of the rhetorical conventions of a research article, of their contextual criteria that affect those conventions and of the different critical tools available for the analysis of texts in English.

The successful completion of these tasks will indicate that the students have achieved learning objectives #1, 2 and 3. The analysis and discussion of textual models should follow the "Guidelines for the analysis and discussion of textual models".

These activities will be assessed following the assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. The activities will be graded from 0 to 10 and represent 10% of the final grade of the student in this subject.

1:

Before the end of the course, students will also be required to write a **3,000 word essay** in correct academic English on a specific aspect of the course contents, on a topic previously agreed with one of the teachers.

In this essay the students are expected to assimilate the main learning objectives of the subject. The textual analysis and critical discussion of the textual models will credit students' achievement of learning objectives # 1, 2 and 3. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10 and this grade represents **90%** of the final score of the student in this subject. A pass mark in this essay is a *sine qua non* condition to pass the subject.

This 3,000-word essay must follow the norms and format specified in the "Guidelines for preparing the essay"

Reference documents

Guidelines for preparing the essay and participating in seminars

The students may find it useful to follow the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them appropriately to the field of research.
2. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
3. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
4. State and justify the theoretical framework.
5. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
6. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
7. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
8. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context.
9. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
10. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos"/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, imparted by the teacher, will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyze critically and conceptually, and therefore to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts/films.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.

(Adapted from www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc)

Activities and resources

Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:

This subject has been specifically designed to train novice scholars in conducting research and writing up research in English. For this reason, the proposed activities (i.e. the analysis and discussion of textual models by means of critical tools and the comments on, presentation of, and reflections on these analyses from various theoretical perspectives) are aimed at putting into practice the basic principles of academic writing in English.

Accordingly, the subject is organised in three modules: 1. Learning the recurrent rhetorical structures and lexicogrammatical and discursal features of a research article in the field of the humanities, 2) learning how to apply analytical methods and theoretical frameworks, 3) becoming acquainted with the contextualization criteria involved in the processes of academic writing and 4) writing of an individual research article, applying the theoretical concepts and applied resources for the development of a selected research topic.

Outline of the Programme

The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :

1: Theoretical seminars on “The research article as a process and a product” 0.4 credits. Onsite.

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at developing a critical view, drawing on a selection of textual models- of the key aspects of the research article genre both as a process and as a product. The seminar will also revise the key concepts of the genre theory and other interrelating theoretical frameworks. These seminars will be conducted following the “guidelines for the analysis of textual models”.

2: Tasks/activities. 3 credits. Onsite.

Classroom activities will provide students with models for textual, discursal and rhetorical analysis. In these tasks students will discuss both individually and in group the recurrent features of the research article genre and the contextualization criteria that may justify those features. The aim of the tasks/activities is also to learn how to use/apply the critical and textual analytical tools and theoretical approaches dealt with in the course and in the module. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for the discussion of textual models”.

3: Individual and group tasks. 5.8 credits. Onsite.

Practical tasks in which students will rely on the application of methods of analysis and theoretical frameworks to discuss a selection of textual models. These tasks will be carried out either individually or in group and seek to enquire into the textual and contextual features of academic writing in the humanities, as well as into the analytical critical tools needed for carrying out research in English studies. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for the discussion of textual models”.

4: Tutorial activities. 0.6 credits. Onsite and online.

Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits. These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for activities on the analysis and discussion of compulsory and recommended readings”.

5: Assessment tasks/activities and self-assessment of classroom work. 0.2 credits. Offsite.

These activities will be conducted following the “guidelines for preparing the essay”.

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

COURSE PLANNING FOR ONSITE SESSIONS

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PRESENTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

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ASSIGNMENT 2.	Computer tools for academic writing	Deadline: (pending confirmation)
ASSIGNMENT 3.	Writing the introduction section	Deadline: (pending confirmation)
ASSIGNMENT 4.	Argumentation techniques in discussion and conclusion sections	Deadline: (pending confirmation)

Bibliographical resources

ALCARAZ, E. 2000. *El inglés profesional y académico*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

BECHER, T. and TROWLER, P. R. 2001. *Academic Tribes and Territories. Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

BELCHER, D. 2007. “Seeking Acceptance in an English-only Research World”, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16/1: 1-22.

BENNET, K. 2007. “Epistemicide! The Tale of a Predatory Discourse”, *The Translator*, 13/2: 1-19.

CANDLIN, C. N. and HYLAND, K. 2001. *Writing: Texts, Processes and Products*. London and New York: Longman.

HYLAND, K. 2000. *Disciplinary Discourses. Social Interactions in Academic Writing*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.

MAURANEN, A. 1993. *Cultural Differences in Academic Rhetoric: A Textlinguistic Approach*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

MYERS, G. 1989. “The Pragmatics of Politeness in Scientific Articles.” *Applied Linguistics* 10, 1: 1-35.

PRIOR, P. 1998. *Writing/Disciplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

SWALES, J.M. 1990. *Genre Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SANDERSON, T. 2008. *Corpus-Culture-Discourse*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

SHAW, P. and DAHL, T. (eds.) 2008. Special issue of the *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 3/7.
<http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/njes/issue/current>

SWALES, J. M. 1998. *Other Floors, Other Voices: A Textography of a Small University Building*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

SWALES, J.M. 2004. *Research Genres. Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SWALES, J. and C.B. FEAK. 1994. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

WEISSBERG, R. and S. BUKER. 1990. *Writing up Research. Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Course programme

MODULE 1. The rhetorical organisation of the research article

1-Characteristics and conventions of academic disciplinary prose. Modalities of academic writing: descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative.

2-The rhetorical architecture of the research article. The IMRD structure (Introduction-Materials/Methods-Results-Discussion). The rhetorical organisation of the abstract.

3-Genre moves and sub-moves in the different sections of the IMRaD structure.

4-Instructions to authors: variation across the different academic disciplines.

5-Interstitial genres involved in the process of writing a research paper: manuscript submission forms, intertexts (citations, bibliography, Citation Index), personal and electronic correspondence, etc.

MODULE 2. Lexicogrammatical elements in research article writing. Discourse functions of phraseological elements in academic prose

1-Methods and theoretical frameworks in research article (RA).

2-Results section in the RA.

3-Introduction sections in the RA. The CARS model.

4-Discussions and conclusion sections in the RA.

5-The abstract.

MODULE 3. Contextualisation criteria involved in the process of writing a research article

1-The sociology of scientific knowledge and its impact in the process of production of a research article. How discourse communities operate: norms and conventions.

2-Contextualisation criteria: functional and audience parameters.

3-Analysis and application of linguistic/rhetorical strategies for claiming centrality of the research presented in an academic paper. The use of tentative language and other rules of pragmatic politeness.

E-learning platform

<http://moodle.unizar.es/>

htw course (How to write a research article in English)

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings