Course Syllabus

Preparing for Graduate Success:

Language, Culture, and Community at U-M

Summer 2022

Congratulations on your admission to your graduate program at the University of Michigan. This online course prepares you to succeed in your U-M graduate studies by inviting you to explore how you wish to engage with academic language use for graduate study and research as well as campus culture both in and beyond the classroom. You will identify U-M resources that support international graduate students. You'll establish an early network of friends. Every step of the way, you will explore how to enhance your communication repertoire to achieve your academic, scholarly, and professional goals.

In this highly interactive four-week course, you will respond to brief articles, watch short videos, and participate in engaging discussions that will familiarize you with a range of features of graduate life and academics at this large research university. You will have many opportunities to hone and refine your language skills through practice assignments and through interactions with each other. You will receive individualized feedback from your instructor, Pamela Bogart.

Objectives

By completing the course, you should enhance your ability to

- Express the identity you wish to project in various English language contexts
- Initiate social conversations in English to meet new friends and colleagues
- Formulate an engaging "elevator pitch" about your graduate studies, in order to network with others before and after arrival on campus
- Use English effectively to negotiate roles and express opinions, e.g. to determine responsibilities and collaborate successfully in a group assignment
- Identify how to use online resources to improve your academic writing
- Navigate the process of attribution and citation in your academic discipline
- Participate in campus conversations and change efforts regarding diversity, identity, power, and community

Your Instructor

Pamela Bogart, Lecturer IV, English Language Institute

You can send me messages within the Canvas Inbox (Canvas dashboard) or email (**pbogart@umich.edu**) anytime during the online course, and I look forward to meeting you in person after you arrive in Ann Arbor.

Community Commitments for Inclusive Participation

How can we create an online community together for this course that is caring, inclusive of everyone in the course, intellectually challenging, and boosts everyone's confidence in using English in graduate school?

We are soon going to be posting a video self-intro so that we can get started speaking in English together right away. Sharing a video with strangers, however, can feel kind of stressful. Thus, before we begin to post videos, we want to foster an inclusive, respectful community.

Here is a starting set of guidelines for our ongoing collaboration. These ideas were generated by students in PGS and other ELI courses over the past couple of years, with initial advice from *"Guidelines for Dialogue,"* The Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, 2016. We will allow these guidelines to evolve as we discuss them and build a dynamic, inclusive learning community together. This Syllabus will be updated accordingly during our course.

1. **Maintaining Privacy** We will not share any information about anyone else in the class or anything they post, electronically or otherwise. We'll all be submitting informal audio/video recordings, and these should never be re-posted anywhere else.

2. **Learning from one another** We will listen to each other and respond to each other, not just look for opportunities to make our own points. We realize that the differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values will increase our awareness and understanding. Part of making learning from one another possible is offering productive feedback to classmates to the best of our abilities.

3. **Valuing one another's perspectives** We will not demean, devalue, or "put down" people for their experiences, lack of experiences or difference in interpretation of those experiences. In other words, **always respect classmates** (which is true for 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 too).

4. **Challenging ideas, not people** If we wish to challenge or disagree with something that has been said (or written), we will be careful to talk about the idea, not the individual person sharing this idea.

5. **Balancing participation** We will be mindful of taking up much more space than others. We will step up to contribute when others are dominating the conversation or group effort.

6. **Reading/listening before posting to discussions** By reading and listening what's already been posted before joining online discussions, we can frame our contributions as deepening or broadening the conversation, not just repeating what has been said. This approach will make discussions both more efficient and more productive.

7. **Being sensitive to diverse beliefs and identities** Topics involving beliefs or identity such as religion, sexual orientation, nationality, race, or political views should be discussed with extra care to express respect and empathy. It will be important to use guidelines 2, 3, and 6 to interact thoughtfully with one another.

Technical requirements to take this course online

The course is set up in Canvas, available to U-M students at umich.instructure.com. This is the course platform you will also use in your Fall classes across the university. You will need:

- an internet-capable device that can play video, record voice and video, and upload video files to the course website (You won't be required to participate live on video, but you may optionally join PGS community gatherings via Zoom.)
- for some activities, a laptop or desktop computer may work much better than a phone or tablet
- access to a means to use your U-M email and login (which may require use of the free **U-M MLane** or a VPN, depending on where you're taking the course, because U-M email (@umich.edu) is on the Google email platform)

Grading

There are 2,600 possible points in the course. You can choose to focus your attention broadly across the course, or to focus on segments of particular interest to you. Earning at least 80% of this point total

constitutes "Completion" of the course. Earning at least 60% constitutes "Active Participation." This low-risk, try anything, skip anything approach is described in **this paper from the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching** (CRLT) at U-M. This is not a credit-bearing course, so there is no passing or failing or letter grade. Instead, the course is graded on degrees of completion.

Course activities include:

- Discussion forums
- Language activities, including interactive video
- Peer feedback assignments
- Group project (opt-in or opt-out)
- Elevator pitch planning activities, first draft, revised draft, and final video

Preparing for Graduate Success

Name:	Range:		
Completed course!	< 80%	to	79%
Active participation	< 79%	to	60%
Intermittent participation	< 60%	to	30%
Minimal participation	< 30%	to	0%

Plan on setting aside 3-4 hours each week to explore life and communication in graduate school together. I look forward to meeting you and working with you as you discover the keys to graduate success at the University of Michigan!

Accommodations

If there is anything you'd like me to know about how you learn best and any accommodations that would support your best learning, please contact me via email or Canvas messaging. I am eager to adapt this course with you to optimize your learning experience.

While some courses require documentation of a disability in order to be eligible for accommodation, that is not the case for this course. We all learn and process information differently, and a small course like this is well-suited for flexibility. You are welcome but not required to share with me anything about your learning. Of course I will maintain the confidentiality of any information you share with me.

Religious/Cultural Holidays

I encourage you to celebrate religious or cultural holidays that are important to you. Please inform me in advance, in writing, as to how a given holiday will affect your participation schedule, so that we can make advance alternate plans together.

What else the English Language Institute (ELI) can offer you

The ELI offers a range of credit and non-credit ways to enhance your oral and written communication in English.

Courses

See the ELI website for a current list of 1-credit and 2-credit mini-course offerings, which are designed to provide rich spaces for exploration of academic written and spoken language throughout your graduate journey at Michigan.

Clinics

The ELI Graduate Speaking Clinic and the ELI Graduate Writing Clinic offer one-on-one consultation on any aspect of speaking or writing you'd like to work on. You can practice for an upcoming presentation, strategize a self-study plan for summer, or get advice on revising a paper or application, for example. There are also additional clinic hours set aside for current or future GSIs (the GSI Speaking Clinic), and there is a speaking and writing clinic at Taubman specifically for Architecture and Urban Planning students.

Conversation Circles

To practice fluent, everyday social interaction in English, you may be interested in joining a Conversation Circle to practice these skills in a fun, friendly environment. Circles meet weekly at a wide range of times and places (including online.)

Student Wellbeing

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. U-M offers the following resources:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** - confidential; 734-764-8312; for after-hours urgent support, call and press 0; counseling, workshops, groups and more, counselors are embedded in some schools
- **Dean of Students Office** - 734-764-7420; provides support services to students and manages critical incidents impacting students and the campus community
- **Ginsberg Center for Community Service Learning** - 734-763-3548; opportunities to engage as learners and leaders to create a better community and world
- **Multi-ethnic Student Affairs (MESA)** - 734-763-9044; diversity and social justice through the lens of race and ethnicity
- **Office of Student Conflict Resolution** - 734-936-6308; offers multiple pathways for resolving conflict
- **Office of the Ombuds** - 734-763-3545; students can raise questions and concerns about the functioning of the university.
- **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)** - 734-763-3000; accommodations and access to students with disabilities
- **Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)** - confidential; 734-764-7771 or 24-hour crisis line 734-936-3333; addresses sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and stalking
- **Spectrum Center** - 734-763-4186; support services for LGBTQ+ students
- **Trotter Multicultural Center** - 734-763-3670; intercultural engagement and inclusive leadership education initiatives
- **University Health Service (UHS)** - 734-764-8320; clinical services include nurse advice by phone, day or night
- **Well-being for U-M Students website** - searchable list of many more campus resources
- **Wolverine Wellness** - confidential; 734-763-1320; provides Wellness Coaching and much more

Canvas help

Link to Canvas support for students

Questions and feedback

Send me feedback and questions any time, or post questions in our community conversation space on the Yellowdig platform.