

## VV064 Syllabus – Academic and Professional Skills in English for IT

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Spring 2022, Wednesday 16:00 – 17:45, C525

### Course Description:

Life, whether inside or outside academia, requires multiple sets of skills. As a consequence, the course takes a holistic approach to academic and professional skills, therefore giving the students an opportunity to widen their abilities that will be useful in their future careers. The course covers the following areas: the difference between formal and informal language and their proper use, summarizing information effectively, paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism, writing formal letters, and presentation style and delivery.

### Evaluation:

The course evaluation is based on the following:

- class participation (25%)
- formal/informal exam (in Week 7) (20%)
- presentation (25%)
- homework assignments (30%)

#### Class participation

Active participation in class assignments and discussions is expected.

#### Formal/informal exam

There will be an in-class exam in Week 7. The exam focuses on formal/informal and personal/impersonal vocabulary as well as grammar and overall style. The vocabulary from the exam is from Vocabulary Exercises for Academia (see the Useful Links section of the syllabus).

#### Presentation

Students will give a presentation during the last week of the course or during the examination period (**TO BE DISCUSSED, will depend on the overall number of students in the course**). The presentations should last between 10 and 15 minutes and the topic will be chosen after a discussion with the instructor.

#### Homework assignments

For majority of classes students need to submit written assignments. These are separated into two types – minor assignments and major assignments. Minor assignments are evaluated based on submitted/not submitted basis. Major assignments are graded according to the quality of the submission. Assignments are always given for the following week (so the

assignment in Week 1 is due before Week 2). **Unless otherwise noted, the deadlines for all homework assignments are Tuesday midnight before next class.**

A timely submission of short homework exercises is also vital for completion of the course. You receive a deduction of 10 percent for every day past the deadline for all major assignments. Those who do not submit all their assignments by the end of the teaching period will receive an 'X' (failed to complete) as their course grade. In such case, resits are NOT possible.

### **Final grade:**

The percentage of each of the four categories corresponds to the maximum number of points awarded for the given category. When all these points are added together, students are awarded their grades according to the following breakdown:

- A 92-100
- B 84-91
- C 76-83
- D 68-75
- E 60-67

### **Course policies:**

Students are allowed not to attend two classes. In case of more absences – whether excused or not – please get in touch with the instructor ASAP. Students are also allowed to miss one deadline without penalty – however, this needs to be announced before the deadline to obtain the permission for late submission from the instructor, and the assignment should be submitted within a few days.

### **Syllabus:**

#### Week 1 – February 16

Introduction to the course, formal/informal language and vocabulary, using the appropriate register

#### **Assignment (minor): Using academic language**

#### Week 2 – February 23

Formal/informal language and vocabulary (continued), nominalizations

#### **Assignment (minor): 2, 4/E**

Week 3 – March 2

Additional formal/informal practice, reporting verbs (continued)

**Assignment (minor): complete 2/D**

Week 4 – March 9

Paraphrasing and plagiarism; introduction to letter writing

**Assignment (minor): write a cover letter (i.e. a motivational letter for applying to a job position) to a fictional workplace of your choice. Try to include all formal aspects of writing such letter you deem necessary. Aim at around 200 words.**

Week 5 – March 16

Writing business letters; basic organization and structure in writing

**Assignment (minor): submit examples of discourteous/rude letters, email or other forms of communication. Suggest revision. Make sure to source these properly.**

Week 6 – March 23

Writing cover letters

**Assignment (major): Conduct an online research and find an employer or a research group/center related to your studies. Imagine you are writing a cover letter for an available position at your desired location. Deadline April 5, midnight.**

Week 7 – March 30

**Formal/Informal Exam**

Understanding summaries

**No assignment**

Week 8 – April 6

Further discussion of summaries; Introduction to presentations, how not to give a presentation

**Assignment (minor): The Case of the Piltdown Man**

Week 9 – April 13

Some problems with presentations, polishing presentations

**Assignment (major): Hans Rosling video (see handout).**

Week 10 – April 20

Further presentation discussion and practice

**Assignment (minor): Presentation outline: students will submit the outlines of their presentations. These outlines should clearly indicate the proposed topic, your overall point (what you are trying to say), as well as the structure of the presentation. In general, you should include a few secondary sources, the style and the target audience of your presentation (more formal/more informal; general public/students/experts).**

**Finally, make sure that your outline and description clearly describe the topic, organization, and presentation goals and desired outcomes.**

Week 11 – April 27

**No class** – students meet with the instructor in his office to discuss their final presentations (*not* the presentations for the following major assignment)

**No assignment**

Week 12 – May 4

Abstracts vs summaries, presentations

**Assignment (major) – writing a summary (see handout).**

Week 13 – May 11

Giving feedback, Course wrap-up

**Presentation assignment (major) – create and upload a short presentation. Deadline May 18, midnight.**

**CONGRATULATIONS – If you are reading this text, you have read the entire syllabus. The first student to send me an email about finishing the syllabus – and reading this note – is awarded a small prize! (inspired by <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/18/us/professor-syllabus-money.html>)**