

# ACADEMIC WRITING FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*Teachers: Robin Bellers, Vera Eliasova, Eva Nagy, Zsuzsanna Tóth*

## Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to help you develop as a writer within the English speaking academic community by raising awareness of, practising, and reflecting upon the conventions of written texts. The course will also address other skills needed for graduate level work in English.

## Aims

During the course, you will become more familiar with features of various academic and non-academic texts, and learn to use the discourse patterns and conventions of academic English effectively, taking into consideration the expectations of your readership. Along the way you will improve your critical reading/writing skills to help you think and write more clearly and incisively, and develop your writing process through drafting, peer evaluation and individual writing consultations. You will also learn to incorporate the work of other authors into your own writing within the requirements of English academic practice. Ultimately, you will become a more informed writer, one able to analyse others' writing, to be more aware of the choices available to you when approaching any given writing task.

## Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify the purposes, typical components and features of various (academic) genres
- Structure certain specific academic genres at the macro and micro level
- Think and write more clearly and incisively
- Employ effective skills and approaches when writing papers
- Properly incorporate the work of other authors into your own writing, and understand the CEU policy on plagiarism
- Edit and refine your own written work

## Course Requirements

For one-year Masters students the course is for Pass/Fail and is for two credits, which are awarded at the end of the winter semester. For two-year students the course is for three credits, two in the first year, and one for the two shorter courses awarded in the second year.

The first five sessions of the course are mandatory for *all* MA students. These sessions prepare you to write a short assignment on two related texts. All students must submit this paper and come for at least one consultation on this assignment. As a part of the course, you will have three mandatory consultations, two in the Fall (the position paper and on a departmental paper of your choosing before mid-December) and, for one-year students, one in the Winter semester on the thesis proposal. Two-Year students will have a further mandatory consultation on a thesis chapter in the winter semester of their second year. Beyond them, consultations are available at all times throughout the academic year to all students on an open sign-up basis.

If you have had prior academic writing training and would like to be exempted from the remaining sessions of the course, you may request exemption based on the assessment of the first draft of your position paper. This exemption does not apply to the thesis related sessions in the winter semester. Even if exempted from the course, you must attend at least *two* individual consultations on papers for your department (consultations on the CAW assignment do not count) by mid-December latest, and attend any subsequent mandatory consultation.

## Course Syllabus

### Section A — The Position Paper (Mandatory for all)

This section will introduce you to the process of evaluating the context and purpose of written texts, as a preparation for the process of writing an evaluation in the form of a position paper as a response to two published texts.

Introduction to Academic Writing

*Aims:* To introduce you to underlying principles of academic writing, including the writing process and genre theory

Identifying main and supporting arguments

*Aims:* To teach strategies for identifying key arguments, summarizing those arguments and contextualizing texts within a wider debate

Evaluating claims and comparing ideas

*Aims:* To teach criteria and techniques for evaluating claims and supporting evidence

Writing the position paper – Genre analysis

*Aims:* To familiarize you with some of the features and possible structures of the position paper as a genre in preparation for writing your own

**Written assignment: Position paper -first draft**

Word limit 1100 words +/- 10%. <i>The assignment will not be graded but extensive feedback will be provided.</i>
--

Peer Review

*Aims:* To introduce you to and give you the opportunity to practice giving and receiving peer feedback on a first draft of your position paper

**Written assignment: Position paper -second draft**

### Section B — The Policy Brief

*Aims:* To provide you with an awareness of the nature, audience and purpose of policy papers and to help you to recognize and reproduce the structural features of the policy brief as a genre

### Section C — Research-Based Writing (Exemption may be requested)

In this section you will develop an awareness of research-based academic writing and the conventions of using the work of other authors in English academic discourse, and reflect on how these influence the development of your own voice.

The Nature of Research Writing

*Aims:* To introduce you to the process and nature of research writing and help you begin to plan and manage your time towards the effective completion of your written work for the semester

Introductions

*Aims:* To help you understand and work with the conventions of academic writing as regards the structure of introductions

Developing Argument in Research Papers

*Aims:* To increase your awareness of and ability to use strategies and techniques for developing and structuring argument in academic texts

Using the Work of Other Writers Effectively

*Aims:* To help you to understand the role of sources in academic writing, how they underpin argument and how they can be used

Relating to and Reviewing the Literature

*Aims:* To introduce the concept of the literature review as an element of many academic papers, its purpose and structure, and techniques for making a literature review effective

Conclusions and Abstracts

*Aims:* To familiarize you with the options open to you in structuring your conclusion and abstract

## **Winter Semester (One-year students)**

### **Section D – Thesis Related Writing (Mandatory)**

Proposal Writing

*Aims:* To identify the aims of a proposal (as a genre) in general, and the (thesis) proposal in particular. We discuss the main features, possible structuring and the main problems with proposals

Proposal Writing – Peer Review

*Aims:* To consider what criteria might apply to assess effective proposals, to then analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your colleagues' proposals before making changes to your first draft after the session

#### **Mandatory Consultation on the Thesis Proposal before submission to the department**

Thesis Structure

*Aims:* To consider issues related to possible structuring of a thesis, the logic, clarity, and coherence through the thesis and analysis of the metadiscourse within a previous thesis submitted to the Dept.

## **Spring Semester (Two-year students)**

### **Section E – Thesis Related Writing (Mandatory)**

Proposal Writing

*Aims:* To identify the aims of a proposal (as a genre) in general, and the (thesis) proposal in particular. We discuss the main features, possible structuring/outlining and the main problems with proposals

Proposal Writing

*Aims:* To further elaborate on the specific elements in the proposal, focussing more on the literature, research questions and possible methodology.

Proposal Writing – Peer Review

*Aims:* To consider what criteria might apply to assess effective proposals, to then analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your colleagues' proposals before making changes to your first draft after the session

### **Section F – Thesis Chapter Writing (Mandatory for Two-year Masters students in January 2022)**

Thesis Introduction Writing

*Aims:* To discuss the proposal submitted some 6 months previously and to begin to draft the thesis introduction. To identify how introductions change within differing academic research genres, and to make the initial changes to the anticipated structure of the thesis if necessary.

Peer Review of the Introduction and Projected Structure

*Aims:* To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your colleagues' introduction and identify possible problems with the proposed structure.

The Literature Review and Chapter Writing

*Aims:* To build on the session from the first year on literature reviews by discussing students' own thesis literature review and its possible structuring. To look at chapters and how they fit within the thesis as a whole and to discuss in greater detail the importance of metadiscourse within the thesis.