



Course: TE-0300 CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH I
Prerequisite: LM 1002
II Semester 2011
Professor: M.A. Hazel Vega (hazelveg@gmail.com)
HAE: Wednesday 11:30-2:30

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This workshop-type course has been designed to help students improve and increase fluency and accuracy in Ecotourism-related topics. The course will provide personal, interpersonal, and creative strategies for students to build on their interactive skills. Since one of the major purposes of education is to enable a person to speak clearly and confidently, the course will also provide the learners with the basic principles of speech communication so they can achieve clarity, confidence, and effectiveness in oral presentations or demonstrations.

II. GENERAL GOALS

By the end of the semester, students will have to be able to:

1. Build up strategic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence in English.
2. Increase fluency on issues concerning Ecotourism and express ideas with greater confidence and solid background knowledge.
3. Organize, plan, and present informative speeches based on audience-centered interaction.
4. Acknowledge their personal contribution to the conservation and destruction of the environment.
5. Increase their use of essential idioms and phrasal verbs.
6. Produce more complex utterances using advanced structures.

III. Course Approach

The course will be organized in a way that provides the students with practical knowledge and hands-on experience which will prepare them to interact successfully with native and non-native speakers of English on a variety of environmental topics. Classroom time will be subdivided into the following parts:

A. Public speaking

Activities to analyze listeners, how to be sensitive to their needs and interests, and how to talk to and with them, not at them. Students will be encouraged to communicate ideas to real people, rather than merely stand up and go through the motions of “giving a speech” Practical activities to analyze the audience, select a topic and specific purpose, devise a central idea, find verbal and visual support material, design effective introductions and conclusions as well.

B. ESP (English for specific purposes)

Each class period, students in small groups will have to present an article related to topics that have to do with the students' major. The students have to choose an article related to the topic suggested or any other of their interest. The article has to be approved by the professor and sent or given to the rest of the class a week before the presentation. These presentations must be very dynamic and well-organized. Students are expected to incorporate the principles of public speaking in these demonstrations and prepare a short activity for the group. The day of the presentation, the rest of the class will bring a questionnaire (10 questions including the answers) to be used in a question-answer exchange. This will be a follow-up activity to grasp the content of each article and assimilate the main ideas. The evaluation sheet which will be used to assess these demonstrations will be discussed with the students.

C. Grammar and idioms

Weekly review of slang and phrasal verbs from the course anthology. Exercises on the following grammatical structures: past tenses, past perfect tense, would+base verb for past habits, gerunds and infinitives, review of passive voice, reported speech, adverbs, tag questions and third conditional clauses. Any other grammar structure the students want to study or review will be taken into account.

D. Bulletin Boards

Students in groups will prepare a bulletin board periodically to be exhibited to the college community. The topics must be selected from the student-generated list which follows these instructions. Students are expected to be as creative as possible in organizing the visuals and information on the board. The evaluation form and rubrics which will be used to assess the activity will be discussed before the presentation. The day of the oral presentation, students may send invitations in advance invite to other classes, colleagues, or foreign guests. It is recommended to prepare a social interactive activity such as refreshments, goodies, raffles, games, or any other similar activity to engage and motivate the audience.

Possible topics: biodiversity, pre-Colombian cultures, national reality, hotel management, hotel industry, lodges, Costa Rican history, describing specific species, national parks and reserves, recycling, evolution of ecotourism, endangered species, social problems affecting the Costa Rican society, global warming and its consequences, life zones, tourist marketing, lodging in CR, guidelines for being a tourist guide, tourist attractions, taxonomies, the TLC, environmental issues, natural history.

E. Field trip

The field trip will be a final class project which will imply careful, systematic preparation. It will be a bilingual tour offered by a tour operator. The goal is for the students to put the language of biodiversity into application in a real context. The destination will be decided by the students. Appropriate guidelines will be provided throughout the course.

I. Responsibilities.

- Because this course meets only once a week, attendance and participation are essential. It is also necessary to arrive on time.
- Avoid eating in class or coming in and out. Take advantage of breaks for that purpose.
- All assignments must be completed ON TIME on the day assigned. No make-up assignments or quizzes will be accepted.
- 8 hours per week is the minimum amount of time that should be spent on reviewing and practicing material covered in class and carrying out assignments. Because this course will be moving at a rapid pace, it will be very important that you refer to the readings and classroom materials to reinforce learning.
- No Spanish will be allowed in class. Students should take advantage of the limited opportunity they have to express themselves in a second language once a week.

V. Evaluation

1. 2 Oral presentation of articles. (20%)
2. 2 Bulletin boards exhibits. (20%)
3. Questionnaires. (10%)
4. Quizzes on grammar and idioms. (At least four) (20%)
5. Final project. (Performance during the trip 15%, oral presentation 5%, total 20%)
6. Class participation: attendance, preparation, active participation in-class discussions (10%)

VI. Class syllabus

Session 1 (August 9th): getting acquainted, course orientation, guidelines.

Session 2 (August 16th): game, introduction to public speaking, group presentations on informative speeches.

Session 3 (August 23rd): first oral presentation: Ecotourism and the environment. Idioms and grammar. Question-answer session.

Session 4 (August 30th): second oral presentation: Costa Rica: ecotourism, geography, habitats, parks. Idioms and grammar. Question-answer session. Introductions and conclusions of presentations.

Session 5 (September 6th): Idioms and grammar. First bulletin board exhibit.

Session 6 (September 13th): third oral presentation: Ecology and natural history. Question-answer session. Idioms and grammar.

Session 7 (September 20th): Idioms and grammar. Second bulletin board exhibition. Delivering the speech.

Session 8 (September 27th): Fourth oral presentation Ecosystems. Reaching the audience.

Session 9 (October 4th): Idioms and grammar. Third bulletin board.

Session 10 (October 11th): Idioms and Grammar. Start making preparations for field trip. Fifth oral presentation: Amphibians. Question-answer session.

Session 11 (October 18th): Fourth bulletin board. Idioms and Grammar.

Session 12 (October 25th): Sixth oral presentation: The Costa Rican avifauna. Question-Answer session. Grammar and idioms.

Session 13 (November 1st): Fifth bulletin board. Idioms and Grammar.

Session 14th. (November 8th): Grammar and idioms.

Session 15th(November 15th): Sixth Final bulletin board. Review

Session 16th (November 22nd):

- Final project: oral report on the field trip.
- Course wrap-up

Información adicional:

- ⌘ No habrá exámenes o presentaciones de reposición sin una justificación válida (como por ejemplo: enfermedad -con dictámen médico- o muerte de un familiar). Se debe presentar la documentación pertinente en un lapso de 8 días después de la ausencia como estipula el Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil.
- ⌘ Por su naturaleza, las pruebas cortas pueden no ser anunciadas a los estudiantes con antelación, de esta manera queda claramente especificada la condición en la que se realizarán estas pruebas y se cumple lo estipulado en el Reglamento del Régimen Académico Estudiantil en su capítulo V y artículo 15 que vigila el cumplimiento del artículo 18 del mismo reglamento. Estas pruebas evaluarán los contenidos vistos en clases anteriores.
- ⌘ Por favor noten que las normas universitarias clara y enfáticamente estipulan que los teléfonos celulares deben de ser apagados durante el tiempo lectivo. Según oficio ELM-CENV-984-2004, en relación con la Circular No.31-2000 suscrita por el entonces Vicerrector de Docencia, el hacer uso del celular en forma permanente en el tiempo destinado al desarrollo de las lecciones, NO es adecuado porque constituye un distractor en el proceso enseñanza – aprendizaje; en consecuencia, es PROHIBIDO que los (as) profesores (as) y los (as) estudiantes hagan uso del mismo en el aula durante el desarrollo de actividades académicas, excepto en situaciones de emergencia o de excepción, condicionado.
- ⌘ El examen de ampliación, en caso de ser necesario, se programará luego, de acuerdo a la disponibilidad del estudiante y el profesor.