

Course guide

340281 - TCAP-O7P36 - Academic and Professional Communication Techniques

Last modified: 18/04/2024

Unit in charge:	Vilanova i la Geltrú School of Engineering	
Teaching unit:	756 - THATC - Department of History and Theory of Architecture and Communication Techniques.	
Degree:	BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2009). (Optional subject). BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2009). (Optional subject). BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONICS AND AUTOMATIC CONTROL ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2009). (Optional subject). BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2009). (Optional subject). BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INFORMATICS ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2018). (Optional subject).	
Academic year: 2024	ECTS Credits: 6.0	Languages: English

LECTURER

Coordinating lecturer:	Elisabet Arnó Macià
Others:	Elisabet Arnó Macià Joseph Edward Barr Playfair, Rachel Mary

PRIOR SKILLS

Required level of English B1.2

DEGREE COMPETENCES TO WHICH THE SUBJECT CONTRIBUTES

Transversal:

1. EFFICIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION - Level 1. Planning oral communication, answering questions properly and writing straightforward texts that are spelt correctly and are grammatically coherent.
2. EFFICIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION - Level 2. Using strategies for preparing and giving oral presentations. Writing texts and documents whose content is coherent, well structured and free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- 04 COE N3. EFFICIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION - Level 3. Communicating clearly and efficiently in oral and written presentations. Adapting to audiences and communication aims by using suitable strategies and means.
- 03 TLG. THIRD LANGUAGE. Learning a third language, preferably English, to a degree of oral and written fluency that fits in with the future needs of the graduates of each course.
- 04 COE. EFFICIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION. Communicating verbally and in writing about learning outcomes, thought-building and decision-making. Taking part in debates about issues related to the own field of specialization.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Presentations by the lecturer and practical sessions
Cooperative learning
Practical activities and problem-solving

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT

In our current international context, it is essential for engineering students to develop strategies for effective oral communication in both academic and professional settings. This course will focus on oral communication in English in the technical fields. Thus, its main objective is to help students acquire speaking, listening and interactive skills and strategies in order to participate in a wide range of authentic communicative situations in the technical professions, with special emphasis on intercultural communication and autonomous learning. This course is also intended to promote students' critical thinking to help them reflect on the impact of engineering on society and be able to express those reflections in English. The specific course objectives are the following:

1. Listening, interacting and speaking in English in academic and professional situations.
2. Understanding and participating in academic activities related to the students' discipline (presentations, lectures, seminars).
3. Effective participation in professional oral activities (meetings, presentations, etc.).
4. Developing and giving an effective oral presentation in English related to the academic or professional field.
5. Participating in activities in internationalisation and mobility-related activities in English, in an appropriate manner.
6. Communicating in English, accurately and appropriately, being able to express one's own ideas and being able to exchange different points of view.
7. Effective communication in English in authentic situations related to the professional practices of engineering, including intercultural communication.
8. Engaging in critical reflection on the impact of engineering on society and expressing such reflection in English.
9. Managing and continuing with one's own learning process, using resources and strategies acquired during the course (e.g. planning and assessing one's learning, using ICT resources, etc.)

STUDY LOAD

Type	Hours	Percentage
Self study	90,0	60.00
Hours small group	60,0	40.00

Total learning time: 150 h

CONTENTS

LECTURES AND SEMINARS - ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH

Description:

DEVELOPING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND SPEAKING PRACTICE IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS

Specific objectives:

Some techniques for effective listening
Understanding lectures: Semantic markers and signposting
Features of lectures, lecture style.
Note-taking practice, giving oral reports.
Listening and speaking activities: spoken technical English
Pronunciation guidelines for effective listening and speaking

Related activities:

Activities to reflect on strategies for effective listening comprehension in the technical fields.
Activities to practise listening to different types of spoken academic texts
Activities to apply different listening strategies in academic discourse.
Activities to practise spoken academic communication (comprehension, production, interaction).
Activities to identify features of spoken academic discourse.

Full-or-part-time: 20h

Practical classes: 12h

Guided activities: 2h

Self study : 6h

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH THE TECHNICAL FIELDS

Description:

Equipping students with resources and strategies to be able to participate orally in English in communicative situations in professional settings, producing accurate and appropriate messages.

Specific objectives:

Levels of formality and language functions in different communicative situations in technical settings.
· Planning and participating (using spoken English) in professional situations:
-Telephoning
-Schedules and appointments
-Describing products and processes.
-Discussing and negotiating

Related activities:

-Activities to identify appropriate messages in a given communicative situation (language function and level of formality).
-Activities to recognize and produce accurate and appropriate messages in specific situations.
-Role-play activities to practise spoken communication in different situations.
-Listening comprehension activities related to communicative situations in professional settings.

Full-or-part-time: 21h

Practical classes: 12h

Guided activities: 3h

Self study : 6h

PRONUNCIATION: SOME GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Description:

This module will introduce some basic aspects of pronunciation, both at segmental and suprasegmental level, so as to raise students' awareness of their own pronunciation and avoid some of the common weaknesses of Spanish/Catalan speakers. The aim of this module is to help students improve their pronunciation (and comprehension) for greater effectiveness in academic and professional communication.

Specific objectives:

- Being able to improve one's own pronunciation in a systematic manner (recognizing phonetic symbols, being aware of and applying pronunciation resources, etc.).
- Distinguishing some potentially confusing vowel and consonant sounds through minimal pairs.
- Becoming familiar with the rhythm, stress and intonation of English.
- Becoming aware of one's pronunciation in academic and professional situations (e.g. when preparing a presentation in English) and applying appropriate strategies for effective pronunciation.

Related activities:

- Recognizing the sounds of English (vowels, consonants, diphthongs), using IPA (International Phonetics Association) transcription.
- Practical exercises focusing on: sounds in isolation, connected speech, word stress and sentence stress, intonation.
- Using different types of resources for practising and improving pronunciation.

Full-or-part-time: 12h

Practical classes: 8h

Self study : 4h

"RESEARCHING ENVIRONMENTALISM": DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC PROJECT IN ENGLISH

Description:

This module is intended to develop students' skills for doing academic work and developing authentic projects in English, practising speaking skills in the different stages of project development. In this practical module, students must collaborate through all the stages of an academic project in English. Students must carry out a research project about sustainability, in which they must go through the different stages of questionnaire design about environmentally-related actions and attitudes, field work, analysis of the results obtained, as well as the oral presentation of results.

Specific objectives:

Students will work in groups in this hands-on module in order to do a collaborative project, in English, on the topic of sustainability, with the aim of developing their academic speaking skills.

Related activities:

Activities based on Module 5 from the online material "Quantum LEAP" (Learning English for Academic Purposes)*, in which students have to design a questionnaire about "environmentally friendly attitudes". They must carry out a small field study, analyse the results and present them orally. The module also includes a reflective paper on students' development of their own academic speaking skills.

*The materials for this module will be available via ATENEA.

Full-or-part-time: 21h

Laboratory classes: 9h

Guided activities: 6h

Self study : 6h

ORAL ACTIVITIES IN PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH: VIRTUAL REALITY PRACTICE

Description:

This section will focus on planning and organizing speech for effective participation in different oral activities in the technical field: meetings, job interviews, and oral presentations. Virtual Reality (VR) activities will be included to simulate international professional situations.

Specific objectives:

Introduction to different types of oral activities

- Meetings: characteristics, roles, structure, guidelines for effective participation in professional meetings.
- Meetings: meeting practice through role-play activities.
- Designing an oral presentation in the technical field
- Planning and structuring an oral presentation (signposting).
- Delivering effective oral presentations (using the Pecha Kucha format).
- Preparation for and effective participation in job interviews.

Related activities:

- Activities to identify, analyze, and practise the different communicative situations presented in class.
- Activities to develop strategies for effective participation in those communicative situations.
- Role-play activities.
- Activities to analyze and improve one's own performance (how to give a good oral presentation, what makes an effective meeting, resources and strategies for a job interview).
- Developing the appropriate language resources for presentations, meetings, and job interviews.
- Introduction to Pecha Kucha format for concise and effective oral presentations.
- Preparing and delivering an oral presentation in Pecha Kucha format.

Full-or-part-time: 11h 40m

Laboratory classes: 6h 40m

Guided activities: 2h

Self study : 3h

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Description:

Emphasis will be placed on persuasive oral communication both in academic (presenting ideas and projects to convince an audience) and professional settings (e.g. in a job interview). In this section, we'll highlight the elements that make persuasive communication and we'll practise persuasive presentations, building argument for the persuasive presentation of a project or of oneself as a candidate.

Full-or-part-time: 7h

Laboratory classes: 2h

Guided activities: 3h

Self study : 2h

GRADING SYSTEM

- Written and spoken assignments: 20% (including the assignment for "researching environmentalism" as well as audio or video samples of students' oral production, like role-plays of professional situations)
- End-of-term oral presentation and report: 20% (students must do BOTH the oral presentation and the report in order to qualify for a mark for this section of the course)
- Exam(s): 40% (15% first exam + 25% second exam)
- Class participation and activities (in-class and out-of-class activities): 20%

EXAMINATION RULES.

All assessed activities are compulsory.

In order to qualify for a course mark, students must submit at least 50% of course assignments and attend at least 50% of classes.

Late assignments cannot be accepted.

Academic integrity and plagiarism: It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that any work submitted is original and that it is his/her own work (i.e. not plagiarised in part or in its entirety, and carried out without external assistance). If the instructor considers that any work submitted (an activity or part of it, e.g. an assignment) is not original, the student will be disqualified from the entire activity and will get a mark of 0.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic:

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- Comfort, Jeremy [et al.]. Speaking effectively : developing speaking skills for business english. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. ISBN 0521376912.
- Hewings, Martin; Thaine, Craig. Cambridge Academic English C1 Advanced Student's Book: An Integrated Skills Course for EAP. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0521165211.
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- Maier-Fairclough, Jane; Burzphal, Gerline. Career Express : business english C1 : Course book. Reading: Garnet, 2013. ISBN 9781907575716.
- Argent, Sue; Alexander, Olwyn. Access EAP foundations : Course book. Reading: Garnet, 2010. ISBN 9781859645246.
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