

Magistrale 2: EAAS Academic Reading and Writing

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This course aims to extend students' academic reading and writing skills to the C2 level and raise critical thinking skills. Students will use academic articles to identify discourse features and produce written texts typical to academia and following standard academic conventions. Opportunities will also be provided for students to practise oral presentation skills.

The EAP/task-based syllabus is designed around specific ELT related tasks and activities that the students will complete in class during the course. Follow up exercises will be set for outside the class times. This type of syllabus emphasises the development of real-life communicative skills and focuses on the practical application of language. The ELT focus allows students to narrow their independent reading and writing accordingly for exam preparation and increase their language awareness and enhance their ELT techniques and resources.

This C2 level academic reading and writing course involves writing academic essays, participating in discussions, and analysing and evaluating language in use and academic texts. The course allows for a flexible and student-centred approach, where the students are actively engaged in the learning process and able to apply their language skills to real-life, present and target situations in a meaningful and relevant way.

Course Outline:

1. Language Development
 - Expanding knowledge of formal vocabulary and register.
 - C2 language practice and tasks related to academic reading and writing.
 - Genre transformation tasks.
2. Advanced Reading
 - Reading for research: skimming, scanning, reading for detail.
 - Reading for academic interest and dialogue.
 - Storing and archiving for reference.
3. Academic Writing Conventions
 - Writing timed essays on research papers.
 - Using citations in academic writing.
 - Analysing discourse features and identifying author's strategies.
4. Language in Academic Writing
 - Advanced target language structures and their use in academic contexts.
 - Identifying features of academic language in context.
 - Analysing language in use for teaching purposes.

Course goals (1-5) and objectives:

1. Develop skills in analysing and evaluating academic texts effectively.

Draw conclusions about the effectiveness of author's writing strategies and support with textual evidence

- Articulate and assess author's thesis, purposes, audiences, contexts, bias, and credibility
- Discriminate between examples/illustrations and main points
- Identify author's main claims, supporting points, specific evidence and examples

2. Strengthen language proficiency to produce academic writing at the C2 level.

- Employ appropriate mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling conventions
- Write readily understood text for an academic audience
- Write clear and appropriate thesis statements

3. Gain proficiency in conducting research, drafting, revising, and editing academic texts following standard conventions.

- Use electronic environments to research, draft, revise, edit, and share or publish texts
- Recognise and avoid plagiarism
- Organise and adapt texts appropriately for genre, purpose and audience
- Construct abstracts which summarise academic papers
- Find, analyse, summarise, and synthesise appropriate source material from both print and electronic environments
- Locate, evaluate, and use academic sources
- Document and cite in HARVARD/ APA format accurately

4. Cultivate advanced critical thinking skills and the ability to construct compelling arguments in academic writing.

- Analyse discourse and language items in context for teaching purposes
- Describe significant findings from raw data
- Distinguish voices and viewpoints
- Present focused, logical arguments that support a thesis
- Restate author's thesis and support points in own words
- Signal and integrate basic quotes, paraphrases, and summarised ideas
- Use reliable and varied evidence to support claims, incorporate sources from others appropriately

5. Develop strategies for expanding academic vocabulary and utilising language effectively in academic contexts.

- Utilise a range of strategies for dealing with unknown words
- Write about complex subjects, underlining key issues in a style appropriate to the intended reader.

The exam:

The exam is divided into two papers of 90 minutes each. Students will be provided with an extract from an academic article which forms the basis of both papers involved in the exam. Both papers must be passed in order to pass the exam.

In part one students are required to complete four tasks:

1. Complete gaps in an academic text segment of an academic article
2. Remove language items from a text to enhance concision
3. Analyse language from the text and comment on its use and meaning in context
4. State the thesis of the study and justify where the text segment would occur in the original article in 100 words.

In part two students must:

- Answer a specific essay question from 3 options related to the article segment from part one
- Produce a cohesive and accurate academic text of 500 words
- Use conventional academic writing strategies
- Paraphrase authors' words
- Use academic in-text citation
- Develop a clear thesis statement

Exam criteria:

Part one, task three, Language commentary and analysis:

1. At least 5 key features per item are described with examples from text to support.
2. Descriptions are accurate in content.
3. Terminology is used accurately.
4. Language is indicative of CEFR C2 level.

Part one, part four, Segment justification and thesis statement

- The thesis statement is clear, concise, and directly related to the main argument or purpose of the study.
- The justification is clear, logical, and well-supported, identifying the most appropriate section of the research paper (e.g., introduction, literature review).

The academic essay should meet the following criteria:

1. Title is appealing and clearly relates to the content and expressed in no more than 10 words.
2. The essay question is answered in all its parts.
3. Clear and well-defined thesis statement: The essay should have a strong and clear thesis statement that is consistently supported throughout the paper.
4. Advanced level of language proficiency: The language used in the essay should demonstrate a high level of proficiency (CEFR C2), including a wide vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and accurate use of English.
5. Evidence-based: The essay should be based on credible and relevant evidence, including scholarly sources, and should use appropriate citation styles.

6. Sources and citations: Citations are relevant and sources are treated as per academic conventions.
7. Paraphrasing: Citations should be paraphrased and convey the original academic concepts accurately.
8. Logical and well-structured: The essay should be well-organised and have a logical flow of ideas, with clear transitions between paragraphs and sections.
9. Balanced: Paragraphs should be consistently developed and balanced
10. Originality: The essay should demonstrate original thought and analysis, rather than simply summarising existing research.
11. Register: The language should be formal and academic in register and academic strategies (hedging, nominalisation etc.) evident.
12. Strong conclusion: The conclusion should effectively summarise the main points of the essay and provide a final insight or call to action.

Course materials:

- Academic writing, Exploring Processes and Strategies, 2nd ed., Ilana Leki, CUP
- Mastering Advanced English Language, Sara Thorne. Palgrave.
- A monolingual dictionary, e.g. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

Practice materials will also be made available on the course webpage.

E-learning:

Margaret Horrigan: <https://web.uniroma1.it/cla/en/cel/margaret-horrigan>