(PALAS 210) Critical and Academic Writing
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies
Professor Douglas Town
Universidad de Belgrano
Course Syllabus 2011

Course Information
MW 1:00-2:30 PM (C9)

Contact Information
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Course Description
The emphasis of courses at most English-medium universities and colleges is on producing essays and research papers. Moreover, research has shown that whether they teach humanities, social sciences, engineering or medicine, teachers have remarkably similar expectations about the content, organization and language of such papers. This course trains undergraduates to write successfully in English. It develops analytical and critical thinking skills through collaborative work and discussion as well as through individual writing practice. Models and exercises are provided to help students write clearly, persuasively and accurately. Units one and two guide students from the initial stage of understanding the essay title, through note taking and paraphrasing, to the organisation of the essay and finally proof-reading. Unit three builds on these basic skills through a focus on communicative functions, such as definition, exemplification and classification, and other areas of concern to student writers.

Course Requirements
The UB requires students to attend at least 75% of class sessions in order to be eligible for the final exam. In addition, students on this course are required to submit two out-of-class essays for assessment as well as completing weekly assignments such as summaries and language exercises. The midterm and final exam will be based on these assignments. There is no make ups for Classes falling on public holidays. UB holds to the view that plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and is a serious breach of acceptable conduct. Any student caught plagiarizing will immediately be given a “no credit” for all courses taken in the semester.
Required Textbooks and Materials:

Assessment and marking
Midterm Exam
   Written test: 20%
   750 word essay: 20%
Final Exam
   Written test: 30%
   1,500 word essay: 30%

For a better understanding of the comparable table for grading, see
http://www.ub.edu.ar/studies/conversion_table.htm

Course schedule

Unit 1: Writing Foundations

Week 1
1.1 Introduction to Academic Writing:
   Text types, organization and paragraphing
1.2 Avoiding Plagiarism:
   Quotation, paraphrase and summary
1.3 Understanding essay questions
   From Titles to Outlines
1.4 Reading and Evaluating Texts
   Facts, opinions and hedges
1.5 Understanding Purpose and Register
   Academic and non-academic texts

Week 2
1.6 Selecting Key Points
   Relevance
1.7 Note-taking
   Clarity and organization

Week 3
1.8 Paraphrasing
   Changing syntax and vocabulary

Week 4
Monday August 16: National Holiday (no class)
1.9 Summary Writing
Week 5
1.10 Combining Sources
   Comparing and contrasting the ideas of different writers

   **Unit 2: Writing Stages**

Week 6
2.1 Planning the Essay
   Description; for and against; compare and evaluate
2.2 Organising Paragraphs
   Topic, support, example and comment
   Cohesion:
   Given and new
   Conjunctions
2.3 Organising the Main Body
   Linear structure
   Signposting

Week 7
2.4 Introductions
2.5 Conclusions
2.6 Rewriting and proof-reading

Week 8:
2.7 Essay One - conferencing session

   **Midterm exam**

   **Unit 3: Writing Tools**

Week 9:
**Monday October 11: National Holiday (no class)**
3.1 Physical description
3.2 Narrative – talking about the past

Week 10:
3.3 Defining
3.4 Exemplifying

Week 11:
**W May 25: National Holiday (no class)**
3.5 Classifying
3.6 Describing a process

Week 12:
3.7 Interpreting and commenting on non-verbal data:
   Statistics, graphs and charts
Week 13:
3.8 Comparing and contrasting
3.9 Explaining causes and effects

Week 14:
3.10 Reporting and certainty
3.11 Arguing and hedging

Week 15
M June 20 National Holiday (no class)
3.12 Essay two - conferencing session
Final exam

Bibliography