

Understanding English: Listening & Speaking I -- Syllabus Fall 2011

Prof: Gord Sellar

Description:

This is the fundamentals course in listening and speaking, designed to give students the basis for further study of conversational English.

Objectives:

1. To equip students with basic listening & conversational skills such as: clarification & requesting clarification, rephrasing, taking an active role in the direction of conversations and discussions, use of a full complement of nonverbal communicative techniques, exercises emphasis, and familiarity with typical modes of expression in English, including informal modes, academic modes, and more.
2. To help students develop the skills and confidence required actively to lead and contribute to group discussions and conversations in a variety of contexts and on a variety of topics, either self-determined or assigned.
3. To develop a self-reflexive and self-challenging attitude towards language-learning through use of, for example, self-designed challenge assignments, peer-evaluation and/or self-evaluation exercises.

Methods of Teaching:

Weekly student-led discussions, in-class group and pair listening and conversation exercises, presentations and other task-related projects, oral examinations, and pre- and follow-up exercises for classroom discussions, and regular online self- and peer-evaluation. There will also be a series of "Challenge Exercises" designed by you, the students, which you will attempt to fulfill in a sequence of my designation for part of your grade. These challenge exercises will focus on the use of English outside of the classroom.

Grading System:

Your grade will be evaluated according to your work as follows:

Class Participation: 35%
Individual Discussion Leadership: 15%
Homework: 20%
Midterm Self-Evaluation: 5%
Final Self-Evaluation: 5%
Challenge Exercises: 15%
Department Events: 5%

Note that failure to attempt any of the above will constitute grounds for a summary failure: you're expected to at least try everything. Despite being only worth 5% of your grade, you still must submit a midterm or final self-evaluation if you wish to pass the course.

Textbooks:

No textbook will be used; however, there will be handouts and other readings assigned as the class progresses. You must complete your readings if you wish to participate in discussions sufficiently to pass the course. I may occasionally quiz you on assigned readings to provide you with the incentive to make sure you have completed (and understood) them.

My contact information:

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Class Website: <http://classes.gordsellar.com>

Course Outline:

The following is somewhat vague; we will in general run the class by a basic format as below, but there will be a great variety in the range of topics we discuss.

Week 1: Intro & Paperwork

Week 2: Small Group Discussions 1 | Introducing Discussion Leadership/Signup

Week 3: Small Group Discussions 2 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 4: Small Group Discussions 3 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 5: Small Group Discussions 4 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 6: Small Group Discussions 5 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 7: Pre-Exam Review | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 8: Midterm Exams

Week 9: Small Group Discussions 6 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 10: Small Group Discussions 7 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 11: Small Group Discussions 8 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 12: Small Group Discussions 9 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 13: Small Group Discussions 10 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 14: Small Group Discussions 11 | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 15: Pre-Exam Review | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 16: Final Exams