

Understanding English: Listening & Speaking II -- Syllabus Fall 2012
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" primarily 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. Think of a video game, of the old Super Mario Brothers type: through the semester, you work on beating one level so you can try the next, constantly moving to harder challenges.

Grading System:

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

- Class Participation: 35%
- Challenge Exercises: 35%
- Individual Discussion Leadership: 10%
- Homework: 10%
- Online Midterm & Final Self-Evaluation: 5%
- 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. Even though they're 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, but I will assign readings from time to time in order to facilitate discussions. I will normally post a link to these readings on the class website. (See below.)

My contact information:

Office: IH306 Office Phone: 02-2164-4459 Email: mistergord@gmail.com
Class Website: <http://gordsclass.com> Office Hours -- see: gordsclass.com/about/

Course Outline:

The following is somewhat vague and subject to change at any time, but it should give you an idea of what I'm planning for you. As you can see, courses are set up so that we have a Discussion Leadership Day on the one-hour class during the week; on the longer class, we'll have Small Group Discussions, projects, or other activities to work on. We'll also do some things that are not listed here, like the occasional outing with classmates you'll do for homework, group presentations, debates, and "small talk" exercises.

Note that there are no deadlines for the Challenge Exercises. This is an exercise in cultivating individual responsibility, a cornerstone of adult education in all English-speaking cultures. You will fulfill those exercises at your own pace, of course taking into account that you can only complete one such exercise in a given week. I **STRONGLY** recommend that you begin working on the first one as soon as we have a challenges list: the longer you put them off, the harder it will be for you to complete them all, and they are worth a significant part of your grade. The Challenge Exercises, like Discussion Leadership, are a chance for you to shine as an individual, but you will also need to have the discipline to work independently and make a reasonable schedule for yourself. Feel free to make an appointment with me if you need advice in doing so.

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 / Exams | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 8: Midterm Self-Evaluation Due

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 / Exams | Discussion Leadership Day

Week 16: Final Self-Evaluation Due