

Course

Academic Writing: Michaelmas Term

Key Issues in Academic Writing

Tutors

Maggie Charles, George Taylor and Peter Saunders

Entry level: C1.

Exit level: C2.

Course Content

The course will focus on the following topics:

- Variation in Academic Writing: genre and disciplinary differences
- Language Patterns: collocation and grammatical regularities, examining concordances and the British National Corpus
- Linking Ideas: information order, word order and emphasis, nominalisation
- Signalling Logical Relations: linking adverbs, subordination, co-ordination and complex prepositions
- Taking an Appropriate Stance: personal pronouns, impersonal forms, passive/active forms
- Expressing Levels of Certainty: modality, hedging
- Tense and Time in Academic Writing: past, present and present perfect forms and uses

Two of the sessions are run as workshops, which allows some provision for work on individual writing.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this term, students should have an increased awareness of some of the key features of academic writing. They will have learnt the importance of information order in conveying the message and should be able to connect text more appropriately. They should know how to choose a suitable tense for their purpose and be able to express different levels of certainty in their writing. They should also have a better understanding of how to take an appropriate stance within their discipline. They will know about the British National Corpus and will have had experience of examining concordances to gain information on language patterns.

Course text

There is no course book. Students will be given photocopied handouts and will be encouraged to use the resources of the library and web-based concordance software.

Course

Academic Writing: Hilary Term

Writing a Thesis or Dissertation

Tutors

Maggie Charles. George Taylor and Peter Saunders

Entry level: C1.

Exit level: C2.

Course Content

The course will focus on the following topics:

- The overall organisation of the thesis/dissertation
- Structure and language for writing an introduction
- Reviewing the literature: citation forms and functions
- Reviewing the literature: tense choice and organisation
- Constructing discussions and arguments
- Structure and language for writing a conclusion
- Structure and language for writing an abstract

Two of the sessions are run as workshops, which allows some provision for work on individual writing.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this term, students should have learnt how to structure the introduction, literature review, discussion, conclusion and abstract of a thesis or dissertation. They will have practised signalling these organisational moves through their use of language. They should also have gained greater competence in incorporating citations into their texts, including choosing appropriate tenses and reporting verbs. They will have studied the overall organisation of the thesis or dissertation and will understand how different disciplines and topics demand somewhat different organisational structures.

Course text

There is no course book. Students will be given photocopied handouts and will be encouraged to use the resources of the library.

Course

Academic Writing: Trinity Term

Using Corpora to Investigate Grammar and Rhetorical Functions

Tutors

Maggie Charles, George Taylor and Peter Saunders

Course Content

The course will focus on the following topics:

Entry level: C1.

Exit level: C2.

- Problem-solving with hands-on concordancing: preposition patterns and collocation
- Building your own corpus and investigating stance: personal pronoun use
- Making and countering arguments: linking adverbs
- Making and modifying claims: reporting verbs, adjectives, adverbs
- Defending your research against criticism: subordination and co-ordination
- Situating your research in the field: tenses
- Writing with authority: adjective patterns
- Criticising others' research: citation

Two of the sessions are run as workshops, which allows some provision for work on individual writing.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this term, students should understand how writing operates as an interaction between writer and reader and they should have an enhanced awareness of how to position themselves within the field as a competent member of the research community. They will have learnt the language necessary in order to justify their own research appropriately, criticise the research of others and construct a sound argument.

Students will have compiled their own individual corpora from research articles as well as using the Oxford Academic Text Corpus. They will have investigated the language functions specified above by using the Antconc concordance software. They will have learnt how to search a corpus for information and will have practised interpreting corpus data. By the end of the term students should have their own corpus and copy of the software and should be able use this resource independently to deal with their own academic writing problems.

Course text

There is no course book. Students will be given photocopied handouts and will be encouraged to use the resources of the library and web-based materials.