

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
UG Course Syllabus

Communication for Environmental Management and Technology III

LANG 3081

3 credits

Pre-requisites: LANG2083

Co-requisites: N/A

Name of Course Leaders: Jessie Lam

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Office Hours of Course Leaders: Available by appointment only. Students should contact their section instructor directly with any questions.

Course Description

LANG 3081 is a two-credit, one-semester course for students in the BSc in Environmental Management and Technology (EVMT) program. It focuses on preparing students for their Final Year Capstone Project report writing and presentations. The course is offered during the Spring terms only.

Topics to be covered:

- Role of research in environmental management
- The environmental research process
- Brainstorming research topics and/or research question
- Identifying preliminary research
- Developing research questions/hypothesis/research problem statements
- Writing the Introduction
- Synthesizing literature & Writing the Literature Review
- Writing the Methods section
- Writing the Results/Findings and Discussion section
- Writing the Conclusions, Recommendations and Executive Summary section
- Presenting the research report: rhetorical and linguistic strategies
- Oral Presentation Skills: Delivery and Language Use
- Oral Presentation Skills: Handling Questions & Designing Effective Visual Aids

Methods of instruction: interactive tutorials support active learning through group discussion, collaborative activities, peer learning, input, practice and feedback.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Critically review, select, and synthesize texts in their discipline to produce an academic research report.
2. Support claims with appropriate evidence and properly acknowledge sources.
3. Adapt the message to the purpose and context of the communication and to the audience's needs.
4. Organize ideas logically, coherently and cohesively to meet the purpose, context and needs of audience in an academic research report and presentation.

5. Use appropriate tone and style, and clear and accurate language to suit the purpose, context and audience of an academic research report and presentation.
6. Use body language and their voice effectively to build rapport with the audience, make the message effective, sustain the audience's attention and impact the audience.
7. Display teamwork and leadership skills in a group project.
8. Identify a specific area in the environment that may require some intervention in the short-term with possible long-term, wide-ranging influence.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
1a. Research Writing Assessment 1: Introduction & Literature Review (The Interim Report) (Individual)	28%	Week 5
1b. Peer Evaluation of Reviewer's Feedback: The Interim Report (Individual)	3%	Week 4
2a. Research Writing Assessment 2: Introduction, Literature Review & Methodology (The Expanded Report) (Individual)	40%	Week 9
2b. Peer Evaluation of Reviewer's Feedback: The Expanded Report (Individual)	3%	Week 7
3. Research Report Presentation (Group): 16 minutes plus 4 minutes of Q & A	20%	Week 12 & 13
4. Research Project: Peer Evaluation of Teamwork and Leadership (Individual)	6%	Week 13

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
1a. Research Writing Assessment 1: Introduction & Literature Review (Individual)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO8	This task evaluates students' ability to present the introduction and literature review sections of their research report on an environmental issue (ILO8). It requires them to articulate the research question and purpose, synthesize information from multiple sources (ILO1), develop and support their claims with appropriate evidence (ILO2), and communicate ideas coherently (ILO4). Additionally,

		students must tailor their message to a specific target audience (ILO3) and use appropriate written language effectively (ILO5).
1b. Peer evaluation of reviewer's feedback: The Interim Report (Individual)	ILO7	This task assesses students' ability to give constructive feedback on their peers' draft, interim research report (ILO7).
2a. Research Writing Assessment 2: Introduction, Literature Review & Methodology (The Expanded Report) (Individual)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO8	This task evaluates students' ability to present their expanded research report on an environmental issue (ILO8). It requires them to articulate the research question and purpose, synthesize information from multiple sources (ILO1), develop and support their claims with appropriate evidence (ILO2), and communicate ideas coherently (ILO4). Additionally, students must tailor their message to a specific target audience (ILO3) and use appropriate written language effectively (ILO5).
2b. Peer evaluation of reviewer's feedback: The Expanded Report (Individual)	ILO7	This task assesses students' ability to give constructive feedback on their peers' draft, final research report (ILO7).
3. Research Report Presentation (Group): 16 minutes plus 4 minutes of Q & A	ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6, ILO8	This task assesses students' ability to present their findings in the expanded research report on an environmental issue (ILO8). It requires them to articulate the research question and purpose, develop and support their claims with appropriate evidence (ILO2) and communicate ideas coherently (ILO4). Additionally, students must tailor their message to a specific target audience (ILO3) through appropriate spoken language (ILO5) and nonverbal communication (ILO6).
4. Research Project: Peer Evaluation of Teamwork and Leadership (Individual)	ILO7	This task assesses students' ability to work effectively as a team in the Research Project (ILO7).

Grading Rubrics

Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas. These rubrics clearly outline the criteria used for evaluation. Students can refer to these rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	<p>Content and organization: Articulates the research question and purpose very clearly to provide a clear direction for the research; demonstrates sophisticated synthesis and analysis of substantial quality sources to support the research question/argument; explains and justifies the research methodology very clearly, concisely and persuasively; organizes and develops ideas fully, very clearly, and highly coherently and cohesively.</p> <p>Communication: Uses highly persuasive, clear, concise, accurate and nuanced language and non-verbal communication with sustained, deep awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.</p> <p>Teamwork: Approaches working within team settings in a highly sophisticated manner.</p>
B	Good Performance	<p>Content and organization: Articulates the research question and purpose very clearly to provide a clear direction for the research with occasional minor slips; demonstrates good synthesis and analysis of ideas from quality sources to support the research question/argument; explains and justifies the research methodology very clearly and persuasively; organizes and develops ideas fully, clearly, and very coherently and cohesively with occasional minor slips.</p> <p>Communication: Uses very clear, persuasive, concise and accurate language and non-verbal communication with very high awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.</p> <p>Teamwork: Brings sophistication to work within team settings.</p>
C	Satisfactory Performance	<p>Content and organization: Articulate the research question and purpose generally clearly but may lack direction in some parts; demonstrates synthesis and analysis of ideas from relevant sources to support the research question/argument; explains and justifies the research methodology generally clearly and appropriately; organizes and develops ideas generally clearly, appropriately, coherently and cohesively.</p> <p>Communication: Uses generally appropriate, clear, persuasive, concise, and accurate language and non-verbal communication with appropriate awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.</p> <p>Teamwork: Works collaboratively in a team setting in ways that are effective and productive.</p>
D	Marginal Pass	<p>Content and organization: The research question and purpose are vague and lack clarity and direction; minimal synthesis and limited analysis of sources, which are somewhat relevant but limited to support the research question/argument; ideas may be</p>

		<p>superficial, repetitive, missing or inadequate; the research methodology lacks clarity, precision, and has limited appropriateness for the research purpose; ideas are only somewhat coherent and cohesively developed, making it harder for readers to follow.</p> <p>Communication: Use some appropriate language and non-verbal communication though clarity and persuasiveness are compromised by frequent errors which may impede understanding; little awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose; communication is often inadequate or awkward.</p> <p>Teamwork: Attempts to work collaboratively in a team setting or does so only somewhat appropriately.</p>
F	Fail	<p>Content and organization: The research question is missing, and there is no discernible research purpose; no/minimal attempt at analysis or synthesis of sources, which is minimal/non-existent/fails to support the research question/argument; ideas are very superficial, repetitive, irrelevant, inadequate, and/or lacking; the research methodology is vague and is not well-suited for the research purpose; no sense of coherence and cohesion, leaving readers confused about the progression of ideas.</p> <p>Communication: Limited awareness of audience, context, purpose; limited control of language; clarity and persuasiveness are highly compromised, causing confusion for the readers.</p> <p>Teamwork: Does not work collaboratively in a team setting.</p>

Course AI Policy

Aligned with HKUST's commitment to embracing Gen AI in education, the LANG 3081 course encourages students to make use of all the tools available that can help them to communicate more effectively in English. We also expect students to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and requires ethical use of Gen AI tools. There is no penalty for using or not using GenAI. However, GenAI and other tools cannot be used as a substitute for a student's own work. Students are expected to write their own assessed assignments and to prepare their presentations themselves.

GenAI tools can be very useful for:

- Brainstorming ideas and suggesting sources BUT the information provided may not be accurate or relevant to your assignment.
- Giving suggestions about improving the organization of your writing BUT GenAI tends to suggest very formulaic patterns of writing which may not fit your requirements.
- Giving suggestions about improving your language BUT GenAI may make suggestions for language changes which are not appropriate for the intended context and audience.

- Suggesting simple ways of expressing complex discipline-specific concepts BUT these explanations may be unfamiliar to your audience.
- Providing summaries of long texts BUT important information may be omitted, particularly if the original text is not well-written.

In short, GenAI provides opportunities to enhance your use of English and contains pitfalls which you need to be aware of.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement where relevant. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Resubmission Policy

Resubmissions are not accepted, except in exceptional circumstances.

Required Texts and Materials

Course materials and additional resources are provided via Canvas.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.