

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
UG Course Syllabus

Academic English for Humanities and Social Science Studies

LANG1408

3 credits

Pre-requisites: LANG1402 unless exempt. Students exempt from LANG1402 are those who attained Level 5 (with all papers at or above Level 4) or above in English Language in the HKDSE, or equivalent qualification.

Co-requisites: N/A

Name of Course Leader: Thomas Rewhorn

Email of Course Leaders: lctrewhorn@ust.hk

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

Course Description

LANG1408 is a Common Core course taken by all Humanities and Social Science School students.

Course objectives: to develop your ability to communicate accurately and appropriately in humanities and social science contexts in the university and beyond.

Course content: Through this course, you practice critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, to help enhance your written, spoken and multimodal communication skills and academic literacy skills in a range of discipline related topics. Previous topics focused on Chinese culture, minority languages, generative AI use in education and universal basic income. Academic literacy skills such as discussions, evaluating generative AI output, peer review and language analysis are applied to explore topics in depth.

Key topics:

- Module 1: introduction to academic literacy for humanities and social science students.
- Module 2: communicating arguments through multimodality. These include audience analysis, language use and communication strategies to engage an audience in humanities and social science topics.
- Module 3: persuasion in academic writing and speaking. These include finding, evaluating, critiquing and synthesizing sources, and developing coherent, persuasive arguments through text and spoken discussions.

Methods of instruction: interactive tutorials support active learning through group collaboration and discussion of topics, peer learning, and evaluating and reflecting on feedback.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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

1. Identify, evaluate, select, critique, integrate, and cite relevant information from humanities or social science sources to provide evidence-based arguments
2. Develop ideas clearly and fully
3. Organize ideas coherently, ensuring logical flow and focused development from sentence to text level
4. Use written and spoken language that is accurate, fluent, and contextually appropriate in humanities or social science communication

5. Demonstrate awareness of audience and reader needs and expectations and communicate with them appropriately
6. Use different modes of communication appropriately to strengthen message delivery
7. Work collaboratively in a team to achieve common goals
8. Demonstrate effective learning skills by using appropriate learning strategies and evaluating progress through reflection and feedback

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 below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Argumentative paper (Written assessment)	35%	Approx. week 13*
Critique forum discussion (Spoken assessment 2)	35%	Approx. week 12*
Checkpoints: a series of tasks to be completed during the course to which contributes to the process of completing the assessments.	20%	spread through course-see course schedule
Password test	10%	Exam period

*Specific due dates are posted on Canvas.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Argumentative paper (Written assignment)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	This task assesses students' ability to critique and synthesize information from multiple sources (ILO1) to fully and clearly develop ideas (ILO2) that are communicated coherently (ILO3) to a specific target reader (ILO5) in appropriate written language (ILO4).
Critique forum (Spoken assignment)	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6, ILO7	This task assesses students' ability to critique and synthesize information from multiple sources (ILO1) to fully and clearly develop ideas (ILO2) that are communicated coherently (ILO3) across different group members (ILO7) to a specific target audience (ILO5) in appropriate spoken language (ILO4).
Checkpoints: a series of tasks to be completed during the course	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO 5, ILO6, ILO7, ILO8	The checkpoint tasks assess students' ability to reflect on and evaluate the process of completing the assignments through quizzes (ILO 1), peer collaboration and review (ILO5, ILO7, ILO8) and multimodal communication tasks

		such as videos and infographics (ILO6).
Password test	ILO4	The Password test assesses students' ability to identify appropriate linguistic features according to different contexts (ILO4).

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	Content: Demonstrates sophisticated synthesis of well-developed ideas from quality sources with skilful coherence. Communication: Uses impactful language and non-verbal communication with sustained awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.
B	Good Performance	Content: Demonstrates synthesis of well-developed ideas from quality sources with effective coherence. Communication: Uses effective language and non-verbal communication with very high awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Content: Demonstrates synthesis of relevant ideas from quality sources with appropriate coherence. Communication: Uses appropriate language and non-verbal communication with some awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose.
D	Marginal Pass	Content: Synthesizes relevant ideas with some analysis, somewhat coherently. Ideas may be superficial, repetitive, missing or inadequate. Communication: Use somewhat appropriate language and non-verbal communication with little awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose. Communication is often inadequate or awkward.
F	Fail	Content: Does not synthesize, develop or organize ideas sufficiently. Ideas are very superficial, repetitive, irrelevant, inadequate, and/or lacking. Communication: limited awareness of audience, context, purpose; limited control of language.

Course AI Policy

We encourage 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. 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.