

# English Foundations Course

## Course Curriculum (Pre-University)

2017/2018 Academic Year

### Language Practice

The main aim of the course is to develop and/or consolidate students' overall English language proficiency with a view to preparing them for their BA level studies in an English language programme. The course focuses on all four language skills as well as on improving students' vocabulary and their accurate use of the language. Course materials involve a course book as core material and a range of supplementary materials according to the students' needs and interests. Students will also be expected to be engaged in self-directed learning, i.e.: to further develop their language skills in a fairly autonomous way with the help of the Self-Access Centre facilities

#### *Requirements & assessment:*

Evaluation and final grades will be based on i) attendance ii) preparation for and participation in class activities iii) in class tests and iv) written assignments.

### Study Skills

This course is intended to help participants develop effective study skills that they are going to need if they want to become university students. After discovering their own personal study style, they will find out how to increase their ability to learn, how to improve study habits, set goals, manage time, monitor progress and carry out self-reflection and self-evaluation. Specific topics and skills the course will focus on are: effective listening comprehension, note taking and using notes, strategies for reading textbooks, strategies for building vocabulary, as well as improving memory for information. Students will pay a visit to the SEAS Library where they will get acquainted with our electronic catalogue. They will find out about the use of printed and electronic resources such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and electronic databases. In the second semester the focus will be on developing writing skills, writing assignments, learning from teacher feedback, studying for exams, and techniques and tips for test taking. Students will also learn about the concept and the consequences of plagiarism in an academic environment and will be taught to avoid it.

#### *Requirements & assessment:*

Regular attendance and active participation in class. Weekly readings and home assignments. Short quizzes, a mid term and an end-term test. Assessment will be based on participation, home assignment, and test results.

### English speaking cultures – *first semester*

The aims of this course are to provide students with an introduction to the civilisations and cultures that have flourished in the British Isles from historical times, to familiarize them with some aspects of life in

modern Britain and to use this framework to improve their language skills and their use of English. Topic areas covered will include geography, history, institutions, holidays and traditions, education and popular culture. Everyday life in contemporary Britain will be explored by looking at the habits and attitudes of different members of society. An effort will be made to improve both accuracy and fluency with particular emphasis on vocabulary building and laying the foundations for further study.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Assessment will be based on i) attendance ii) preparation for and participation in all class activities iii) language skills iv) tests and assignments.

### **English speaking cultures – second semester**

In this course, students will be exposed to elements present in both the English speaking cultures of the United States and Canada. The course is to be considered as a general overview, to highlight what the transference of Anglo-Saxon culture means in the context of the “New World” countries. The course will also look at the effect of large native and immigrant populations of these cultures.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Discussion is very important to the class and all students are expected to participate in all discussion. There will also be two exams during the semester, to test student’s knowledge gained from the class.

### **Background to Hungary**

The main aims of this course are to raise students’ cultural awareness, to develop their understanding of the most important ingredients of successful intercultural communication in general, and to develop the relevant knowledge and skills to study in Hungary with the help of readings and videos dealing with current Hungarian cultural and social issues. The course will also provide opportunities for lots of speaking and listening practice as well as vocabulary development through activities, discussions, readings and written assignments.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Regular attendance, active participation in the activities and discussions, completion of all the assignments. Assessment: based on an essay, a presentation, a vocabulary quiz and active participation.

### **Cultures of Europe**

This course will concentrate on discussing concepts relevant to European cultures. All discussions will be conducted in English, to prepare students for further studies in literature and culture. The aim of the course is to introduce some features of historical and cultural periods, focusing on general knowledge, including music and arts, architecture and landscape, and to offer the necessary vocabulary for their discussion. Suggested list of topics for the first semester: Hungary through Music and the Arts I-II; Greek Mythology; The Age of Chivalry; Renaissance Europe; Field Trip to a Museum in Budapest; The Baroque in Europe; Romanticism; Art Nouveau in Budapest; Modernism; The Great Generation (the 1950s and 1960s); Postmodernism. The second semester will concentrate more on literary periods in England, such as Shakespeare’s England, the LakePoets, and recurring motifs in literature.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Participation in class; short home assignments; short quizzes; in-class test at mid-term and at the end of the term.

### **Basic grammar and pronunciation**

This course rests on the assumption that the international students have some working knowledge of the English language, which, however, does not enable them to fully follow the courses offered for BA students.

Therefore, it is supposed that they have some knowledge of English grammar, which is not formalised and conceptualised enough for them to be able cope with the linguistic difficulties that may occur in various subjects. Thus, the purpose of this course is to systematically lead them through, and offer exercises in, the main structural as well as phonetic constructions of English, using teaching material devised for language learners, such as Thomson and Martinet's school grammar, Swan's Practical English Usage, some sections of Leo Jones. Cambridge First Certificate etc. and phonetic textbooks designed to improve student's pronunciation, and sensitivity to letter to sound correspondences.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Regular attendance and the completion of a large number of in-class and home reading tasks.

### **Speech and writing**

In this course, students will study the level of speaking and writing necessary to participate in English courses in the Department of American Studies. Specifically, emphasis will be given on presentations, class discussion skills, and making logical arguments. For writing, basic academic writing will be taught, with the idea that students will be able to produce written work for their classes.

*Requirements & assessment:*

There will be two assessments during the semester – one presentation, and one paper. Class participation will also be a strong component of the class, and students will be expected to participate.

### **English language texts**

The aim of the course is to teach critical reading skills to students with reading difficulties in order to help them analyse, evaluate, and synthesize the texts they read in order to obtain information in the course of their university studies. The course focuses on the following skills: extracting main ideas, reading for specific information, understanding text organization, predicting, previewing, anticipating, inferring, dealing with unfamiliar words, recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices, utilising non-text information, understanding different kinds of meaning (conceptual, propositional, contextual, pragmatic), understanding sentence syntax, and understanding writer's style. The texts used in the course are general purpose and academic texts representing a range of genres that university students encounter during the course of their studies. The reading materials for the course will be made available to participants after

they have enrolled in the course and have taken the diagnostic reading comprehension test.

*Requirements & assessment:*

Based on regular smaller in-class reading skills tests and on two major tests administered at the middle and at the end of the course. Please note that all participants will have to take a diagnostic reading comprehension test at the beginning of the semester. However, this test serves course planning purposes and therefore its results do not count towards the participants' final grade.