



## School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Course Outline

### WRIT 251, Academic Writing in English as a Second Language, Trimester 2, 2009 (July 13-November 15)

#### Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October

Study week: 19 to 23 October

1. **Course Coordinator:** Stuart Webb

#### 2. Staff:

##### Dr Stuart Webb

VZ307

Ext. 9779

Office hours: by appointment

Email: [stuart.webb@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:stuart.webb@vuw.ac.nz)

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals>

#### Tutors:

Tutors' names, rooms and office hours will be posted on Blackboard once workshop groups have been established.

#### 3. Class times and rooms:

**Tutorials/Workshops:** Three (3) hours per week

CRN17019                      Tuesday 12-1:50 CO118  
                                         Thursday 1:10-2pm CO118

or

CRN17023                      Monday 2:10-4pm KK105  
                                         Wednesday 2:10-3pm KK105

You are expected to attend all your workshop sessions. If for any reason you are unable to attend a session, you should explain your absence to your tutor. **Note that there is an attendance requirement for the workshops** (see the **Mandatory Course Requirements**).

**NB** It is important that you are able to attend **all three hours** listed for your workshop group.

## **Workshop groups**

The workshop groups will be posted on the notice board and on Blackboard on Monday 13 July at 9 a.m. Workshops begin in the first week of the trimester.

### **4. Announcements:**

#### **Noticeboard**

The WRIT 251 noticeboard is opposite VZ 208, on the second floor of the von Zedlitz building. Course information will be announced in workshops and/or posted on this notice board and/or on Blackboard.

#### **Assignments**

All student assignments are to be placed in the Assignments Box opposite the elevators on the second floor of the von Zedlitz building. It is situated on the wall of the School office, which is VZ210.

#### **Language Learning Centre**

You are encouraged to make use of the University's Language Learning Centre (Floor 0, von Zedlitz). Most of the books listed on page 3, and a number of additional resources and texts relating to second language writing, including grammar, spelling and punctuation, are available in the Self-Access Centre (VZ007). The Centre also has a wide range of listening materials in general and academic English.

### **5. LALS main office:**

VZ210, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

### **6. WRIT 251 Course Administrator:**

Vivien Trott, Undergraduate administration  
Tel: 463 5600/463 5894/472 1000 ext 8386

## **Course Delivery**

The course is delivered in workshops over 12 weeks. Each week there are three hours of workshops which students must attend. Students are expected to have completed relevant readings prior to class as well as any required tasks, and to participate in discussions and group work in the workshops.

### **7. Aims:**

The course aims to help non-English speaking background students develop an awareness of what constitutes effective writing and reading in academic contexts. It does this by presenting significant stages of the writing process and the skills relevant to each stage, by presenting and practising strategies for successful completion of university essays, and by having students practise writing in workshops where feedback is a crucial feature.

You are expected to participate actively in the workshops. The workshops provide an opportunity to clarify your understanding of the writing process and to work on a range of tasks aimed at practising and refining writing and reading skills. A regular feature of workshop tasks will be your preparation of drafts of written text and critical evaluations on which your tutor and peers will provide feedback.

### **8. Learning objectives:**

A student that has successfully completed WRIT 251 should be able to:

- a) solve some of the problems faced when writing and reading in a second language
- b) demonstrate increased richness and accuracy of their English when expressing complex ideas
- c) demonstrate strategies for writing and reading texts effectively
- d) demonstrate awareness of discourse features of academic essays and reports

- e) demonstrate awareness of the discourse features of written critical evaluations
- f) demonstrate strategies for successful completion of university essays

## 9. Content:

1. Introduction to the course. The writing process
2. Purpose: Fulfilling the requirements of an academic essay
3. Voice and audience
4. Academic essay structure
5. Writing summaries and the QUEST approach to writing critical evaluations
6. Writing summaries and critical evaluations part 2
7. Report writing: Problem-solution texts
8. Report writing: Research reports
9. Incorporating sources into the text: references, quotations and the reference section
  
10. Incorporating tables and figures into the text
11. Making your argument flow
12. Revising, editing, and using feedback

## 10. Texts:

### Required:

- WRIT 251 Coursebook. (Available from Student Notes Distribution Centre at an estimated cost of approx. \$10 - 15)

The set of readings can be purchased from Student Notes Shop ([www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/notetexts.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/notetexts.aspx)), a part of VicBooks ([www.vicbooks.co.nz/cms\\_display.php](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz/cms_display.php))

You should buy this before workshops begin.

### Recommended:

(Note: Most of the following books are on 3-day loan in the VUW Library. You should also check under Course Reserve on the Library website.)

- Braine, G. (1996). *Writing from sources: a guide for ESL students*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield.
- Clanchy, J. & Ballard, B. (1991). *Essay writing for students*. (2nd ed.). Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Coxhead, A. (1998). *An academic word list*. Wellington: School of LALS, Victoria University of Wellington.
- Gardner, P.S. (2005). *New Directions: Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, M. & O'Dell, F. (2002). *English vocabulary in use (Advanced)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, R. (1985). *English grammar in use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raimes, A. (1992). *Exploring through writing: A process approach to ESL composition*. New York: St Martins Press.
- Rountree, K. (1991). *Writing for success: a practical guide for New Zealand students*. Auckland: Longman Paul.
- Sinclair, J. (ed.) (1995). *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*. London: Collins.
- Swan, M. (1995). *Practical English usage*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilhoit, S. (1997). *A brief guide to writing from readings*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

### Any other relevant material/equipment:

There are a large number of useful websites which can help you with your grammar; many of these include quizzes which you can use to test your knowledge of grammar. Try visiting some of the following:

“Guide to Grammar and Writing” (<http://ccc/commnet.edu/grammar/>)

“Online Resources for Writers” (<http://webster.comnet.edu/writing/writing.htm>)

“The Purdue University On-Line Writing Lab (OWL)” (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>)

“Sentence Sense” (<http://webster.comnet.edu/sensen/>)

“My Words” (<http://mywords.ust.hk/>)

You need to take responsibility for working on your grammatical weaknesses by using practice materials available on websites or in the VUW Language Learning Centre. Your tutor will help you identify your weaknesses.

A site that can help you with study skills is: [www.skills4study.com](http://www.skills4study.com)

## 11. Assessment:

WRIT 251 is an in-term assessed course. The final grade will be based on:

	Length	%	Due date and time
Essay 1	1000-1200 words	20%	Friday August 7, 12 noon
Revision task 1	1000-1200 words	15%	Friday August 21, 12 noon
Critical evaluation 1	500-600 words	10%	Friday September 11, 12 noon
Critical evaluation 2	500-600 words	10%	Friday September 18, 12 noon
Critical evaluation 3	500-600 words	10%	Friday September 25, 12 noon
Report	1600-2000 words	35%	Friday October 16, 12 noon

### The Essay

You will be guided through a process approach to writing the essays. The process includes pre-writing tasks, drafting, revising, and editing. This will involve discussing your writing with members of your workshop group, and giving each other feedback on writing drafts. The process also includes integrating reading from different sources, and using appropriate referencing conventions.

### The Revision Task

When you submit each essay, your tutor will write comments on it, and return it to you with specific suggestions for improving the essay. The Revision task requires that you reflect and act on the feedback from your tutor. In addition to working through the specific suggestions from your tutor, you are expected to identify other areas needing improvement, and plan and make changes to these. You will then submit the revised essay and revision notes to your tutor. Your ability to make effective changes to the essay both independently and in response to tutor feedback will then be assessed for 15% of your final grade.

### The Critical Evaluations

The critical evaluations require you to demonstrate successful critical reading and writing with the aim to focus you on a writing style which is both academic and objective. The approach used in the critical evaluations will be based on Barkhuizen's (2002) QUEST approach, which is included in the course readings. The topics and themes found in the critical evaluations will be based on those found in the report and the evaluations should be included in your report. Thus, successful completion of the evaluations will help you to complete the final report in WRIT 251.

### The Report

The final assessment task is a disciplinary specific report worth 35% of your final grade. This provides you with the opportunity to focus on academic writing in an area which relates to your coursework. You and your tutor will negotiate a topic for your report based on a question, which you provide that is related to your academic discipline. It is important to note that your report will be assessed on the quality of the writing rather than the content of your report because tutors are unable to accurately assess the content of so many different areas.

### Word limits

You must ensure that your essays, critical evaluations, and report meet the word limit requirements. If your written work is over 10% in excess of the word limit, it will only be assessed to the maximum word length noted in the guidelines.

## 12. Penalties:

You must complete essays by the deadlines. If you have strong personal reasons for needing an extension (such as illness or bereavement), you must get explicit permission before the due date from Stuart Webb, the course co-ordinator, to hand in work late. Work handed in late without prior permission to do so may not be eligible for assessment.

## 13. Relationship between assessment and course objectives:

The skills outlined in the course objectives will be assessed in the essay, critical evaluations and report.

## 14. Workload:

In line with faculty workload guidelines, you are expected to spend 12 hours per week (including 3 hours of class time) working on WRIT 251, in order to maintain satisfactory progress.

## 15. Mandatory Course Requirements:

In order to earn the right to be assessed for a final grade in WRIT 251, you must:

- attend a minimum of 30 hours of workshops.
- complete all assessment tasks and workshop tasks.

## 16. Attendance:

**You must attend a minimum of 30 hours of workshops.** You should only miss workshops for strong reasons such as illness or bereavement.

## 17. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately.

This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## 18. GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC(Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic/Publications.aspx>

## WRIT 251 Course Outline

The following outline summarises the topics to be covered during the workshop sessions.

### Week beginning

<b>13 July</b>	Introduction to the course. The writing process
<b>20 July</b>	Purpose: Fulfilling the requirements of an academic essay
<b>27 July</b>	Voice and audience
<b>3 August</b>	Academic essay structure
<b>10 August</b>	Writing summaries and the QUEST approach to writing critical evaluations <b>Essay 1 (20%) due by 12 noon, Friday 7 August.</b>
<b>17 August</b>	Writing summaries and critical evaluations part 2
<b>Mid-trimester break</b>	<b>24 August – 6 September</b>
<b>7 September</b>	Report writing: Problem-solution texts <b>Revision task 1 due by 12 noon, Friday August 21</b>
<b>14 September</b>	Report writing: Research reports <b>Critical evaluation 1 (10%) due by 12 noon Friday September 11</b>
<b>21 September</b>	Incorporating sources into the text: references, quotations and the reference section  <b>Critical evaluation 2 (10%) due by 12 noon Friday September 18</b>
<b>28 September</b>	Incorporating tables and figures into the text <b>Critical evaluation 3 (10%) due by 12 noon Friday September 25</b>
<b>5 October</b>	Making your argument flow
<b>12 October</b>	Revising, editing, and using feedback <b>Report (35%) due by 12 noon Friday October 16</b>

The workshop programme will provide opportunities for practising relevant skills and receiving feedback on them. Towards the end of the course the workshops will focus on applying the principles you have met and practised in WRIT 251 to your other subjects, and developing independence as a writer.