Information on a Gateway Education Course
offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A in 2014/ 2015

Part I

Course Title: English for Science

Course Code: GE2401

Course Duration: 1 Semester

Proposed Area: Arts and Humanities (GE English Requirement)

No. of Credit Units: 3

Level: B2

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: *(Course Code and Title):*   Grade D in HKAL Use of English or Grade 4 in
HKDSE or successful completion of English Academic
Proficiency Courses (EL0220, EL0222, EL0223 and
EL0225 – 6 credits) or English for Academic Purposes
(EL0200 – 6 credits)

Precursors: *(Course Code and Title)* None

Equivalent Courses: *(Course Code and Title)* None

Exclusive Courses: *(Course Code and Title)* None

Part II

1. Abstract

This course aims to provide students with the necessary communicative competence to operate effectively in a range of scientific contexts. Students on the course will learn how to find and critically evaluate a range of texts related to their scientific investigation, and use appropriate English to present these texts. Students will take part in an English for science project, which involves an investigation of a scientific issue, and learn to present and interpret the results of this project as a scientific documentary for a non-specialist audience, and a scientific report for a specialist audience. Students will learn how to explore academic scientific texts using linguistic search tools, making discoveries that inform their use of English for scientific communication. Finally, students will have the opportunity to collectively reflect on their learning by engaging in online discussions related to key concepts of the course.

2.   Course Aims

This course aims to…

1. Provide students with opportunities to improve their English communication skills in the context of their own interests, disciplines and/or future career aspirations.
2. Give students further opportunities to explore how to use English as a tool for inquiry, learning, thinking and communicating within their chosen fields or areas of interest.
3. Help students to master the conventions (including citation, referencing and avoiding plagiarism) associated with communicating in English in their particular fields or areas of interest.
4. Develop students' critical and evaluative thinking within their disciplines or areas of interests.
5. Develop students' capacity to become self-directed English language learners within the context of their chosen fields or areas of interest.
6. Help students to understand the role of English communication in the development of professional identities and membership in disciplinary communities or interest groups.

3.   Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Critically evaluate scientific texts in terms of content, writer stance, reliability and trustworthiness, and apply the knowledge generated to their own reading and writing.	
2.	Create, share and discuss a multimedia scientific documentary on an authentic scientific issue, which is organized in a logical way, follows acceptable scientific conventions, and makes effective and creative use of verbal	

	and non-verbal delivery techniques.	
3.	Write a scientific report on an authentic scientific issue, making creative and effective use of appropriate scientific language, organization and academic referencing conventions (i.e. avoiding plagiarism).	
4.	Use corpus tools to explore language in use, identify common language patterns in scientific texts, and apply their observations in their own use of English for scientific purposes.	
5.	Use writing as a tool for lifelong learning, by monitoring and evaluating their own learning processes and the impact of their learning on their development as a member of professional scientific communities.	

4. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs - Some TLAs may address more than one CILO.)

CILO No.	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
CILOS 1-5	Interactive tutorials introducing key concepts and skills, including: • The critical evaluation of scientific texts for content, writer stance, reliability and trustworthiness; • Oral presentation strategies especially in multi-modal contexts; • Academic and scientific writing conventions (including citation, referencing and avoiding plagiarism); • The critical and creative construction of scientific texts for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences • The use of corpus tools to explore language in use. Students are expected to participate actively in class activities.	
CILOS 1-5	Practical research, discussion and writing activities which provide opportunities to practice the skills introduced, including the critical analysis and investigation of an authentic scientific issue of general concern. Students are expected to participate actively.	

5. Assessment Tasks/Activities
(designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs –Some assessment tasks/activities may address more than one CILO.)

CILO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
CILOS 1, 2	**Scientific documentary** This assessment task will be designed to help students to orally present the findings of an academic project in the form of a multimedia scientific documentary which is organized in a logical way, follows acceptable scientific conventions, and makes	30%	

	creative and effective use of verbal and non-verbal delivery techniques.		
CILOS 1, 3	**Scientific report** This assessment task will be designed to help students to present the findings of an academic project in the form of a written scientific report, making creative and effective use of appropriate scientific language, organization and academic referencing conventions (i.e. avoiding plagiarism).	40%	
CILO 4	**Corpus consultation project** This assessment task will be designed to help students to use corpus tools to explore language in use, identify common language patterns in scientific texts, and apply their observations in their own use of English for scientific purposes.	20%	
CILO 5	**Reflective report** This assessment task will provide students with the opportunity to reflect on communication strategies, including document design and the use of visuals, that can be employed when writing for different specialist and non-specialist audiences.	10%	

6. **Grading of Student Achievement:** Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations.

General Criteria for Assessment of Language Proficiency

Proficient User	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise and analyze information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations. Can create new and creative insights and texts by reflecting and thinking critically from reading and comprehending texts.
	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can create new insights and texts by reflecting and thinking critically from reading and comprehending texts.

	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. Can create insights and texts by reflecting and thinking critically from reading and comprehending texts.
	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Grading is assigned based on student achievement of ILOs according to defined grading criteria, as follows:

CILOS 1, 2: SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTARY

	Organization and content 20%	**Multimedia and visual effects 10%**	**Language 10%**
A+, A, A-	Able to present information in a clearly organized and creative/original way, using effective signposting with an attention-grabbing opening, an effectively organized body which clearly follows scientific conventions, and a memorable conclusion/ending.	Able to design creative and interesting visuals which effectively and appropriately support the documentary and utilize an appropriate variety of multimedia and visual effects, e.g. video clips, pictures, objects, graphs, diagrams, tables.	Able to express ideas in fluent, accurate English with few errors (of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), using appropriate language for the context.
B+, B, B-	Able to present information in an organized and somewhat creative/original way, using appropriate signposting, with a clear opening, a clear body which follows scientific conventions, and a clear conclusion/ending.	Able to design visuals which appropriately support the documentary and utilize an appropriate variety of multimedia and visual effects.	Able to express ideas in fluent, accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language for the context.
C+, C, C-	Able to present information in a moderately organized and moderately creative/original way, using some signposting, with a brief opening, a moderately organized body which mostly follows scientific conventions, and a short conclusion.	Able to design visuals which are moderately appropriate, support the documentary moderately well, and utilize a somewhat limited and/or somewhat inappropriate range of multimedia and visual effects.	Able to express ideas in mostly fluent, accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language for the context.
D	Little evidence that the student is able to present information in an adequately organized and creative/original way, with a brief opening, a moderately organized body which may not follow scientific conventions and a short conclusion.	Little evidence that the student is able to design visuals which are mostly appropriate, support the documentary most of the time and utilize a range of visual aids. The visuals may be very wordy and/or inappropriate.	Little evidence that the student is able to express ideas in mostly fluent, accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language for the context.
F	Unable to present information in an adequately organized and creative/original way, with a brief opening, a body which may follow scientific conventions, and short conclusion. The body of the presentation is poorly organized.	Unable to design appropriate visuals which support the presentation and utilize a range of visual aids. The visuals are very wordy and/or inappropriate.	The documentary is difficult to understand because of language issues.

CILOS 1, 3: SCIENTIFIC REPORT

	Organization 10%	Content 10%	Language 10%	Citation and referencing 10%
A+, A, A-	Able to present information in a clearly organized, coherent and cohesive way, using effective signposting with all expected sections of the report present and in a logical sequence.	Able to introduce and develop ideas clearly, effectively and in an interesting way, following scientific conventions, referring to relevant theory and supporting claims appropriately.	Able to express ideas in accurate English with few errors (of grammar, vocabulary), using appropriate language forms and an appropriate range of technical and semi-technical vocabulary for the different sections of the report.	Able to appropriately reference sources in text when necessary and write a reference list in the style taught on the course, with minimal errors of style. In-text references are always relevant and useful.
B+, B, B-	Able to present information in a mostly clearly organized, coherent and cohesive way, using some signposting with all expected sections of the report present and in a logical sequence.	Able to introduce and develop ideas clearly, effectively and in an interesting way most of the time. Mostly follows scientific conventions, refers to relevant theory where necessary and supports claims appropriately.	Able to express ideas in accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language forms and a mostly appropriate range of technical and semi-technical vocabulary for the different sections of the report.	Able to appropriately reference sources in text most of the time and write a reference list in the style taught on the course, with some errors of style. In-text references are mostly relevant and useful.
C+, C, C-	Able to present information in a somewhat organized way, with most of the expected sections of the report present and in a logical sequence.	Able to introduce and develop ideas clearly, effectively and in an interesting way some of the time. May follow scientific conventions, refer to relevant theory where necessary and support claims appropriately.	Able to express ideas in somewhat accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language forms and a mostly appropriate range of technical and semi-technical vocabulary for the different sections of the report.	Able to appropriately reference sources in text some of the time, and write a reference list in the style taught on the course, with errors of style. In-text references are somewhat relevant and useful.
D	Little evidence that the student is able to present information in a somewhat organized way, with most of the expected sections of the report present and in a logical sequence.	Little evidence that the student is able to introduce and develop ideas clearly, effectively and in an interesting way. May not follow scientific conventions, refer to relevant theory where necessary nor support claims appropriately.	Little evidence that the student is able to express ideas in somewhat accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language forms and a mostly appropriate range of technical and semi-technical vocabulary for the different sections of the report.	Little evidence that the student is able to appropriately reference sources in text and write a reference list in the style taught on the course. Where there are in-text references they are irrelevant or unhelpful.
F	Unable to present information in a somewhat organized way. Important sections of the report are missing.	Unable to introduce and develop ideas clearly, effectively and in an interesting way. Does not adequately follow scientific conventions to support claims.	Unable to express ideas in somewhat accurate English with some errors, using mostly appropriate language forms. The report is difficult to understand because of problems with language use.	No attempt to reference sources in text or write a reference list.

CILO 4: CORPUS CONSULTATION PROJECT

Grade	
A+, A, A-	Able to utilize corpus tools in order to ascertain accurate and appropriate language use all of the time.
B+, B, B-	Able to utilize corpus tools in order to ascertain accurate and appropriate language use most of the time.
C+, C, C-	Able to utilize corpus tools in order to ascertain accurate and appropriate language use some of the time.
D	Unable to utlilize corpus tools in order to ascertain accurate and appropriate language use all of the time.
F	Unable to utilize corpus tools in order to ascertain accurate and appropriate language use.

CILO 5: REFLECTIVE REPORT

Grade	
A	Excellent understanding of affordances and constraints of the medium/process Excellent description and interpretation of the writing experience, with appropriate reference to concepts and excellent examples from own contribution Excellent use of language with few errors and appropriate to the genre and audience
B	Good understanding of the affordances and constraints of the medium/process Good description and interpretation of the writing experience, with appropriate reference to concepts most of the time and good examples from own contribution Good use of language with some errors and mostly appropriate to the genre and audience
C	Adequate understanding of the affordances and constraints of the medium/process Adequate description and interpretation of the writing experience, with appropriate reference to concepts some of the time and some adequate examples from own contribution Adequate use of language with some errors (sometimes major) although at times not appropriate to the genre and audience
D	Little evidence of adequate understanding of the affordances and constraints of the medium/process Little evidence of adequate description and interpretation of the writing experience Little evidence of adequate use of language for the genre and audience
F	Inadequate understanding of the affordances and constraints of the medium/process Does not adequately describe and interpret the writing experience Inadequate use of language for the genre and audience

Part III

Keyword Syllabus

English for Science, Academic writing, Academic literacy, Critical literacy, Reading strategies, Writer stance, Oral presentation, Verbal delivery skills, Non-verbal delivery skills, Scientific report, Lab report, Discourse conventions, Language in use, Organization and structure, Citation and referencing, Corpus tools, Data-driven learning.

Recommended Reading
Text(s)

Online Resources

Corpus tools
Word Neighbours, http://wordneighbors.ust.hk/
Just the Word, http://193.133.140.102/JustTheWord/index.html
MICASE,
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?page=home;c=micase;cc=micase

English language resources
Guide to Grammar and Writing, http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Online Writing Lab, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

Journals and magazines
BBC Science and Nature, http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/
Directory of Open Access Journals, http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=home
National Geographic, http://www.nationalgeographic.com/
Nature, http://www.nature.com/
Science, http://www.sciencemag.org/
Scientific American, http://www.sciam.com/

Podcasts
BBC Science, http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/podcasts/directory/genre/science/
Howard Hughes Medical Institute,
http://www.hhmi.org/biointeractive/podcast_popup.html
NASA, http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/podcasting/
National Geographic, http://www.nationalgeographic.com/podcasts/
Nature, http://www.nature.com/nature/podcast/
Science, http://www.sciencemag.org/multimedia/podcast/
Scientific American, http://www.sciam.com/podcast/