

GE1401: UNIVERSITY ENGLISH

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

University English

Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

Course Number

1401

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

GE Area (Primary)

University GE English

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Grade D in HKAL Use of English or Grade 4 in HKDSE English Language or successful completion of English for Academic Purposes 2 (LC0200B – 3 credits) or Grade B or above in English for Academic Purposes 1 (LC0200A – 3 credits).

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to give students the necessary competence in rhetoric and writing in English so that they can use the English language effectively to think, reason, argue and express themselves. Students will develop a sense of their own strengths and weaknesses as English writers and discover how they can make their writing more logical, innovative and persuasive. This course will aid in developing students' reading, writing, critical thinking, and teamwork skills by scaffolding them through collaboratively designing an infographic (information visualization), and the multi-drafting and peer review process of writing an argumentative essay. The overall goal is for students to become autonomous writers and self-editors.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Read critically and collaboratively identify, evaluate and present information using technology and a variety of reading strategies for different purposes, discovering how the ideas in what they have read relate to their own lives and academic disciplines.		x	x	
2	Use different points of view and perspectives in their writing and integrate the ideas and words of others in a way that avoids plagiarism.		x	x	
3	Produce multiple drafts of writing making use of various techniques including identifying characteristics of the argumentative essay genre, brainstorming ideas and gathering information, working with sources, prewriting and outlining, planning and drafting, reviewing, revising, editing and proofreading.		x	x	x
4	Work together with others to improve their reading and writing through peer review, peer conferencing, and peer review responses, collaboratively designing an infographic based on the gathered sources and information, evaluate own and team members' contributions.		x	x	x
5	Use English as a tool for discovery and self-directed learning through in-class discussion and outside-of-class (online) writing activities		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	1	1.1. Students will participate in interactive lectures, discussions, tasks, and activities where the notion of the writing process is introduced, modelled, and illustrated.	1, 2, 5	
2	1	1.2. Students will practice a variety of writing processes essential to the production of well-formed texts.	2, 3, 4, 5	
3	2	2.1. Students will conduct research outside of class and engage in library workshops or self-access workshops/materials to get acquainted with the documentation of knowledge.	1, 3, 5	
4	2	2.2. Students will share their research in class using the technology tools introduced in class.	2, 4, 5	
5	2	2.3. Students will evaluate their peers' work through in-class peer review activities and conferencing.	3, 4, 5	
6	3	3.1. Students will identify characteristics of the Argumentative Essay by participating in in-class analysis and discussion of genre features.	2, 5	
7	3	3.2. Students will work collaboratively with teachers, peers, and instructors/teaching assistants in the Language Centre in order to take control of and improve their writing.	2, 3, 4, 5	

8	4	Students will evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for their academic writing success through participating in needs analysis and end-of-course self-assessment commentary.	4, 5	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	In-Class Participation Students are assessed according to how actively they contribute to in-class discussions, tasks, and activities on course topics and readings.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	Individual work	Yes
2	Online Module Students are assessed according to their performance of working on the online modules each week.	1, 2, 4, 5	10	Individual work	No
3	Information Visualization (Infographic) In teams, students are assessed on the creation of a graphic representation of some aspect of their argumentative essay using the principles and tools introduced in class. They may choose to visualize some information relevant to their argument or the shape/structure of their argument itself.	1, 2, 4, 5	30	Group work	No

4	<p>Argumentative Essay Students are assessed individually on their final production of an Argumentative Essay. The writing process includes multiple learning activities, namely building an outline, writing two drafts before the final production, one round of peer feedback, one round of instructor feedback, and cover notes in response to the peer reviewer and to the instructor. Students need to make a consistent progress on these learning activities during the writing process.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	40	Individual work	No
5	<p>Self-assessment Students are assessed on a final 750-word commentary reflecting on students' initial Needs Analysis goals, detailing their writing process and progress over the semester, and laying out goals for future academic writing; students will further rate their team contribution as well as their team members' contributions via an assessment rubric.</p>	4, 5	10	Individual work	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

In-Class Participation

Criterion

Task fulfillment which includes: Active participation in and contributions to in-class tasks, activities, discussions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Actively participates in and contributes to most in-class tasks, activities, and discussions.
The active participation is strongly consistent during the semester.
Have no unexcused absence.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Actively participates in and contributes to most in-class tasks, activities, and discussions.
The active participation is moderately consistent during the semester.
Have no more than one unexcused absence.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequately participates in and contributes to some in-class tasks, activities, and discussions.
The adequate participation occurs in some classes.
Have no more than two unexcused absences.

Marginal (D)

Marginally participates in and contributes to in-class tasks, activities, and discussions.
Have no more than three unexcused absences.

Failure (F)

Fails to participate in and contribute to in-class tasks, activities, and discussions.
Have four or more unexcused absences.

Assessment Task

Online Modules

Criterion

Task fulfillment: Students' performance of working on the online modules for each unit.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates excellent performance of working on the online modules.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates good performance of working on the online modules.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrates adequate performance of working on the online modules.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrates marginal performance of working on the online modules.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates poor performance of working on the online modules or fails to complete the online modules.

Assessment Task

Self-Assessment (limited to 750 words)

Criterion

Task fulfillment: which includes completion of the needs analysis, and a 750-word commentary, reflecting on initial goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and future academic goals.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very detailed and thoughtful reflection of initial needs analysis goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and goals for future academic writing.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Detailed and thoughtful reflection of initial needs analysis goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and goals for future academic writing.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Partial reflection of initial needs analysis goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and goals for future academic writing.

Marginal (D)

Marginal reflection of initial needs analysis goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and goals for future academic writing.

Failure (F)

Inadequate reflection of initial needs analysis goals, the writing process and progress over the semester, and goals for future academic writing.

Assessment Task

Infographic

Criterion

Task fulfillment & content

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

An excellent title which effectively reflects the content and context.
Varied content that shows strong evidence of wide research.
In-depth content that is suitable for general academic audience.

Good (B+, B, B-)

A good title which reflects the content and context.
Moderately varied content that shows solid evidence of wide research.
Moderately in-depth content that is suitable for general academic audience.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

A fair title which may not well reflect the content and/or context.
Limited range of content that only shows some evidence of research.
Limited in-depth content that is suitable for general academic audience.

Marginal (D)

A problematic title which is confusing or misleading.

The content is marginally varied that shows minimal evidence of research.

The content is marginally in-depth that may not be suitable for general academic audience.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Assessment Task

Infographic

Criterion

Logic & organization

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

A clear general-to-specific pattern for presenting all the information.

All detailed facts are closely connected to the topic.

Good (B+, B, B-)

A clear general-to-specific pattern for presenting most of the information.

Most detailed facts are connected to the topic.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

A general-to-specific pattern for presenting parts of the information.

Some detailed facts are connected to the topic.

Marginal (D)

Marginal evidence to show a general-to-specific pattern for presenting information.

Marginal facts are connected to the topic.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Assessment Task

Infographic

Criterion

Visual design

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent text density with appropriate amount of information throughout the infographic.

Excellent visual contrast that effectively highlights key information for audience.

Effectively unified background for the infographic.

Excellent choice of visual elements (e.g., color, image, graph) that effectively add value to the message in the rhetorical situation.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good text density with appropriate amount of information for most parts of the infographic.

Good visual contrast that highlights key information for audience.

Moderately unified background for the infographic.

Good choice of visual elements (e.g., color, image, graph) that moderately add value to the message in the rhetorical situation.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair text density but with over/under-crowded texts for some parts of the infographic.

Limited visual contrast to only highlight some key information for audience.

Limited evidence to show the effort of creating a unified background.

Limited choice of visual elements (e.g., color, image, graph) that does not add much value to the message in the rhetorical situation.

Marginal (D)

Problematic text density which shows over/under-crowded texts for most parts of the infographic.

Minimal visual contrast to hardly highlight any key information OR the visual contrast is distracting.

The background is confusing and distracting for the audience.

Problematic choice of visual elements (e.g., color, image, graph) that is distracting and confusing.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Assessment Task

Infographic

Criterion

Language use

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Occasional mistakes of language use (e.g., word choice, spelling, grammar, punctuation)

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some mistakes of language use that do not affect comprehensibility generally

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Some mistakes of language use that may affect comprehensibility in some parts

Marginal (D)

Many mistakes of language use that may affect comprehensibility in many parts

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal

Assessment Task

Infographic

Criterion

Citation & references

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The reference list and in-text citations are all in APA style.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Occasional mistakes of APA style can be found in the reference list and in-text citations.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Some mistakes of APA style can be found in the reference list and in-text citations.

Marginal (D)

Many mistakes of APA style can be found in the reference list and in-text citations.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay

Criterion

Task fulfillment & Content

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

An excellent title which effectively reflects the content and context.

Excellent introduction with relevant background information and a clear thesis statement.

Excellent body paragraphs are developed based on effective topic sentences and detailed evidence to support the topic sentences.

Dealing with possible opposing arguments in an excellent way.

Excellent conclusion with an effective summary of the main points, personal stance, and final remarks.

Good (B+, B, B-)

A good title which reflects the content and context.

Good introduction with mostly relevant background information and a clear thesis statement.

Good body paragraphs are developed based on moderately effective topic sentences and detailed evidence to support the topic sentences.

Dealing with possible opposing arguments in a good way.

Good conclusion with a moderately effective summary of main points, personal stance, and final remarks.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

A fair title which may not well reflect the content and/or context.

Fair introduction with somewhat relevant background information and a fair thesis statement.

Fair body paragraphs are developed based on topic sentences and some evidence to support the topic sentences.

Dealing with possible opposing arguments in a fair way.

Fair conclusion with a summary of main points, final personal stance, and final remarks, but may have some minor issues.

Marginal (D)

A problematic title which is confusing or misleading.

Problematic introduction with little relevant background information and vague thesis statement.

Body paragraphs are not well developed, because of problematic topic sentences or limited evidence to support the topic sentences.

Failing to dealing with possible opposing arguments or doing so in a problematic way.

Problematic conclusion with a poor summary of main points, final personal stance, and final remarks.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal

Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay

Criterion

Organization coherence & cohesion

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

An excellent organization of information, which is easy to follow (at between-paragraph and within-paragraph levels).
An excellent use of cohesive devices that effectively guide readers through the entire draft.

Good (B+, B, B-)

A good organization of information, which is mostly easy to follow.
A good use of cohesive devices that guide readers through most parts of the draft.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

A fair organization of information, which is partially easy to follow.
A fair use of cohesive devices that guide readers through some parts of the draft.

Marginal (D)

A marginal organization of information, which is not easy to follow.
A marginal use of cohesive devices that guide readers through few parts of the draft.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal

Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay

Criterion

Language & style

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Occasional mistakes of language use (e.g., word choice, spelling, grammar, punctuation).
A wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures.
Excellent academic tone.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some mistakes of language use that do not affect comprehension overall.
A moderately wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures.
Good academic tone.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Some mistakes of language use that affect the comprehension of some parts of the essay.
A limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures.
Reasonable academic tone with some slips

Marginal (D)

Language use is problematic and affects the comprehension of most parts of the essay.
Vocabulary and/or sentence structures show marginal variation.
Limited academic tone with many slips

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal

Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay

Criterion

Citation & references

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Citations and reference list thoroughly follow APA guidelines.
All citations are relevant, add value, and with effective elaboration.
All sources are credible.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Citations and reference list mostly follow APA guidelines.
Most citations are relevant, add value, and with effective elaboration.
Most sources are credible.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Citations and reference list partially follow APA guidelines.
Limited citations are relevant, add value, and with some elaboration.
Some sources are credible.

Marginal (D)

Citations and reference list marginally follow APA guidelines.
Few citations are relevant, add value, and with some elaboration.
Few sources are credible.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay

Criterion

Evidence of effective revision

The evidence will be collected through multiple sources (e.g., checklists, handouts, peer-review forms, and highlighting changes in the final draft).

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and the writer's reflection are given full consideration, resulting in highly effective revisions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and the writer's reflection are given enough consideration, resulting in moderately effective revisions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and the writer's reflection are given some consideration, resulting in limited revisions.

Marginal (D)

Teacher feedback, peer feedback, and the writer's reflection are seldom given consideration, resulting in little revisions.

Failure (F)

Performance worse than marginal.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Writing as a tool for discovery
 The process of writing
 Argumentative writing
 Research and using evidence
 Integrating other people's words and ideas
 Avoiding plagiarism
 Peer review
 Needs analysis
 Self-assessment
 Online self-study

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Nil

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Aaron, J.E. (2008) Little, Brown Essential Handbook. Longman.
2	Lester, J. (2009) The Essential Guide: Research Writing Across the Disciplines (International Edition). Pearson Education.
3	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Oxford University Press.
4	Ramage, J. (2008) Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing: The Brief Edition. Longman.
5	Ruggiero, V. (2009) Art of Thinking (International Edition). Pearson Education.
6	Sinclair, J. (1990) Collins COBUILD English Grammar. Collins.
7	Stern, L. (2006) What Every Student Should Know About Avoiding Plagiarism. Longman.
8	Swan, M. (2005) Practical English Usage (3rd Edition). Oxford University Press.
9	CityU Language Centre Online Resources: https://www.lc.cityu.edu.hk/WebPages/OnlineResources/
10	Purdue University Online Writing Lab: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
11	Paradigm Online Writing Assistant: http://www.powa.org/
12	University of Wisconsin Writer's Handbook: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/

Annex (for GE courses only)

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology

1, 3, 4

PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

1, 4

PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text

3, 4

PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills

1, 4, 5

PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team

1, 4

PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues

1, 2

PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

2, 4

PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation

1, 4, 5

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task

Argumentative Essay