English 566: Teaching and Testing ESL Grammar (Online)

Expected Course Outcomes:
- To learn about the different types of English grammar (prescriptive, descriptive, and pedagogical)
- To learn how ESL learners’ grammar develops in theory and practice
- To learn about the methods and techniques used to teach ESL grammar
- To learn about the methods of evaluating ESL students, in general, and ESL students’ grammar, specifically

Narrative explanation: This course will start with a review of prescriptive and descriptive grammar. It will then discuss the theoretical issues surrounding L2 grammar acquisition, followed by a presentation of the techniques used to teach grammar on paper and in virtual environments. Finally, it will look at the issue of language testing, in general, and with specific regards to grammar. Issues such as validity, reliability, standardized testing, testing in public schools, and computerized testing will be discussed.

It is important to remember, however, that you will not learn everything about grammar and testing; instead, the course will look at the major issues with the aim of having you become a more critical and self-directed teacher and curriculum designer.

This course addresses the following Kentucky Teacher Standards: Designs/Plans, Manages Instruction, Assessment, Reflection, Collaboration, Content Knowledge, and Technology.

This course addresses the following TESOL Standards: (1) Language: Describing Language; Language Acquisition and Development; (2) Instruction: Planning for Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction; Managing and Implementing Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction; (3) Assessment: Issues of Assessment for ESL; Language Proficiency Assessment; Classroom Assessment for ESL; (4) Professionalism: ESL Research and History.

Course Format:
- Course readings
- Blackboard postings
- Short essays
- Paper/project
- Critical chapter/article reviews
- Interviews

Note: This course assumes that you have access to a computer that can access the university’s website and the web, in general, with little difficulty. Those whose computer access is not reliable need to find other facilities. Although occasional technical problems are understandable, computer crashes and the like are not valid excuses. As a rule, you should have access to another computer in case yours goes down; likewise, save all of your work not only on your computer, but also in two other places, preferably a disk and as an email attachment.

Course Texts: All course texts are required. You can get them at the university bookstore or order them on-line at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or any other bookseller. You should get them ASAP. Likewise, as you will note below, you have other articles. These will be sent to you by e-mail. For your bibliographic records, they are all listed below.


Evaluation:

A. Discussion board: 20%
   - Each week, questions/discussion topics will be posted on the discussion board in Blackboard. These are based on the course readings and notes for the week. You are to respond to a minimum of five questions/discussion topics. Responses must be at least five sentences long. Answers are to be substantial, and must neither simply reject nor support another’s assertion; instead, thorough analysis and explanation are expected. However, students may respond to other students’ posts. That way, there will be ample opportunity to engage in debate and conversation with peers.

B. Paper/project: 25%
   - In this 15-page paper, you are to discuss specific grammar difficulties that ESL or EFL learners have and exemplify some specific techniques/activities aimed at helping them with these difficulties. You must use a minimum of 10 library sources. You must also use the APA style guide when you cite your references.

C. Short response essays: 30%
   - You will do three, 3-4 page, short response essays based on specific readings given to you at a later date. These essays will require you to analyze certain issues in-depth or add your highly critical “two cents” to the issue(s). Part of these essays will involve collaborating with an assigned partner in order to solve a specific problem associated with the topic or reflect on its significance. The following issues are covered: oral/written error correction, problems with assessing the content knowledge of K-12 ESL students, and teachers’ beliefs about teaching grammar. You must use APA style in these essays.

D. Critical chapter/article reviews: 20%
   - You are to review ten chapters and/or articles in which you condense the major points of the reading; (2) discuss the pedagogical significance of the reading’s main points/research findings; (3) and point out the weaknesses (content-wise, stylistic, or in any other way) of the reading. You must divide these reviews among the following topics: prescriptive/descriptive/pedagogical grammar; theoretical views on L2 grammar acquisition; approaches and methods to teaching grammar; classroom assessment; and standardized assessment. You must use APA in these reviews.

F. Interview: 5%
   - You are to do an in-depth interview with one ESL teacher about the role of grammar in their classroom and in their school’s curriculum. You can pick any grade level (P-12, college, community college, etc.) you wish, but it should correspond to the grade level you teach or plan to teach. You must ask them a minimum of ten questions regarding their training in grammar, their view about the nature of second language grammar acquisition, their opinion on how grammar should be taught, and the difficulties that their students have with grammar.

**Student Disability Services**

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the
professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Course Calendar

- Barry: Ch. 1-4

Week Two: Review of Prescriptive/Descriptive Grammar: Pronouns, Adjectives and Adverbs, Prepositions and Particles, and Voice
- Barry: Ch. 5-8

Week Three: Review of Prescriptive/Descriptive Grammar: Discourse Function, Negation, Coordination, and Subordination
- Barry: Ch. 9-12

Week Four: Spoken vs. Written Grammar; Grammar in the ESL Curriculum; Methods of Teaching Grammar; Error Correction; and the Anti-Grammar Movement
- Thornbury: Chs.1 & 2; Truscott (1996); Krashen (1998, 2000)

- Cross (2002); Lai and Zhao (2006); Truscott (1998)

Week Six: Inductive Approaches to Teaching Grammar in Theory and Practice; Examples of Sample Lessons Using Inductive Approaches; the Use of Scripted Dialogues, Authentic Texts, Dictoglosses, and Genre Analysis to Teach L2 Grammar; Focus on Form Instruction in Theory and Practice
- Thornbury: Chs. 4 & 5; Poole (2005)

Week Seven: Practicing Grammar via Drills, Information Gap Activities, and Personalization Tasks; Fluency vs. Accuracy; Approaches to Dealing with Errors and Mistakes; Integrating Grammar in the Classroom in Theory and Practice
- Thornbury: Chs. 6, 7, 8

Week Eight: Poor Choices in L2 Grammar Instruction; Testing Grammar Using Discrete-item Tests and Oral Performance Exams; the Relationship between Assessment and Instruction; Washback; Strategies for Classroom-based Evaluation
- Thornbury: Chs. 9, 10; Genesee and Upshur: Chs. 2, 3

Week Nine: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Evaluation; Practicality; Reliability; and Validity
- Genesee and Upshur: Ch. 4

Week Ten: Planning for and Implementing Classroom Observations; Portfolios; Conferences; Journals; Questionnaires; and Interviews
- Genesee and Upshur: Chs. 5, 6, and 7

Week Eleven: Using Tests: Norm-referenced Tests, Objectives-referenced Tests, and Domain-references Tests; Developing Open-ended and Closed-ended Test Tasks
- Genesee and Upshur: Chs. 8, 9, and 10

Week Twelve: Assembling and Scoring Tests; Interpreting Test Scores; Standardized Tests
- Genesee and Upshur: Chs. 11, 12, and 13

Week Thirteen: No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and LEP Students: Testing Requirements and Difficulties
- Huempfner (2004); Mahon (2006); Menken (2006)

Week Fourteen: Issues in Computerized Testing: Options, Drawbacks, and Future Possibilities; the Differences between the Paper-based and Computerized Versions of the TOEFL and GRE
Week Fifteen: LEP Children and Kentucky: Required Assessments and the WIDA

- “Schedule for Inclusion for LEP Students in Kentucky State-Required Assessment.” Download this from the “Course Documents” section on Blackboard.

**Articles**


