

GRAD 811: Advanced Communicating in the American University Classroom Part 2

Preparing International Teaching Assistants Program (PITAP)
The Graduate School
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Syllabus
Spring 2008

Course Description

This course is offered through the Graduate School at UNC Chapel Hill as part of the Preparing International Teaching Assistants Program (PITAP, <http://gradschool.unc.edu/pitap.index.html>). GRAD 811 serves as a continuation course with GRAD 810 being a prerequisite. The course focuses on cross-cultural communication, English pronunciation, basic teaching skills, and topics necessary for effective interaction in the American classroom. The PITAP courses are professional development courses offered at no charge to the graduate student.

Instructor

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Class meeting times: T, Th 5:00-5:50pm Dey 202

Recommended Texts

- Curzan, Anne and Lisa Damour. First Day to Final Grade. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000. ISBN: 0472097326.
- Gilbert, Judy. Clear speech : pronunciation and listening comprehension in American English : student's book. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984. ISBN 0521287901
- Grant, Linda. Well said: Pronunciation for Clear Communication, Boston : Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 2001. ISBN: 0838402089.
- Ross, Catherine and Dunphy, Jane. Strategies for Teaching Assistant and International Teaching Assistant Development: Beyond Microteaching. Jossey-Bass/Wiley, San Francisco, CA, 2007. ISBN: 978-0470180822.
- Sarkisian, E. Teaching American Students. Harvard University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0-674-02141-X.
- Smith, J., Meyers, C.M., Burkhalter, A.J. Communicate: Strategies for International Teaching Assistants. Regents/Prentice Hall, 2007. ISBN: 1577665309.

Course Goals

- Further refine English pronunciation and grammar
- Analyze cross-cultural differences in educational settings
- Further develop cross-cultural communication skills
- Practice teaching techniques and interacting with American students
- Empower and build confidence in the classroom as an effective TA

Core Areas of Focus

- Language Improvement
- Cultural Differences
- Teaching Strategies

Communication Log

Students will keep a communication log based on observations and conversations throughout the course.

Observations

Students should observe and take notes on student (graduate and undergraduate) interactions in different locations on campus and in the community (e.g. a classroom, the Undergraduate Library, Lenoir Hall, Starbucks). What are the speakers talking about? What is their manner of speaking (formal, informal, etc.)? Does gender or age factor into the topic, or manner of speaking? What words or linguistic constructions do you have difficulty understanding? What questions might you ask the speaker(s) if you had the opportunity to do so? Students will record the date, location, topics discussed, duration of time spent observing, vocabulary and grammar points.

Conversations

Students should also find a partner to converse with throughout the semester. Topics discussed can be anything the student chooses, including but not limited to...interests, hobbies, learning about American culture, sharing your own culture, your research areas, your family, current events, etc.

Student's log should contain documentation for a minimum of **4 hours of observation and 2 hours of conversation**. We will be discussing the progress of your logs throughout the semester, so be prepared to share some of your observations and areas of need. You will probably notice that others have similar communication issues and challenges.

Communication Progress

As part of evaluating progress in your English conversational skills, students will meet with Liv, PITAP Teaching Assistant, individually four times throughout the semester, at the beginning, midway through, and at the end of the semester. These meetings will be 30 minutes in length, during which students will work with Liv on specific language issues related to speaking and listening. These meetings will count for 2 hours of your conversation log.

Schedule

First meeting: MW between 9am and 3pm before January 23.

Second meeting: MW (9am-3pm) before February 18.

Third meeting: MW (9am-3pm) before March 19.

Fourth meeting: MW (9am-3pm) before April 16

Methods used in the course

The course is facilitated through active learning techniques. These techniques include microteaching practice sessions, discussions, case study analysis, self and peer evaluation, linguistic guidance, role-playing, and teaching reflection journals.

Microteaching demonstrations

Students will be expected to give microteaching demonstrations as part of the class. These experiences may be recorded and analyzed together as a class and/or individually with the instructor. The purpose of this activity is to increase your confidence in front of a classroom, identify areas of improvement, and document your progress in the course.

Course Policies

This is a pass/fail, 2 credit course. Students are expected to attend all sessions. Each student is permitted two (2) unexcused absences; any other absence must be excused by the instructor prior to the class missed. **More than 2 unexcused absences will be grounds for failing the course.**

Assumptions about Culture and Language

In this course a number of generalizations (e.g. characteristics of U.S. higher education, qualities of UNC undergraduates etc.) will be discussed. While these generalizations can be very useful in learning about another culture, they must not be mistaken for stereotypes. A generalization is a hypothesis - a starting point of inquiry about a subject. Exceptions and individual variation are always present.

Further, the exploration of cross-cultural differences in teaching and learning can be a complicated and sensitive task. It is not unusual for misunderstandings to occur. In order to do the work of this course, it is important to acknowledge this potential and to prepare for how to handle any misunderstandings or feelings of offense that may arise. It is a course expectation that any concerns that arise will be brought to the attention of the instructor and that a mutually agreeable solution will be the goal. (Adapted from R. Michael Paige's concept of cross-cultural inoculation)

Finally, it is important to have realistic goals for language development. The goal is not for students to sound like native speakers of U.S. English, but rather to be intelligible to undergraduates enrolled in their classes. In this course, students will need to demonstrate sufficient proficiency to convey discipline-specific content effectively, and comprehend questions and comments. Minor language errors that do not interfere with meaning are expected.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

UNC Graduate and Professional Student Federation (GPSF)

Office Location

Suite 2501-F
Carolina Student Union

Phone Numbers:

(919)962-5595 (office)
(919)962-4723 (fax)

Email Address: gpsf@unc.edu

Conversation Partners Program

http://oisss.unc.edu/services_programs/conversation.html

This program is for UNC-Chapel Hill foreign students and their spouses, especially if they are recent arrivals to the U.S. Private one-on-one conversation sessions for an hour a week can be arranged to give students a chance to speak English with an American friend from the University or the Chapel Hill community. Conversation partners can answer questions about foreign students' new living situations here in Chapel Hill and can help internationals with their pronunciation and understanding of English.

International Student & Scholar Services

<http://oisss.unc.edu/resources/esl.html>

Lists additional resources to support the needs of international students and scholars at UNC.

Date	In-class Topic and Activity	Post-Assignment
T 1/15	English pronunciation practice Self assessment of your communication skills	
Th 1/17	Course Management: Generating a Syllabus – analysis activity Pronunciation practice	Generate discipline specific, 20 word list Start developing your own syllabus
T 1/22	Finalize syllabi Your First Day of Class Finding your Teaching Perspective	
Th 1/24	Microteaching: Your First Day of Class	
T 1/29	Microteaching: Your First Day of Class	Revise syllabi as per suggestions
Th 1/31	Communication: communicating sequences and transitions	Work on Lesson Plan 1
T 2/5	Creating Lesson Plans	
Th 2/7	Microteaching: implementing your lesson plan	Work on reflective essay
T 2/12	Microteaching: implementing your lesson plan	
Th 2/14	Microteaching: implementing your lesson plan	
T 2/19	Getting students involved and keeping control	
Th 2/21	Reflective essay discussion	
T 2/26	Communication: Vocabulary – when you can't remember the exact word...	Prepare Lesson 2
Th 2/28	Microteaching: addressing misconceptions	
T 3/4	Microteaching: addressing misconceptions	
Th 3/6	Microteaching: addressing misconceptions	
T 3/11	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
Th 3/13	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	Revise Lesson 2
T 3/18	CLASSES CANCELED TODAY 4-6pm	
Th 3/20	Microteaching: teaching difficult concepts	
T 3/25	Microteaching: teaching difficult concepts	
Th 3/27	NO CLASS	
T 4/1	Course Management: Training with Blackboard	Meet in Davis Library 246
Th 4/3	Case Studies in Teaching - discussion	
T 4/8	Assessing and improving teaching	
Th 4/10	Responding to Students' Questions	http://www.teachingperspectives.com and bring results summary to class on 4/15
T 4/15	Evidence of Learning – The Teaching Portfolio and Developing a Teaching statement	Read “Help! My Professor Doesn't Talk English” by Rubin for 4/17
Th 4/17	Discussion of Rubin chapter / communication discussion	
T 4/22	Microteaching: Final	
Th 4/24	Microteaching: Final	