

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

UG Course Syllabus

Intensive English Language for University Studies

UCUG1050

3 credits

Prerequisites: The course does not have pre-requisites or co-requisites. Students are pre-registered based on their English proficiency upon admission to the University.

Exclusion: UCUG 1051

Name of Course Coordinator: Bing Li

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If you have any questions, your first point of contact should be your section instructor. Please find the email address on Canvas.

Office Hours of Course Coordinator: Available by appointment only

Course Description

UCUG 1052 is an intensive English language course for students in their first year of study who need language enhancement and proficiency training to build a strong foundation in English.

Course objectives: Students will develop the language skills necessary to communicate effectively and complete academic tasks in an English-medium university. They will also build skills and habits for self-directed learning at university.

Course content: This course focuses on developing students' language foundation, and tasks and activities are designed so that they can receive enhanced teacher support and feedback.

Key topics:

- Unit 1: Learning and Being at University: develop effective language learning habits and practices; evaluate useful resources and learning strategies for university-level study.
- Unit 2: The Future and Space Time Capsule Project: build foundational academic writing skills (paragraph structure, thesis support, coherence, and substance); develop structured, fluent speaking skills (pronunciation, connected speech, and flow); strengthen constructive discussion strategies; distinguish between written and spoken language features; and foster reflective practice on language learning progress.

Methods of instruction: Interactive lessons support active learning through guided skill-building tasks, individual drafting and practice, peer feedback activities, and collaborative discussion. Input and feedback provided by teachers and peers help students develop both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Use language appropriate for the audience, context and purpose for spoken and written communication.

2. Express ideas with range in vocabulary and sentence structures, and develop clear pronunciation.
3. Organise ideas into arguments in speaking and writing.
4. Interact with others' ideas to contribute and communicate in group contexts.
5. Analyse problems and provide solutions in speaking and writing.
6. Find and use appropriate sources to support an argument.
7. Apply learning strategies to become an effective learner, including goal setting, evaluating learning strategies, and self-reflection.

Weekly Schedule and ILOs

Week	Topics	ILOs
1	Getting to know one another and Being a responsible learner	ILOs-4, 7
2	Reflective and social learning	ILOs-4, 7
3	Written and spoken language for different audiences and purposes	ILOs-1, 2, 4, 5
4	Developing a critical mind	ILOs-1, 2, 4, 5
5	Discussing alternative perspectives (1)	ILOs-1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6	Elaborating topics from past to present to future	ILOs-1, 2, 3, 4
7	Elaborating solutions to problems	ILOs-2, 3, 4, 5
8	Discussing alternative perspectives (2)	ILOs-1, 2, 3
9	Essay writing and Connecting ideas	ILOs-1, 2, 3
10	Developing an argument	ILOs-3, 6
11	Writing a good essay	ILOs-3, 6
12	Citing and paraphrasing from sources	ILOs-1, 2, 6
13	Using appropriate written language style for different audiences and purposes	ILOs-1, 2, 3, 5

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
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Group Discussion	20%	Week 8-9 *
LPA** Speaking Test	15%	Week 12 *
LPA Writing Test	15%	Week 13 *
Space Time Capsule Group Writing Project	35%	Week 13 *
Self-Directed Learning	15%	Week 2, 4, 11

* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

** LPA (Language Proficiency Assessment)

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Group Discussion	ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	This group discussion assessment evaluates students' ability to interact with others' ideas, contributing effectively in a group context (ILO 4). It also assesses their ability to use language appropriate for the audience, context, and purpose (ILO 1), as they must communicate clearly and persuasively with their peers. Students are expected to organize their ideas into coherent arguments while responding to others (ILO 3), demonstrating a range of vocabulary and sentence structures and maintaining clear pronunciation to enhance understanding (ILO 2). Furthermore, the discussion requires analyzing problems and collaboratively developing solutions (ILO 5) while utilizing appropriate sources to support their arguments (ILO 6). Finally, students will reflect on their performance in the discussion, using self-reflection to set goals and evaluate their learning strategies for sustained intellectual development (ILO 7).
LPA Speaking Test	ILOs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7	The LPA speaking test assesses students' ability to use language appropriate for the audience, context, and purpose in spoken communication (ILO 1). It evaluates their capacity to express ideas clearly and effectively, demonstrating a range of vocabulary and varied sentence structures (ILO 2). The test also requires students to organize their ideas into a coherent and persuasive argument within a limited time frame (ILO 3). During the speaking test, students must analyze a topic or problem and provide a concise solution or perspective, demonstrating critical thinking and problem-solving skills (ILO 5). Additionally, this assessment encourages students to engage in self-reflection on their speaking performance, identify areas for improvement, and apply effective learning strategies to enhance their oral communication skills (ILO 7).
LPA Writing Test	ILOs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7	The LPA writing test assesses students' ability to use language appropriate for the audience, context, and purpose in written communication (ILO 1). It evaluates their skills in expressing ideas effectively through a well-developed range of vocabulary and varied sentence structures (ILO 2). Students are expected to organize their ideas into coherent and structured arguments, demonstrating clarity and logical progression in their writing (ILO 3). This assessment also requires students to analyze problems, develop solutions, and present them clearly in writing (ILO 5). Additionally, students must find and integrate appropriate sources to support their arguments, showcasing their research skills and ability to substantiate their viewpoints (ILO 6). Finally, the writing test encourages students to apply self-reflection and goal-setting strategies to evaluate their writing process and outcomes, fostering their development as effective learners (ILO 7).
Space Time Capsule Group Writing Project	ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	The group writing project of a Space Time Capsule assesses students' ability to collaboratively use language appropriate for the audience, context, and purpose in a written format (ILO 1). This task requires students to express ideas clearly and creatively, utilizing a diverse range of vocabulary and sentence structures to effectively communicate their vision for the time capsule's content (ILO 2). As a group, students must organize their ideas into a cohesive and persuasive argument, ensuring the project has a clear structure and logical flow (ILO 3). This assessment also evaluates their ability to interact with and integrate others' ideas, effectively contributing to and communicating in a group context (ILO 4). The project involves analyzing the historical and cultural significance of chosen items, proposing thoughtful justifications for their inclusion, and collaboratively solving challenges related to content selection (ILO 5). Furthermore, students are expected to find and use appropriate sources to support their choices, demonstrating their research skills (ILO 6). Finally, the group writing project encourages students to reflect on their group dynamics, evaluate their collaborative learning strategies, and set goals for future group work, fostering sustained intellectual development (ILO 7).
Self-Directed Learning	ILOs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7	The self-directed learning assessment evaluates students' ability to independently apply learning strategies to become effective learners, including setting personal learning goals, selecting appropriate methods, and engaging in self-reflection to monitor progress (ILO 7). This assessment requires students to use language effectively in written or spoken reflections, adapting their communication style to suit the purpose and context of their learning journey (ILO 1). Students are encouraged to express their ideas and experiences with a diverse range of vocabulary and sentence structures, demonstrating clarity and depth in their reflections (ILO 2). As part of this self-directed process, students must analyze their

		own learning needs, identify problems or challenges, and propose solutions or adjustments to their strategies, showcasing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (ILO 5). They are also expected to find and utilize appropriate resources or sources that support their learning objectives, enhancing their ability to support arguments or positions with relevant evidence (ILO 6). Overall, this assessment fosters a reflective approach to learning, helping students to actively engage with their development and sustain their intellectual growth over time.
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Grading Rubrics

	Discussion	LPA Speaking	LPA Writing	Space Time Capsule Group Writing
Excellent	Demonstrates exceptional engagement and active participation in the discussion, providing valuable insights and facilitating collaboration among group members. Shows a high level of critical thinking, effectively analyzing others' ideas and presenting well-supported arguments. Communicates with exceptional clarity, fluency, and confidence, using appropriate language and vocabulary throughout.	Delivers a highly coherent and engaging speech with exceptional clarity, fluency, and precision. Demonstrates outstanding command of language, incorporating a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Exhibits strong critical thinking, well-developed arguments, and creativity in content. Engages the audience effectively with confidence and poise.	Produces a well-researched, coherent, and original piece of writing that demonstrates exceptional command of language and structure. Shows depth of analysis, critical thinking, and creativity, with arguments thoroughly supported by robust evidence. The writing is clear, fluent, and effectively addresses the task requirements.	Produces a highly cohesive and original piece of group writing that demonstrates exceptional organization, structure, and clarity. Integrates multiple viewpoints and ideas seamlessly, showing strong collaborative effort. Exhibits depth of analysis, creativity, and critical thinking with well-supported arguments and appropriate use of evidence. Shows an outstanding command of language throughout.
Good	Communicates ideas clearly and contributes effectively to the discussion with relevant points. Shows good critical thinking skills and the ability to construct coherent arguments. Actively listens and engages with others' ideas, demonstrating a willingness to consider different viewpoints. Maintains a good level of clarity and fluency, with some minor language errors.	Presents a clear and structured speech, showing good control over language and appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar. Demonstrates solid critical thinking and logical argumentation with evidence to support points. Engages the audience with confidence, though there may be minor hesitations or language errors.	Writes a clear and well-structured piece that demonstrates good command of language and a solid understanding of the topic. Shows effective analytical skills and the ability to construct logical arguments, supported by appropriate evidence. Meets all task requirements, with writing that shows effort and a genuine interest in the subject matter.	Creates a well-structured group writing project that shows good organization and clarity. Integrates different perspectives and ideas effectively, with a clear sense of teamwork. Demonstrates solid analytical skills and critical thinking, with logical arguments supported by relevant evidence. Shows good command of language, with few errors.
Satisfactory	Participates in the discussion with adequate contributions, though may show some hesitancy or lack of depth in ideas. Displays basic critical	Provides a speech that is adequately structured, with basic clarity and some control of language. Shows basic critical thinking and argumentation skills, but	Provides a piece of writing that meets basic requirements, with adequate organization and language control. Shows some analytical ability but arguments may lack depth or originality. The	Produces a group writing project that meets basic requirements, with adequate organization and

	thinking skills but may struggle to develop more sophisticated arguments or engage deeply with others' ideas. Communication is generally clear but may lack fluency or confidence, with occasional language inaccuracies.	the speech may lack depth or originality. Maintains moderate audience engagement, though there may be frequent hesitations or inaccuracies in language use.	writing is generally clear but may contain occasional errors and may not fully engage with the topic.	clarity. Displays some integration of different ideas, though the collaborative effort may be inconsistent. Shows basic analytical skills, but arguments may lack depth or originality. Language use is generally accurate, with occasional errors.
Marginal Pass	Contributes minimally to the discussion, with basic and sometimes unclear ideas. Shows limited engagement with others' contributions and struggles to present coherent arguments. Displays minimal critical thinking, and may rely on simple or unsupported statements. Communication lacks fluency and accuracy, with frequent hesitations and language errors.	Delivers a speech with minimal structure and coherence, struggling with language accuracy and fluency. Demonstrates limited critical thinking and weak arguments, with minimal evidence to support points. Shows low confidence and struggles to maintain audience engagement.	Writes a basic, minimally coherent piece, struggling with language accuracy and structure. Demonstrates limited analytical or critical thinking, with weak arguments and minimal evidence. Barely meets the task requirements, showing little understanding or engagement with the topic.	Completes the group writing project with minimal coherence and structure, showing limited collaborative effort and integration of ideas. Demonstrates basic understanding but lacks analytical depth and critical thinking. Arguments are weak and not well-supported, and language use is inconsistent, with frequent errors.
Fail	Fails to engage meaningfully in the discussion, contributing little to no relevant content. Shows very limited understanding of the discussion topic and lacks the ability to present coherent arguments. Critical thinking is absent, and communication is unclear and disorganized, with significant language inaccuracies.	Fails to deliver a coherent speech, with significant language errors and a lack of clear structure. Demonstrates no critical thinking or argumentation skills, and fails to engage or maintain the interest of the audience. Communication is unclear and ineffective.	Fails to produce a coherent piece of writing, with significant language inaccuracies and lack of structure. Shows very poor or no understanding of the task, with incoherent arguments and no evidence of analysis or critical thinking. Does not meet the task requirements, showing minimal effort and understanding of the subject matter.	Fails to produce a coherent group writing project, with significant issues in organization, clarity, and collaborative effort. Shows little to no integration of ideas and lacks any critical analysis or supported arguments. Language use is poor, with numerous errors, and the writing fails to meet the task requirements.

Final Grade Descriptors

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	An excellent performance in this course involves demonstrating outstanding fluency and clarity in both spoken and written communication. The student actively engages in discussions with

		insightful and constructive contributions, presents highly coherent and persuasive speeches, and exhibits exceptional command of language and subject matter. Written work is original, well-researched, and demonstrates deep analysis and critical thinking. The student shows high levels of confidence, creativity, and the ability to present well-supported arguments across all assessments.
B	Good Performance	A good performance is characterized by clear and effective communication, both in speaking and writing. The student actively participates in discussions, making relevant contributions that reflect critical thinking skills. Speeches are well-structured, with logical arguments supported by appropriate evidence. Written assignments are well-organized, showing solid analytical skills and understanding of the subject. Overall, the student demonstrates good language proficiency and the ability to construct coherent arguments, indicating a strong effort and interest in the course content.
C	Satisfactory Performance	A satisfactory performance indicates adequate communication skills, with the ability to convey ideas clearly, though there may be occasional lapses in fluency or accuracy. The student contributes to discussions, though contributions may lack depth or critical insight. Speeches and written work meet the basic requirements, demonstrating some analytical thinking but lacking originality. The student shows moderate confidence in their communication skills but may struggle to develop more sophisticated arguments in both speaking and writing tasks.
D	Marginal Pass	A marginal pass reflects a basic level of performance, where the student manages to deliver speeches and write assignments that convey basic ideas, but with limited coherence and organization. There may be frequent language errors, and critical thinking skills are minimal. The arguments presented are weak, and there is minimal evidence to support them. The student shows low confidence in communication and struggles to engage effectively in discussions or with the audience. Overall, the performance barely meets the minimum requirements, reflecting limited understanding and engagement with the course material.
F	Fail	A failing grade indicates significant difficulties in meeting the course requirements. The student struggles to express ideas clearly, both in discussions and written work, contributing minimally to group conversations and demonstrating minimal critical thinking or argumentation skills. Speeches are incoherent, with significant language inaccuracies and a lack of structure. Written work lacks clarity, coherence, and organization, with arguments that are poorly supported or entirely unsupported. The performance does not meet the task requirements, showing a lack of effort, understanding, and engagement across all assessments.

Course AI Policy

Approach to GenAI in this course

The PLE at HKUST(GZ) embraces innovation and technology in teaching. In alignment with HKUST's broader educational approach, the PLE recognizes the transformative potential of Generative AI (GenAI) as a valuable tool for the future. Therefore, the responsible use of GenAI is strongly encouraged to help students optimize their learning experiences and achieve their full potential.

The PLE is committed to maintaining high standards of university education at HKUST(GZ) and upholds a strong commitment to ethics and academic integrity. These ethical standards are reflected in practices of honesty, clarity, and transparency. As we collectively learn how to best utilize this emerging tool, it is essential that both students and instructors approach the use of GenAI with openness and integrity.

When using GenAI as a learning tool, students are expected to adhere to the standards outlined in the HKUST(GZ) Undergraduate Student Handbook to uphold academic integrity.

To foster a culture of transparency and accountability in AI usage, students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking and openly communicate their use of GenAI tools. Students who use GenAI tools to complete assignments must declare their usage and provide a clear explanation of how the tool was employed upon submission. This includes formal declarations of GenAI use or non-use for specific tasks within this course.

Promoting transparency and accountability in AI decision making

Students are encouraged to critically reflect on their use of GenAI tools and to maintain transparency about their usage. For assignments such as the Space Time Capsule Writing Task, Discussion, and LPA Speaking assessments, students must declare whether they have used GenAI tools and specify how they were utilized when completing and submitting their work.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment results for individual tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will address strengths, such as organization and delivery, and identify areas for improvement, including language use, style, coherence, argument depth, and the effective use of evidence. The form and content of feedback will be at the instructor's discretion. Students with further questions about their feedback or marks should consult the instructor within five working days after receiving the feedback.

Resubmission Policy

Once an assignment has been graded, resubmission is not permitted.

Required Texts and Materials

All required texts and materials for the course are available on the Canvas course page.

Academic Integrity

Students are required to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy, including upholding the HKUST(GZ) Academic Honor Code and maintaining the highest standards of academic conduct. The University has a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct. Students should refer to the Regulations for Academic Integrity and Student Conduct for definitions of plagiarism and guidelines on avoiding cheating and plagiarism.