

English Skills in Cultural Communication: Summer Semester 2025 Course Outline

Course Lecturer: Stephan Delbos, M.F.A., PhD

Course Description

The fundamental aim of this course is to build on the foundation of the previous semester to improve your writing and critical thinking abilities in English. To accomplish this, you will receive extensive training in both practical and conceptual aspects of writing and criticism. The course will be taught by lectures, practical exercises and discussions, but the most important element of your success will be your willingness and ability to work and think outside of the classroom. Particular attention will be paid to correct use and presentation of source materials, the composition of bibliographies and revision of essays.

The course will also include a public speaking component in order to help assist you prepare to give presentations in seminars. This will comprise of a five-minute presentation which will be delivered in front of the class, followed by a short question and answer session.

Students will be required to submit written homework on a regular basis and to attend class and to complete a final paper of 1,500 – 2,000 words, depending on whether you are a single or double subject student (see course requirements below).

The course is compulsory for both single and double subject students but is worth the following:

Single-subject students: WS 2hr seminar, zápočet, 3 credits, SS 2hr seminar, zápočet + zkouška 5 credits

Double-subject students: WS 2hr seminar, zápočet, 2 credits, SS 2hr seminar, zápočet 3 credits

To reflect this difference, ***single subject students are required to sit an exam at the end of the summer semester*** and to hand in final papers of 2,000 words. Double subject students will not be required to sit an exam and will hand in final papers of 1,500 words.

If a student should fail an assignment or an exam, they will only be allowed to resubmit/resit the required unit of the course once.

Grading: The pass mark for credits will be 70%

A 96%	C+ 79%	D-59%
A- 95%	C 76%	F
B+ 89%	C- 72%	
B 86%	D+ 69%	
B- 82%	D 66%	

- Attendance: You are required to attend all class meetings on time. Three unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.

Essays: All essays must be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font and double-spaced. Title your papers, number the pages, and staple them together in the top left corner. Late papers will not be accepted without a legitimate excuse.

School Policies

Course lecturers will fail any piece of work that they feel shows clear signs of having been plagiarized.

Contact details

Consultation hours for the summer semester: By Appointment

Email address: stephan.delbos@ff.cuni.cz

Should you be asked to submit homework before a class, you will need to hand it in to the box outside 219a with your name, the day and time of the seminar you attend and your lecturer's clearly marked on the front.

If you have any queries or doubts regarding any of the work we have covered in class or exactly what is required in an assignment, please get in touch.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Intro

- Discussion of upcoming semester
- Homework: Read Roland Barthes: "Death of the Author," and "Borges and I"

Week 2: Author, Reader, Narrator

- Authorship vs. narration; discussion of Barthes and Borges
- Presentations: briefly revise strategies for effective public speaking
- Homework: Read Samuel Beckett: "Text for Nothing 9"

Week 3: Dealing with Ambiguity

- Discussion of minimalism, absurdity and ambiguity in Beckett
- Finding a subject in a long or difficult text and making it an argument
- Discussion of mock exam

Week 4: Mock Exam

- Students will be given the opportunity to sit Section B of the English Skills exam, which they will be graded on. This task will count for credit for ALL students.
- Homework: Read Joyce Carol Oates: "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" and find a critical essay on the text. Write a 500-word summary of the essay, identifying its thesis and discussing its merits or failings

Week 5: Fiction, Criticism and Reality

- Discussion of Oates. How much to use from “real life” when researching
- Homework: Read David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*

Week 6: The Art of Fiction

- Discussion of David Lodge
- Discussion of the final essay
- Thesis statements revisited; time management
- Homework: Prepare topic of the final essay, read I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*

Week 7: Weighing up the evidence; reading sources critically

- Discussion of final essay topics
- Discussion of Richards
- Homework: Read Hélène Cixous, *Stigmata*, write abstract of final essay

Week 8: Open-ended Criticism

- Discussion of Cixous
- Presentation of abstracts
- Homework: Prepare presentations, continue work on final essay

Week 9: Student presentations

- Students present a critical essay they will use as a source for their final essay
- Homework: Read “That Crafty Feeling” by Zadie Smith; write first draft of the final essay

Week 10: Craft

- Remainder of student presentations
- Discussion of Smith’s essay and approach to craft
- First draft of final essay due
- Homework: Continue development of final essay

Week 11: Consultations

- Students receive individual feedback on the first draft of their essays.
- Homework: Complete second draft of final essay

Week 12: Editing

- Second draft of final essay due
- Peer editing, troubleshooting the final essay

Week 13: Conclusions

- Wrap up
- Final essays are due one week after the final class