Course Syllabus

Preparing for Graduate Success:
Language, Culture, and Community at U-M

Summer 2019

Congratulations on your admission to a graduate program at the University of Michigan, one of the world's premier public institutions of higher learning. This online course prepares you to succeed in your U-M graduate studies by introducing you to academic language conventions of graduate study and research in the U.S., as well as campus culture both in and outside the classroom. You will identify U-M resources that support international graduate students and establish an early network of friends. Every step of the way, you will learn specific language skills to achieve your academic, scholarly, and professional goals.

In this highly interactive four-week course, you will respond to brief articles, watch short video lectures and complete engaging assignments that will familiarize you with the academic expectations for graduate students at a large research university so that you can hit the ground running when you arrive on campus this fall. You will have many opportunities to hone and refine your language skills through practice assignments and through interactions with each other. You will receive individualized feedback from your instructor, Pamela Bogart.

Objectives

By completing the course, you should enhance your ability to

- Express the identity you wish to project in various English language contexts
- Initiate social conversations in English to meet new friends and colleagues
- Formulate an engaging "elevator pitch" about your graduate studies, in order to network with others after arrival on campus
- Use English effectively to negotiate roles and express opinions, e.g. to determine responsibilities and collaborate successfully in a group assignment
- Identify how to use online resources to improve your academic writing
- Navigate the process of attribution and citation in your academic discipline
- Participate in campus conversations about diversity and community

Your Instructor

Pamela Bogart, Lecturer IV, English Language Institute

You can send me messages within Canvas (http://umich.instructure.com) anytime during the online course, and I look forward to meeting you in person after you arrive in Ann Arbor.

Community Guidelines for Participation

How can we create an online community together for this course that is caring, intellectually challenging, and boosts everyone's confidence in using English in graduate school?

This discussion *[live link in online Syllabus]* provides a starting set of guidelines for our ongoing dialogue together. Please adhere to these guidelines in all forms of communication in this course.

Technical requirements to take this course online

The course is taught in Canvas, available to U-M students at umich.instructure.com. This is the course platform you will also use in your Fall classes across the university. You will need:

- an internet-capable device that can play video, and record voice and video
- for some activities, a laptop or desktop computer may work much better than a phone or tablet

Certificate of Participation

Students who meet the criteria listed below will receive a digital certificate of participation.

At least an 80% average grade on all assignments, including:

At least three of five Activity types (70% of the course grade)

- Discussion forums
- Language activities, including interactive video
- Peer feedback assignments
- Group project
- Completion of course evaluations

The elevator pitch project (30% of the course grade)

- Elevator pitch planning activities, first draft, revised draft, and final video

Plan on setting aside 2-4 hours each week to explore life and communication in graduate school together. We look forward to meeting you and working with you as you discover the keys to graduate success at the University of Michigan!

Bonus gathering in Ann Arbor! The first week of classes or right before that, the English Language Institute and your instructor, Pamela, will host a reunion and elevator pitch workshop where we can all really meet in person and share our elevator pitches with our friends from this online course before we use them over & over in networking with new people on campus. More information on this event coming soon!

Accommodations & Religious/Cultural Holidays

If there is anything you'd like me to know about how you learn best and any accommodations that would support your best learning, please contact me via email, Canvas messaging, Google Hangouts chat, or in person. If you have a disability or learning difference that we can accommodate, I am eager to do so.

Of course I will maintain the confidentiality of any information you share with me.

I encourage you to celebrate religious or cultural holidays that are important to you. Please inform me in advance, in writing, as to how a given holiday will affect your participation schedule, so that we can make advance alternate plans together.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. It is important to know that after you arrive on campus, if you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help after you arrive on campus, contact **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult **University Health Service (UHS)** at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: http://umich.edu/~mhealth/.

Canvas help

Link to Canvas support for students

Questions and feedback

Send me feedback and questions any time, or post questions in our discussion space, Open Discussion Forum *[live link in online syllabus]*.

Classroom research

I am working on a research project that seeks to investigate how to best support graduate student learning in an online environment. I plan to use this research to help me better teach this course and other courses I teach online.

In this class, we will have the opportunity to do a wide variety of activities, including but not limited to discussions, video and audio recordings, games, quizzes, investigations, reading analyses, exploration of resource apps and websites, brief written assignments, reading one another's writing and watching one another's videos, and reflecting on our learning. These are all activities that I would normally offer while teaching this course, regardless of my research. I plan to analyze your work in these exercises for my research project. Of course, however, you can opt out of inclusion in my analysis of any part of your work for any reason at any time. There will be no effect on your grades in this course of any decisions you make about participating or opting out. In other words, participation in this research project is entirely voluntary, and there is neither any bonus for permitting me to include your coursework in the research project nor any penalty for not participating in the research project, in part or in full.

In any presentation of this research, I will not include your name or any identifying details. If I plan to quote extensively (i.e. more than one sentence or an image of your work), I will follow up with an email in advance to check whether this is acceptable to you. Please contact me (pbogart@umich.edu) if you have any questions or concerns about this research, or to opt out in part or in full at any time.

Course Outline

Welcome to Preparing for Graduate Success: Language, Culture, & Community at U-M
Become familiar with the course & one another. Completing this welcome module unlocks Modules 1-4 below.

Week 1. The Culture(s) of Graduate Education in the United States
Explore the graduate school context in the U.S. and practice language skills for presenting yourself professionally and effectively as a new graduate student.

Week 2. In the Classroom—English for Interactive Learning and Teamwork
Jump into the collaborative mode of many graduate disciplines today, examining the impact of diverse experiences in productive collaboration and learning language to negotiate the role(s) you will take on.

Week 3. In Academia—English for Research & Scholarship
Identify ways to fully participate in the scholarship of your discipline in writing and speaking, understand how research in your field incorporates published scholarly writing, and enhance language you can use to bring your own expertise to the table.

Week 4. Beyond the Classroom—English in Campus Life
Connect with the hundreds of ways to build social and professional networks on campus, further explore campus discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and put the finishing touches on a professional self-introduction you can use dozens of times during your first few weeks on campus.

On Campus (end of August/start of September)
Campus Reunion for all members of the class to meet in person & practice our elevator pitches live with one another, date, time & location to be announced

Detailed course outline
- Initial course survey

Welcome to Preparing for Graduate Success [Complete the Welcome to unlock Modules 1-4]
- How to get started (Course orientation page)
- Course Syllabus
- Community Guidelines (Discussion of how we'll all contribute to productive, inclusive climate)
- Introduce yourself (submit videos)
- Commit to or excuse self from Module 2 group project (See Module 2 below)

1. The Culture(s) of Graduate Education in the United States
- Module 1 welcome video

Theme: Graduate Student Identity
- Reflection: Walking in New Shoes (Reflecting on transitions, language & one's multiple cultural identities)
- How is grad school different from undergrad? (Discussion of points raised in video clips with multiple graduate students)
- Graduate student community diversity (Brief reading; reflection on unique contributions one will be bringing to the Michigan academic community)
- Discuss example elevator pitch (Listen to audio footage of a graduate student self-introduction on a scholarly panel, discuss language, content, strategy)

Theme: Expressing your own graduate student identity
- Our first and second language selves (Discussion of video (in Portuguese with English subtitles) by U-M grad student)
- Talking about your scholarly experience and goals (interactive tutorial that will generate class list of verbs to indicate prior experience)
- Vocabulary for introducing yourself professionally (tutorial with feedback that introduces corpus-based formulaic language for formal and informal self-introductions)
- Create a visualization of your skills and experience (use mind-mapping tool to represent the range and thematic connections among elements of one's experience and expertise; engage one another in follow-up questions)
- Draft Script: So what do YOU do at Michigan? (beginning to compose professional self-introduction, aka "elevator pitch")

2. In the Classroom—English for Interactive Learning and Teamwork
- Module 2 welcome video

Theme: Working together in the university context
- Reflection: How diverse groups can positively impact learning (Read & discuss CRLT Occasional Paper "Student teams in the Engineering classroom and beyond")
- Mutual understanding (Watch & discuss brief video clip from Rackham graduate students on how to adjust English speaking patterns to promote mutual understanding.)

Theme: Navigating Group Work

- Negotiating group roles (Explore visual and text summaries of scholarly articles on graduate student group dynamics, reflect and discuss)
- Strategies for negotiating one's group responsibilities (Complete two in-video quiz activities dramatizing graduate student group negotiating group roles, from *Academic Interactions: Communicating on Campus*, University of Michigan Press, 2009, used with permission, discuss take-aways about self-advocacy, language for negotiation, and cooperation vs. competition within groups)
- Module 2 group project: the context of diversity and inclusion at Michigan (Brief background reading, small group assignment to investigate and report on one aspect of Michigan's decades-long efforts to address diversity and inclusion, reflecting on group dynamics and language/strategies used to determine individual roles. *Students may opt out of this group project during the Welcome module if participation is logistically problematic*.)

Additional language resources

- Optional recommended practice: Introduction to ELI e-Resources (discussion forum for students who elect to try out sites & apps introduced by ELI on its e-Resources page)

3. In Academia—English for Research & Scholarship
  - Module 3 welcome video

Theme: Joining an academic discipline

- Reflection: Bringing your expertise to the table (Watch video by grad students about the philosophy of the new Munger Graduate Residence, imagine this setting for trans-disciplinary self-introductions, and refine content of one's elevator pitch given this audience; pose follow-up questions to classmates.)
- Talking about your research (Complete tutorial framed around video of Engineering graduate student's Materials Science research with feedback on language one can use to introduce one's work, record take-aways)
- Communicating and collaborating with faculty (Watch video with international Rackham students offering tips on navigating advisor and faculty interaction; discuss embedded assumptions similarities/differences from expectations)

Theme: Ownership & Sharing of Scholarship

- Exploring academic integrity (Read and discuss Rackham's Academic Integrity brochure, including reflection on diverse culturally-bound concepts of ownership of ideas)
- Citations, organization, and language use in academic writing (Learn to use the MICUSP database of upper-level student papers to investigate language use and citation patterns in academic writing; follow guided tutorial with feedback while practicing use of the corpus interface)
  - Citation formatting guides: Optional resources
- Citation practice: Situating yourself in your discipline (Locate a recent scholarly article in one's field; identify rationale for specific citations; compare and contrast with reports from students in other fields via multiple peer reviews; read brief anthropology graduate student essay on writing in dialogue with published scholarship.)

Additional language resources

- Optional recommended resource: U-M Library/ELI Research Guide (Consult this resource & report on helpful findings)

4. Beyond the Classroom—English in Campus Life
- Module 4 welcome video

Theme: Getting connected

- Reflection: Building Bridges (Watch Global Michigan video detailing one student's story of finding a bridge to become part of the community he's living in as an international student; reflect on own potential bridges at Michigan)
- Student-to-student advice for international graduate students (Watch 8-minute video with advice from an array of international graduate students about making a successful transition to Michigan; reflect on and discuss salient points)
- Joining an extracurricular group (Read short text and watch Rackham video on well-being in graduate school; Investigate a possible group of interest via Maize Pages or Rackham or departmental websites; compose introductory query to send to group leaders)
- Developing early friendship networks (Watch video with international Rackham students offering tips on resources at U-M for developing friendship networks early; reflect on own expectations and potential connections)

Theme: When connections matter

- Reflection: Handling the Unexpected (Read Rackham blog post "Surviving the Quarter-Life Crisis," reflect on self-efficacy strategies and resources for managing unexpected turns in one's graduate journey)
- Make a plan to meet up in Ann Arbor (Submit confirmation of specific plans to meet up with at least one other person in the class after arriving on campus)
- Course Capstone Project: Your Elevator Pitch (Submit video-recording of elevator pitch for specific intended audience and purpose, review multiple peer recordings & offer feedback)
- Final course survey

Additional language resources

- Optional recommended practice: Small talk (focus on tv and web-based video resources one can use to cull language + topics to initiate and sustain small talk)
- Sign up for an ELI Academic Advising appointment to identify good fall courses and resources.

After arriving in Ann Arbor

- On-Campus Reunion and Elevator Pitch Workshop