Global Communication: Rhetorical Strategies for Multilingual Conversation

Writing 302, section 001
Wednesday 4-5pm
3356 Mason Hall
Fall 2015
Instructor: Scott Beal
Office: 1330 NQ
Office hours: Mon. 1-2pm
Email: skot@umich.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course prepares students to lead conversation groups with multilingual undergraduates. Among the topics to be considered are seeking clarification, taking a position, celebrating successes and overcoming nervousness, approaching different communicative contexts, engaging in casual conversation, and using social media. Students in this course lead weekly conversation groups beginning in the second week of the semester. Students also observe one other conversation group and develop a creative outreach project that builds upon bi-weekly blog posts.

COURSE READINGS:
The Arrival by Shaun Tan, available at Vault of Midnight (219 S. Main St.).

All other course readings will be available electronically via CTools. To access course readings, log into CTools, click the tab for our class, then click on "Resources" in the list on the left. Click on the reading you are looking for. Always print copies of these readings and bring them to class on the days we are scheduled to discuss them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
• Facilitation of eleven weekly Chat Cafe group sessions.
• One observational visit to a colleague's Chat Cafe group.
• Regular attendance and active participation in weekly class sessions.
• Six bi-weekly blog posts reflecting on your experiences as a conversation circle facilitator and on the topics covered in class.
• Creative capstone project.

CONVERSATION GROUPS:
You will meet with your assigned group of participants a total of eleven times this semester, beginning in week 3. Sessions should be scheduled and held at a consistent time and place which is convenient and comfortable for all participants. These sessions should be collaborative and non-hierarchical. In other words, your role is not that of an instructor leading students, but of a facilitator fostering conversations among a group of which you are one participating member. We will talk more about what this means in theory and practice throughout the course of the semester.
COURSE BLOG:
Our course blog is at http://sweetlandgcfall2015.blogspot.com. The syllabus gives you prompts for blog posts, so respond to those prompts as you see fit and feel free to blog more if you’d like. Your blog posts don’t have to be long, but they have to be there and thoughtful. I’d like, too, to see you coming into conversation with one another. In other words, your blog post for any given week could be a comment on someone’s else’s post or someone else’s comment; it doesn’t have to be its own unique post unless you want it to be. In still other words, blog as you might in real life—as though it weren’t for a class. What you write will help us hone in on issues of interest to you as we engage in small and large group discussions about facilitating conversations. Note: I will read all blogs and mark them as finished or unfinished. I will provide a public comment that relates to at least one of your blog posts this semester.

CAPSTONE PROJECT:
At the end of the semester, you will submit a creative capstone project inspired by your experience as a Chat Cafe facilitator. This project can be a creative text of your choosing: a poem, poster, video, essay, website, sculpture, comic strip – whatever medium will best fit what you wish to say and how best you think you can say it. Think of your project as a mode of creative outreach. In fact, Sweetland may be interested in using these projects to market the program for future semesters, both for facilitators and participants. What should people see, hear, experience to understand the benefits of the program – and more broadly, the benefits of a diverse, multilingual culture at the university?

GRADES/CREDIT:
If you fulfill the above requirements, you will receive credit for the course, and you may have the opportunity to continue leading conversation circles for Sweetland in future semesters.
**Global Communication**

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All reading/writing assignments are due the day they are listed. Suggested topics for the biweekly blogs are included at the end of the schedule.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

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<th>Week</th>
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| **Week 1** |           | **Introductions/icebreaker**  
Discuss: syllabus and class plan  
Practical planning: how students register, choosing a location, first meeting topics, first meeting anxieties |
| Wed. Sep. 9 |           | **Read: excerpts from “[wcenter] ESL Conversation Groups” email thread**  
- Winter 2014 conversation facilitators' final blogs  
Discuss: conversation group visions, goals, and plans  
Due: Blog post #1 |
| **Week 2** | Wed. Sep. 16 | **Read:** excerpts from “[wcenter] ESL Conversation Groups” email thread  
- Winter 2014 conversation facilitators' final blogs  
Discuss: conversation group visions, goals, and plans  
Due: Blog post #1 |
| **Week 3 – Facilitate first Chat Cafe meeting.** | Wed. Sep. 23 | **ELI class visit:** Perspectives and techniques for facilitating conversation groups  
Recommended reading: College Confidential: “New to the U.S.? What Surprised You the Most?” |
| **Week 4 – Facilitate second Chat Cafe meeting.** | Wed. Sep. 30 | **Read: handouts from ELI session**  
Due: Blog post #2 |
| **Week 5 – Facilitate third Chat Cafe meeting.** | Wed. Oct. 7 | **Read:** Garcia, “Informal bilingual acquisition: Dynamic spaces for language acquisition policy”  
Discuss: planning/unplanning conversations |
| **Week 6 – Facilitate fourth Chat Cafe meeting.** | Wed. Oct. 14 | **Read:** Tan, *The Arrival*  
Discuss: challenges faced by international students; communicative strategies  
Due: Blog post #3 |
| **Week 7 – Facilitate fifth Chat Cafe meeting.** | Wed. Oct. 21 | **Read: Allen, “Discussing Cultural Knowledge for Life in the USA”**  
- Althen, *American Ways* (excerpt)  
- East Meets West Infographics by Yang Liu |
Discuss: exploring cultural differences

Week 8 – Facilitate sixth Chat Cafe meeting.
Discuss: reducing interlocutors' reluctance to speak
Due: Blog post #4

Week 9 – Facilitate seventh Chat Cafe meeting.
Wed. Nov. 4 Listen: Vishton, “Speech and Language Perception” (audio lecture in six parts)
Discuss: implications of sensory process for L2 production/interpretation
Due: Proposal for creative capstone project

Week 10 – Facilitate eighth Chat Cafe meeting.
Wed. Nov. 11 Read: Brinton and Butner, “The Ethics of Pronunciation Teaching”
Discuss: the ethics of pronunciation teaching
Due: Blog post #5

Week 11 – Facilitate ninth Chat Cafe meeting.
Wed. Nov. 18 Read: Scollon and Scollon, “Athabaskan-English Interethnic Communication”
Discuss: navigating cultural and linguistic differences

Week 12 – No Chat Cafe meetings (Thanksgiving week)
Wed. Nov. 25 Read: Tannen, “Indirectness in Discourse: Ethnicity as Conversational Style”
Discuss: directness vs. indirectness in communication
Due: Blog post #6

Week 13 – Facilitate tenth Chat Cafe meeting.
Wed. Dec. 2 Read: Anzaldua, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”
- Rosal, “Delenda Undone”
- Cisneros, “You Bring Out the Mexican in Me”
Discuss: language, voice, and identity

Week 14 – Facilitate eleventh Chat Cafe meeting.
Wed. Dec. 9 Celebration and final reflections on semester
Due: Creative capstone project
Suggested blog topics:
(Note: You need not feel bound by these suggestions. If your specific experiences with your circles and/or with the course lead you in different directions, I encourage you to address those. As long as you use your posts to engage thoughtfully and meaningfully with your role as a conversation facilitator, the blog will be doing its job.)

Blog #1 (week 2):
• As you prepare for your first session, what are you excited about?
• What are you nervous about?
• What motivates you to be a Chat Cafe facilitator?

Blog #2 (week 4):
• What was the most important thing you learned/gained from our class session with Carson and Angelo from ELI?
• What characterizes a “genuine” conversation? What can you do to foster such conversations with your group?

Blog #3 (week 6):
• What are the different challenges between planning a conversation in advance and facilitating the conversation in real-time?
• Now that you've gotten to know your participants a little bit, has that changed your approach to your conversation group? How and why?
• What did you learn by observing one of your peers' conversation groups?

Blog #4 (week 8):
• How have you addressed cultural vs. linguistic differences in your conversation group meetings? Why did you choose to address them in this way?
• Are you comfortable distinguishing between linguistic and cultural differences? Why or why not? What do you wish you knew more about? How can you develop that knowledge?

Blog #5 (week 10):
• What cultural frustrations have your participants expressed?
• Through your group's conversations, have you come to understand anything new or unexpected about specific challenges faced by international students at the university?
• What can be done (by you, by Sweetland, by the university) to help international students in addressing those challenges?

Blog #6 (week 12):
• What have been the best moments or biggest successes this semester in your conversation groups?
• What would you do better next time if you had it to do over again?
• Where do you go from here? How will you use your experience as a facilitator to better interact in other spheres? What have you learned that you can apply to your tutoring or teaching?)