

Conversation & Discussion (ESLC 0260)

Course Description

In this course students practice speaking skills necessary for maintaining conversations and participating in discussions. Topics include effective small talk strategies, questioning and requesting, giving opinions, asking for clarification, and offering suggestions. Students will expand their intercultural awareness and learn basic strategies for holding respectful and appropriate conversations when interacting across cultural differences. Pronunciation features and common idioms are also reviewed.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Participate more confidently in formal and informal conversations
- Understand the importance of cultural differences when communicating across cultures
- Use common phrases and idioms in conversations
- Question, state opinions, ask for clarification & offer suggestions effectively
- Participate in academic discussions with more confidence and understanding of cultural norms

Assignments

Details of all assignments will be provided in class.

Attendance & Letter of Completion

Students will receive a “letter of completion” at the end of this course, providing s/he attends a minimum of 80% of classes (8/10 classes). Please note that there will NOT be a record of this course on your U of M transcript.

Grading

Although homework will be assigned, assignments/presentations will not be formally graded. Instead, you will receive constructive feedback from the instructor. The emphasis in this course is on student improvement in the language areas covered in class.

What Will I Learn In Class?

Conversation and Discussion

- Intercultural Competence
- Impromptu Speaking: Speaking “Off the Cuff”
- Delay Tactics: What to say to give yourself time to think
- Informal Speaking: Small Talk
- Formal Speaking
- Group Discussions: Classroom Participation
- Intercultural communication strategies

Pronunciation

- Stress and Intonation patterns of English
- Connected Speech
- Segmentals

Delivery Skills

- Speaking with Confidence
- Making Eye contact
- Posture and Body Language
- Voice / Volume

Conversation Strategies

- Idioms and Phrases
- Introducing a topic
- Agreeing/Disagreeing
- Interrupting
- Hedging Language
- Spoken Grammar
- Phrases for Academic Speaking (If Time Permits)