



SYLLABUS 2026

1. COURSE TITLE

Speaking and Writing Skills for Academic and Career Success

1.1. Course number

SSS-6ECTS

1.2. Content area

Transversal skills

1.3. Course level

Undergraduate

1.4. Language

English

1.5. Prerequisites

None

1.6. Minimum attendance requirement

Attendance is mandatory. Minimum attendance to pass the course is 80%.



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1.7. Faculty data

Director: Prof. Dr. Beatriz Narbona

Complete list of professors and relevant biography (in alphabetical order of last name):

- Prof. Dr. Patricia González-Díaz: Assistant Professor, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, UAM. Doctor in Applied Linguistics (UAM): Language acquisition, Cognitive linguistics, and Corpus Tool (UAM). Master in 'Teaching Spanish as a foreign language' (UAH) and Bachelor English Degree (UGR). Other relevant facts: Translator specialized in Robotics and Technology in collaboration with University Carlos III. Teacher specialized in Cambridge, IELTS, Trinity, and TOEFL exams.
- Prof. Dr. Raúl Jiménez-Vilches: Assistant Professor, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, UAM. Doctor in Applied Linguistics (UAM). Other relevant facts: His dissertation studies the role of English intonation and prosody in the context of oral presentations. He has been teaching English Phonetics and Phonology (segmental and suprasegmental levels) at the English Studies Department (UAM) since 2009. He has been supervising undergraduate theses (TFGs) and Master theses (TFMs) at the Master's for Teaching at Secondary Education programme (UAM). He has also been teaching workshops on English pronunciation at the Nebrija University (2018) and on how to write a TFG in English for in-service Primary school teachers at the UCM (2017 and 2018).
- Prof. Dr. Beatriz Narbona: Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, UAM. Doctor in Applied Linguistics (U Seville - Sheffield U), Bachelor's Degree in English Philology (U Seville) with major in English for Specific Purposes. Other relevant facts: at present, her main areas of research focus on Sharing Economy and on Language Assessment. Member of Selectividad, PAU and EvaU Tribunals for 25 years as corrector and exam creator. Academic and recruitment advisor for different companies in the Tourism Industry, and in Language Teaching and Testing institutions. Assessment advisor and Speaking & Writing test content designer (Educational Testing Service Spain).



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1.8. Course objectives

A) Introduction

The SSS is a two-week study program, taught in English, in which students will focus on important skills they need to master to be successful university students and professionals, such as effective listening and reading skills, presenting to large audiences, or writing papers. These skills are combined with instruction that supports argumentation, persuasion, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. In addition, students will work in small teams to make presentations to the whole group, practicing speaking and writing skills.

B) Objectives

Public speaking and presentation techniques are designed to prepare you to make unforgettable presentations. You will learn communication techniques and how to connect with the audience. In particular, the objectives are:

- Acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make attractive and successful presentations.
- Acquire knowledge and skills to achieve effective, transparent and fluid communication with your audience.

Reading efficiently and writing high-quality academic papers are skills you will work on in the course to be able to write excellent compositions for academic purposes. You will:

- Acquire knowledge and skills necessary to process written information efficiently, being able to use different techniques depending on your goal.
- Acquire knowledge and skills to write texts conveying your message in a formal, coherent and interesting manner that will attract, entertain or convince your audience.

In addition to the primary objective, the course has a secondary objective. The complementary objective is to provide an enriching study abroad experience. Studying abroad provides students with extraordinary benefits in terms of academic, cultural, and personal enrichment, improving soft skills.



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C) Competencies

This course aims to develop the following key competencies:

A. Generic Competencies:

- a. **Analytical and Synthesis Skills:** The ability to break down complex information from various sources (e.g., listening, reading) and integrate it into coherent understanding for speaking and writing.
- b. **Information Management Skills:** Effectively locating, evaluating, and utilizing diverse written and spoken information to support academic and professional tasks.
- c. **Problem-Solving Skills:** Applying communication techniques and critical thinking to address challenges in presenting, debating, and writing.
- d. **Critical Reasoning:** Analyzing arguments, identifying key points, and forming well-reasoned responses in both oral and written communication.
- e. **Ethical Commitment:** Understanding and applying ethical considerations, particularly in academic writing and the use of AI tools.
- f. **Autonomous Learning:** Taking initiative and responsibility for improving personal speaking and writing skills for academic and career success.
- g. **Interpersonal Communication Skills:** Effectively interacting with others through active listening, turn-taking, and managing interruptions in discussions and debates.
- h. **Practical Application of Knowledge:** Applying theoretical understanding of speaking and writing techniques to real-world presentations, discussions, and academic papers.



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B. Specific Competencies

- a. **Effective Oral Communication:** Delivering clear, confident, persuasive, and engaging presentations and participating effectively in discussions and debates.
- b. **Proficient Written Communication:** Producing high-quality academic and professional texts that are formal, coherent, interesting, and well-structured, adhering to academic conventions.
- c. **Academic Literacy:** Efficiently processing written information, evaluating sources, planning and organizing ideas for writing, and correctly citing and referencing.
- d. **Digital Literacy for Communication:** Understanding and utilizing relevant digital tools, including AI tools, responsibly in academic writing.

D) Expected Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding:

- 1. Know fundamental principles of effective listening, including understanding general ideas, main stresses, intonation, and guessing meaning from context.
- 2. Know key elements of public speaking, such as confidence, vulnerability, storytelling, use of voice, cadence, and non-verbal language.
- 3. Identify essential structural components of academic and professional presentations, including introduction, main body, summarizing, and conclusion.
- 4. Recognize different types of academic texts and effective reading strategies for various goals.
- 5. Articulate principles of effective academic writing, including paragraph structure, developing coherent arguments, tone, voice, and formality.
- 6. Know techniques for cohesion and coherence in writing, such as nominal and lexical cohesion, paraphrasing, quotation, and expressing sources of evidence.



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7. Know various sentence manipulation devices used in academic writing, including passive and impersonal sentences, reporting, fronting, cleft sentences, and signposting.
8. Understand the basics of APA style for in-text citations and references, and formatting for bibliographies, abstracts, and keywords.
9. Know the role and ethical considerations of using AI tools in academic writing.

Application and Analysis:

10. Apply active listening techniques to understand spoken information and participate effectively in discussions.
11. Deliver engaging and successful oral presentations by integrating communication techniques, connecting with the audience, and structuring content effectively.
12. Utilize discourse markers and signposting to highlight key information and guide the audience during presentations.
13. Engage in discussions and debates by analyzing, opposing, supporting, taking turns, and managing interruptions.
14. Read academic texts efficiently and evaluate sources for academic writing.
15. Plan and organize ideas effectively to transition from reading to writing high-quality academic papers.
16. Construct well-structured paragraphs and develop coherent arguments with appropriate tone, voice, and formality in written compositions.
17. Employ various cohesion and coherence devices, including accurate paraphrasing and quotation, to enhance the clarity and flow of written texts.
18. Integrate sentence manipulation devices appropriately to convey messages formally and precisely in academic writing.
19. Apply APA style guidelines for in-text citations and references in academic papers.
20. Design academic texts by effectively using bibliographies, abstracts, and keywords.

Synthesis and Critical Thinking:

21. Critically evaluate spoken and written information, discerning main ideas and supporting details to inform personal communication.
22. Synthesize information from diverse sources to construct well-supported arguments for both oral presentations and academic essays.



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23. Formulate and express ideas clearly, coherently, and persuasively in both speaking and writing, adapting to different audiences and purposes.
24. Engage in self-reflection and peer feedback to continuously improve speaking and writing skills for academic and career success.

1.9. Course contents

The course contents are listed in the following tables:

SPEAKING

Topics	TITLE	SKILLS
1	Introduction to Listening. Listening to understand the general idea. Understanding main words stressed in a sentence. Not expecting to understand all the words. The importance of intonation.	Listening
2	Listening for detail; guessing meaning from context. Active listening.	Listening
3	Introduction to Speaking: Greeting, introducing yourself and the topic	Speaking
4	Connection: Confidence, vulnerability, and storytelling	Speaking
5	Communication: The use of the voice, cadence, and non-verbal language	Speaking
6	Discourse: Highlighting and signposting	Speaking
7	Discourse: Explaining, giving examples, and adding comments	Speaking
8	Discussion and debate: Analyzing, opposing, and supporting	Speaking
9	Discussion and debate: Turn-taking, managing interruptions	Speaking
10	Structure: Introduction, main body, summarizing, and concluding	Presentation
11	Using numbers: Approximation, ranges, big numbers	Presentation
12	Visual language: Presenting visual contents	Presentation
13	Other elements: Tables, charts, graphs	Presentation
14	Ending the presentation: Dealing with questions	Presentation
15	Practice your presentation	Presentation



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WRITING

Topics	TITLE	SKILLS
1	Introduction to Academic Reading & Writing	Orientation
2	Reading Strategies, Source Evaluation & Types of Academic Texts	Reading
3	From Reading to Writing: Planning and Organizing Ideas	Reading to Writing
4	Paragraph Writing and Structure	Writing
5	Developing a Coherent Argument: Tone, Voice, and Formality	Writing
6	Workshop 1: Argument Workshop (essay)	Writing
7	Cohesion and coherence: Nominal and lexical cohesion	Writing
8	Cohesion and coherence: Paraphrasing and quotation	Writing
9	Cohesion and coherence: Expressing the source of evidence of claims	Writing
10	Sentence manipulation devices: Passive and impersonal sentences	Writing
11	Sentence manipulation devices: Reporting	Writing
12	Sentence manipulation devices: Fronting and cleft sentences	Writing
13	Sentence manipulation devices: Signposting	Writing
14	APA Style: In-text Citations and References	Formatting
15	Design: Bibliography	Formatting
16	Design: Writing an abstract and keyword selection	Formatting
17	Workshop 2: Choosing and Designing your Academic Text. Peer Feedback	Writing
18	Using AI Tools in Academic Writing	Digital Literacy & Ethics
19	Evaluation (final paper)	Writing

1.10. Course bibliography

All materials will be made available through the Program's web platform.



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2. Teaching methodology

Teaching activities requiring students' attendance will be the following:

1. Classroom session: Lectures based upon the materials provided to students, and PowerPoint presentations. Practical exercises will apply some of the concepts presented in the lectures. Participation will be strongly encouraged.
2. Workshop on pronunciation (segmental) for delivering an articulate and accurate oral presentation.
3. Workshop on intonation and rhythm (suprasegmental phonetics) for delivering an attractive and persuasive oral presentation.
4. Workshop on structuring an impactful oral presentation (traditional techniques, engagement, and TED talk styles).
5. Workshop using stories and other drama techniques to create a truly effective and memorable presentation.
6. Workshop on Argumentative skills for writing an essay.
7. Workshop on producing written materials for academic purposes.
8. Workshop on AI tools for writing.
9. Optional: Non-compulsory sessions with one or several students during office hours.

Students' activities not requiring attendance will be the following:

1. Personal study for preparing class tasks and the exam.
2. A multiple-choice take-home exam about speaking skills, to be delivered electronically through Moodle or via email.
3. Speaking tasks for the final exam recorded in video doing a speech and presentation to be delivered via email.
4. A writing take-home exam, which will be delivered electronically through Moodle or via email.



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3. Student workload

ACTIVITIES	HOURS	ECTS	%
With attendance	60	2.40	40.00
Lectures, practical sessions, guest lectures, visits to institutions and field trips	60	2.40	40.00
With no attendance	90	3.60	60.00
Personal study and homework	80	3.20	53.33
Speech and presentation video recording	2	0.08	1.33
Speaking multiple-choice exam	1	0.04	0.67
Writing exam	7	0.28	4.67
TOTAL	150	6.00	100.00

4. Evaluation procedures and weight of components in the final grade

PROCEDURE	% GRADE
Attendance, homework and participation	50.00
Speech and presentation video recording	15.00
Speaking multiple-choice exam	10.00
Writing take-home exam	25.00
TOTAL	100.00