TITLE OF COURSE: English for Journalism

PROGRAM TITLE:

CODE:

TYPE: CURS: 3 SEMESTRE:
CREDITS (hores/setmana):
ECTS CREDITS:
LECTURER: Roger Gilabert
LANGUAGE: English

PREREQUISITES:

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE: This program assumes that students have taken at least 320 hours of English and are, therefore, familiar with upper-intermediate grammar structures and vocabulary of the language.

SUBJECTS TO BE STUDIED SIMULTANEOUSLY:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English for journalist has been designed according to the needs perceived by professional and academic journalists. It is based on research findings in the field of English for specific purposes (ESP) and the program follows the principles advanced by the Section of Modern Languages of the Council of Europe. The course has been created from a communicative perspective and is taught by means of task-based methodology. Students have to carry out a series of tasks and projects related to different topics within the field of journalism. In those tasks and projects, students will use English, both receptively and productively, to accomplish the objectives set for each task or longer-term project. As far as materials are concerned, reading and listening exercises have been designed with authentic materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To improve linguistic and communicative strategies involved in the five main groups of tasks that journalists need to perform. These include documentation, interviewing, e-mail communication, telephone language, and socializing.

- To familiarize students with the most common words, idioms, and metaphors of the language in the media.

- To develop reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills as associated with media topics.

- To raise students’ awareness of how language choices influence meanings in the media.

CONTENTS:
The contents of the course will revolve around the five major areas in which journalists need training in English: documentation, interviewing, e-mail communication, telephone language, and socializing.

Documentation: natural disasters, immigration, armed conflicts, elections, terrorism, cloning, business scandals, peace talks, crime and punishment, film reviews, technology, sports, arts, and headline language, among others.

Interviewing: written interviews, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and press conferences.

E-mail communication: Requesting, thanking, and apologizing, among others.

Telephone language: obtaining information and making arrangements, among others.

Socializing: the use of social formulas (e.g. introducing yourself and others, attracting someone’s attention) the provision and retrieval of information (e.g. providing personal information, describing people and things, narrating, solving communication problems) expressing opinions (asking for an opinion, agreeing and disagreeing, speculating, predicting, expressing possibility or certainty) actions (promising, giving reasons, thanking, accepting and declining an offer, persuading, suggesting, advising).

METHODOLOGY:
Students must carry out a series of journalism-related tasks (e.g. sourcing an article, interviewing a source, requesting information via e-mail) which have a specific goal, a particular procedure, and from which an outcome is expected. Hence, each task begins with a pre-task phase in which ideas are activated and input is provided. During the task-cycle, students must work in pairs or small groups in class or outside class. This is followed by a planning stage which students use to prepare and practice their report, and a report phase, which demands a public oral presentation of the students’ work. Each task concludes with a language focus stage in which specific words, collocations, idioms, and metaphors are targeted. Part of this phase can be carried out by students outside the class. Students are also expected to carry out research, obtain information from sources, and make use of the self-access room outside class.

EVALUACIÓ:

A. Exams
B.  
C. Tests
D.  
E.  
F. Reports/group work
G. Practical computerized work
H. Projects
I. Presentations
J. Class participation
K.  
L.  
M.  
...
Final exam 50%

Class work 50% (Class oral presentations, written work, and participation)

CRITERIS D’AVALUACIÓ DE RESULTATS:

At the end of the course:

Objective 1: Oral production and interaction

- Students should be able to express themselves fluently display strategies to overcome occasional communication breakdowns during interaction, as well as show command of typical conversational patterns and short answers.
- Students should show command of media-related terms. They should be able to talk about the most common news topics (e.g. disasters, armed conflicts, immigration, etc.) with precise and accurate vocabulary.
- Students should show they can use high frequency idioms and metaphors which are typically used in the media.
- Students should display a basic ability to interview sources. They should be able to master different question types, pragmatic markers, and formulaic language.
- Students should be able to keep a conversation over the phone, with the use of typical formulas.
- Students should be able to socialize in English, use conversational formulas, be able to produce small talk, to tell personal narratives, and to negotiate.

Objective 2: Reading Comprehension

- Students should be able to abstract information from both introductory and specialized journalism-related texts.
- Students are expected to find specific information in news articles, news wires, press releases, official reports, scientific reports, statistical reports, among others.
- Students must be able to interpret the main ideas in opinion and feature articles, and to guess complex meanings from context.

Objective 3: Listening Comprehension

- Students should be able to understand and interpret the information in TV news and radio news broadcasts.
- Students should be able to understand high- and medium-frequency news-related and media-unrelated words, and show they can guess the meaning of low-frequency words from contextual cues.
- Students must show they understand their interlocutor during normal interaction and that they have some strategies to overcome communication breakdowns, as well as show understanding of pragmatic information.

Objective 4: Written production

- Students must show their ability to communicate through writing in professional situations, such as to arrange interviews or request information.
• Students must be able to demonstrate sophisticated organizational skills when writing, display use of complex connectors, complex structures, formulaic language, as well as idioms and collocations.

TEXTBOOKS:

A dossier with class materials: Gilabert, R. *English for Journalists*.

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

News clips and radio recordings.
Speak-up CDs
BBC World Service, Words in the media section

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