English Communication for International Graduate Student Instructors  
Autumn 2016

Course Overview  
This course is designed for international graduate students for whom English is an additional language who are currently teaching or plan to teach in the near future. In the course, students will improve their English proficiency with a focus on the culturally-specific communication skills needed to succeed as an instructor.

Course Objectives  
- To build linguistic and cultural competence  
- To be able to recognize common pedagogical practices in the United States and understand how these practices differ from those of home country  
- To develop an understanding of the expectations and assumptions of U.S. students and their communications strategies  
- To build confidence when speaking  
- To develop/refine active listening skills  
- To refine rehearsed and controlled speaking strategies  
- To improve ability to field questions and respond appropriately when challenged by students  
- To improve North American English pronunciation, especially with discipline-specific and academic terms  
- To build vocabulary for the classroom  
- To develop metacognitive awareness and learner autonomy  
- To identify strengths and areas needing improvement

References  

Class includes:  
- Interactive class lectures and discussions  
- Microteaching: Students will prepare and teach mini-lessons relevant to their academic discipline (3), Week 1, Week 4 & Week 7  
- Recordings and analysis  
- Constructive feedback from peers and instructors, and self-reflection  
- Individual meetings/tutorials with instructor (Week 5 & end of course)  
- A detailed, formative assessment of language skills, teaching skills, interactive language skills and overall impression as well as culturally appropriate non-verbal and linguistic pragmatics
Week 1

- Introduction to Course
- Overview of language proficiency interview and proficiency levels
- Self-assessment
- Introduction to the International TA “problem” at U.S. universities
- Article: “Not a Lick of English, Constructing ITA Identity through Student Narratives” (discussion in class)
- The characteristics of a good teacher and the relationship to culture
- Pronunciation practice: names and building trust in the U.S. classroom
- Watch and analyze videos of instructors introducing themselves
- **Microteaching 1**: Video-recorded presentation introducing self and fielding general questions
- Diagnose linguistic challenges with focus on pronunciation (sounds, stress, thought groups, rhythm, linking, intonation and emphasis) and structure

Week 2

- Nonverbal communication (cross-cultural differences in the classroom, including personal space, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, head movements, touching, concepts of time and dress)
- Strategies for communicating with U.S. students. Teacher presence and demonstrating confidence and approachability for students
- Building vocabulary (classroom expressions and terms)
- Refining pronunciation and effective compensation strategies
- Difficult situations faced by new teachers and problem-solving strategies and role plays in the US classroom

Week 3

- Introduction to explaining a visual effectively
- Being more directive. How to tell students what to do in a firm yet polite manner
- Cross-cultural comparisons and levels of directness and formality
- Role plays to build culturally-appropriate politeness strategies
- The ideal teacher and the characteristics of a “good” teacher in the United States (undergraduate perspectives)
- Prepare for microteaching in week 4: Video-recorded presentation explaining a visual that is relevant to student’s discipline

Week 4

- **Microteaching 2**: Present visual and field questions (10 minutes/video-taped.
- Evaluating your peers/classmates and self-critique
- Individual learning styles and impact on North American pedagogical practices (accommodating difference)
- How to engage students who challenge the instructor (role plays and discussion)

Week 5

- Individual consultations with instructor
(Homework Reading: “Strategies for addressing questions in US classrooms”)
(Homework Recording: Pronunciation and intonation practice for addressing questions in class)

Week 6
- Review strategies for addressing student questions (responding, restating, rephrasing, monitoring student comprehension)
- Practice giving concise answers, and restating questions with a purpose
- Fielding questions (presentation and discussion) (three-second rule, restatement, clarity and comprehension check)
- Role plays/practice
- Tone and voice exercises for effective questions
- Preparing an interactive presentation on a topic of general interest with embedded questions and leading a brief discussion

Week 7
- **Microteaching 3**: Presenting a topic of general interest and leading discussion (10 minutes)
- U.S. epistemology; values and assumptions that underlie the importance of discussion
- Leading an effective discussion in United States classroom
- Focus on fluency, comprehensibility, and compensation strategies
- Giving effective instructions and building vocabulary
- (Homework: Critique/evaluation of own performance and of peers)

Week 8
- Individual consultations
- Course evaluation/final student self-assessment
- Where to go from here? (Teaching at UChicago, in US, in home country, abroad?)