



**School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Course Outline**

ALIN 301

**Approaches to Grammar in Second Language Teaching & Learning
Trimester 1, 2 March-1 July, 2009**

1. Course Coordinator:

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2. Lecturers:

Peter Gu
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3. Class times and rooms: Each week there is a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial for the twelve weeks of the first trimester.

Lecture 1	Monday	10.00-10:50	MYLT220
Lecture 2	Tuesday	10.00-10:50	MYLT220
Tutorial Group 1	Wednesday	14.10-15.00	MY105
Tutorial Group 2	Thursday	15.10-16.00	MY303

4. Announcements: B. Ed. TESOL/Second Language Education Noticeboard Level 3 Von Zedlitz

5. LALS main office: VZ 210, 2nd floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

6. ALIN 301 Course Administrator: Vivien Trott, Undergraduate administration
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7. Aims: This course looks at the issues involved in the teaching and learning of grammar, vocabulary, and discourse in an ESL/EFL context.

8. Objectives: By the end of the course, you should

- a. become aware of the psycholinguistic processes in the learning of grammar
- b. become aware of different perspectives to the teaching of grammar
- c. be able to make informed decisions and pedagogical choices for grammar teaching

9. Content: The following topics will be covered in the course. The dates given are for the Monday at the beginning of each week. Required readings are listed under each topic.

Week	beginning	Topic and readings
1	2 March	What is grammar? Thornbury (1999) Ch 1 Ch 2 Larsen-Freeman (2002)
2	9 March	What do we know about the learning of grammar? Ellis (1997), Yip (1994)
3	16 March	Explicit teaching of grammar Thornbury (1999) Ch 3 Ellis (1992)
4	23 March	Implicit teaching of grammar Thornbury (1999) Ch 4 Richards (2002)
5	30 March	Practicing grammar Thornbury (1999) Ch 6; Swain (2000)
6	6 April	Dealing with grammar errors Thornbury (1999) Ch 7, Long & Robinson (1998) Ferris (2004)
Break		
7	27 April	Teaching and learning vocabulary Nation & Newton (1997) Schmitt (2000)
8	4 May	The lexical approach Little (1994) Willis (1994)
9	11 May	Grammar and discourse Thornbury (1999) Ch 5 Celce-Murcia (2002)
10	18 May	Integrating grammar Thornbury (1999) Ch 8 Ch 10 Ellis (2005)
11	25 May	Testing grammar Thornbury (1999) Ch 9 Purpura (2004)
12	1 June	Data-driven approaches to grammar Tsui (2004) Bernardini (2004)

10. Texts: There are two required texts.

The set text for the course is Thornbury, Scott (1999). *How to teach grammar*. Longman. It is available from VicBooks.

The set readings *ALIN 301 Set Readings* are available from the Student Notes Distribution Centre.

11. Assessment:

Component	Weight	Word limits / duration	Objectives
Two tasks	15% each, totalling 30%	Each task – 800 words	b, c
One short in-class test	20%	One hour	a, b
Assignment	50%	Approximately 2,500 words	a, b, c

Assessment criteria

The assessable tasks and assignment will be graded, when applicable, with the following criteria in mind:

- Understanding of the content of the course
- Application to a teaching context
- Development of teaching material
- Integration of experience, reflection, and input from ALIN301, including wide reading of relevant literature
- Insights, critical analysis and originality
- Presentation and readability

Due dates for tasks, test and assignment

Task 1	Monday 30 March
Task 2	Monday 27 April
Assignment	Monday 8 June

Test date	Monday 6 April	Topics 1-5
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N.B. Note that if no work is submitted for assessment before the last three weeks of teaching, there will be nothing on which to base an aegrotat consideration.

Tasks

- Task 1 Find a course book for ESL/EFL learners. Analyse and comment on the approach to a particular grammatical point which is taught in this textbook. Follow the example of Ellis (1992), and design a consciousness-raising task to teach the same grammatical point.
- Task 2 Collect a piece of written English produced by ESL learners. A student composition will be provided if you are unable to gain access to students.
- Identify all the grammatical errors (not wrong vocabulary choices).
 - Classify all the errors and describe the main types.
 - Choose one significant error or type of error you might wish to correct. Explain why you wish to correct it.
 - Describe the choices available to you to help learners correct errors of this type in their writing, and indicate which one you would choose in this case. Justify your choice.

Assignment

The assignment is due on Monday 8 June 2009. There is no word limit, but a typical assignment is around 2,500 words long.

Assignment topics

- 1 Compare and contrast explicit and implicit approaches to grammar teaching.

Suggestions: The assignment should include at least the following sections.

- Outline the major features of each approach, and discuss the pros and cons of each side and the possibility of a combined approach. You should provide theoretical arguments and research evidence.
 - Use concrete examples, e.g., classroom teaching materials and procedures, demonstrate how your understanding of the issue can be integrated into a specific teaching context for a specific group of students.
- 2 Analyse the vocabulary learning strategies of a particular group of students. Based on your analysis, propose ways of teaching vocabulary to this group of students.

Suggestions: This assignment can be done in either of the following approaches.

- A small scale research project. You need to have access to either a group of students (for a survey) or at least one or two students (for a case study). Design a task that elicits the vocabulary learning strategies of this student sample. Describe the vocabulary learning strategies either in terms of patterns or in terms of concrete examples. Comment on these strategies in relation to existing research. Propose ways in which this group of students or similar students can be taught to better learn vocabulary.
 - Review the relevant literature about vocabulary learning strategies in a particular teaching and learning context, e.g., EFL in Malaysia. Based on the research findings you outline, design a vocabulary teaching programme for this group of students.
- 3 Design a 60-minute workshop on “Getting help with grammar”. Your job is to help your fellow teachers identify particular problems with grammar, locate grammatical resources, and solve the grammar problem with these resources you identify. Write up the lesson plan for this workshop. Provide the rationale and contextualisation.

Suggestions: This is a workshop that showcases the corpus-based approach to grammar teaching. This assignment should contain at least the following two parts.

- The rationale for such an approach, the reasons you decide to conduct the workshop the way you plan to do it, and the particular teaching context where this is done. Contextualisation should also include the level of teaching, e.g., senior secondary schools, the overall blueprint in which your lesson plan is part.
 - The lesson plan for the workshop itself. The lesson plan does not have to follow a fixed format, but should be detailed enough, and include a step-by-step break-up of the 60 minutes, sample materials and tasks you would use for each step and the purposes you want to achieve with each step.
- 4 Design a test that evaluates a particular set of grammatical features, e.g., tense. Justify your test by providing the rationale behind the test, e.g., construct specifications, content coverage and representativeness, test structure and format, and marking scheme.

Suggestions: This assignment should include at least two parts: the test you design, and the rationale or the thinking behind your test. Use Bachman and Palmer’s (1996) three stages, i.e., design, operationalization, and administration, and what should be done at each stage as an overall guide. Provide any information you can obtain about the qualities of your test.

Tip: Do not try to design a comprehensive test. Focus on one aspect of grammar.

If you wish to do a different topic you should first consult with Peter Gu.

12. Deadlines and penalties

In line with school policy, assignments handed in after the due date will receive a considerably reduced grade unless accompanied by a medical certificate or other evidence of exceptional

circumstances. If you require an extension for good reasons, ask the course coordinator ahead of the date for handing in the assignment.

Unless you have a valid extension granted for your assignment, the following penalties will apply:

For assignments handed in within a week after the due date, the maximum grade possible is C and no personal comment will be provided. Assignments handed in after this time receive no mark.

Plagiarism is not acceptable in assessed work, and will be penalised. The penalty will depend on the severity of the plagiarism. See General University Policies.

13. Relationship between assessment and course objectives: The assignment aims to get you to integrate theories and research into your own pedagogical decisions in the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and discourse. The test will focus on understanding the course book and readings. The tasks concentrate on application of the issues discussed.

14. Workload: ALIN 301 is a 24 point one-trimester paper. Course members should expect to spend about 15 hours per week for twelve weeks on all the work for this course including lectures. The total assessment should be around 5,000 words.

15. Mandatory Course Requirements (Terms): There are minimum course requirements which must be satisfied to be assessed for the final grade. In order to meet these requirements, course members must

- complete the 2 tasks
- sit the test
- attend all the classes
- complete the assignment.

16. Attendance: Course members must attend all lectures and tutorials unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.