



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**LALS 512 TEACHING AND LEARNING GRAMMAR**  
**15 POINTS**

**TRIMESTER 1 2016**

### **Key dates**

**Trimester dates:** 29 February to 29 June 2016

**Teaching dates:** 14 March to 5 June 2016

**Easter break:** 24–30 March 2016

**Mid-trimester break:** 25 April to 1 May 2016

**Last assessment item due:** 15 June 2016

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds).

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)).

### **Class times and locations**

Wednesday, 16.10 -18.00; 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 101

### **Names and contact details**

**Course coordinator / lecturer:**

Associate Professor Frank Boers

Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room 409

In office: On appointment

Phone: 463 6014

Email: [frank.boers@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:frank.boers@vuw.ac.nz)

**MA course administration at LALS:**

Janet Attrill

Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ210

Phone: 463 5894 or 463 5600

Email: [janet.attrill@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:janet.attrill@vuw.ac.nz)

Post: School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington,  
PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

## Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

## Prescription

An analysis and evaluation of diverse pedagogical interventions intended to facilitate grammar acquisition, with a view to helping practitioners optimise their design of course materials and classroom activities.

## Course content

After discussing what is understood by 'grammar', we investigate the challenges that second language learners face when it comes to acquiring L2 grammar, and we explore the factors that influence the likelihood that a given grammar feature will be acquired incidentally.

We then characterise the main strands in L2 grammar pedagogy, and evaluate these strands with reference to published research findings.

Students will weigh the benefits of different interventions and will learn to make judicious decisions about grammar-instruction.

The insights which this course aims to foster are relevant to L2 grammar in general, but most of the examples and materials used in the course concern L2 English.

The course content is planned as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Conceptions of "grammar"
2	Justifications for a focus on grammar
3	Textual enhancement
4	Processing Instruction, part 1
5	Processing Instruction, part 2
6	Present – Practise – Produce (PPP)
7	Focused tasks in Task-Based Learning (TBLT), part 1
8	Focused tasks in Task-Based Learning (TBLT), part 2
9	Data-driven / Discovery learning
10	Exploring rhyme and reason; Taking stock

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

**Students who pass this course will be able to:**

1. make informed judgements about the need for their students to receive instruction intended to raise their awareness of particular L2 grammar features
2. accurately describe the morphological and syntactic regularities of English, using accepted terminology
3. make informed predictions about the likely benefits resulting from particular interventions intended to foster learning of particular L2 grammar features
4. identify the 'schools of thought' behind activities and exercises in textbooks intended for grammar learning
5. evaluate classroom activities intended to foster learning of a particular grammar feature
6. design informed classroom activities intended to foster learning of a particular grammar feature.

## Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as workshops. For distance students, the course is delivered on-line through <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>.

In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Preparation for each class involves reading one or more articles and performing a task / responding to a question.

## Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes and/or contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard (25 hrs), reading and reviewing the essential and recommended texts (85 hrs), and preparing the assessment items (40 hrs).

## Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 512:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	CLOs
1.	Identify a grammar feature of English that is (a) problematic for a group of learners you are familiar with, (b) unlikely to be acquired without explicit instruction. Explain why. Contrast this with a feature that you expect to be acquired relatively easily by these learners without the need for instruction.	30%	1,500	15 April	1, 2
2.	Analyse and evaluate the way a grammar feature of your choice is tackled in a textbook.	30%	1,500	23 May	3, 4, 5
3.	Design a classroom activity (or a sequence of activities) of about 50 minutes intended to foster mastery of a chosen grammar feature. Describe the rationale for the proposed lesson.	40%	2,000	15 June	1, 2, 6

### The criteria for marking are:

- coherence and clarity of the argumentation
- factual accuracy of the language description
- evidence of having grasped the course contents
- incorporation of ideas and findings from (cited) research literature.

Grade descriptors (applicable to all LALS MA courses) will be made available on Blackboard.

## Submission and return of work

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Feedback will be given to students also via Blackboard. Feedback on assignment one will be given within a period of two weeks after submission.

## Extensions and penalties

No penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission (requested via e-mail) to submit the assignment after the deadline. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also consult the course coordinator (via e-mail) in case your text exceeds the word limit, to be advised whether/what cuts need to be made.

## Materials

Apart from the mandatory reading (see below), you will need access to EFL/ESL textbooks or other EFL/ESL pedagogic materials for analysis and evaluation.

## Set texts

Articles to exemplify (research on) diverse approaches to L2 grammar, and a time schedule for reading them, will be made available on the LALS 512 Blackboard site. You will typically be required to read two articles per class. These should be read before the relevant class.

## Recommended reading

Additional, recommended articles on diverse strands of research on L2 grammar learning will be made available on Blackboard. These are intended to help students particularly with assignments two and three.

Students without any linguistics training will be required to familiarise themselves with descriptions of English grammar – it would be hard to make informed decisions about grammar instruction if one had no metalinguistic knowledge of the morpho-syntactic features of the language. A document (devised by the course lecturer) explaining basic terms will be made available on Blackboard as support, but students may find it useful to consult a more comprehensive, published, descriptive grammar of English. Many descriptive grammars of English are available. Past cohorts of students have found the following books helpful (but these are just suggestions):

Kennedy, G. (2003). *Structure and meaning in English: A guide for teachers*. Harlow: Pearson/Longman.  
Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Leech, G. (2002). *Longman student grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow: Pearson/Longman.

## Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected in the first week of the course. Her/his name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard.

## Student feedback

Student feedback was positive in 2015, with no suggestions for improvement. As several students mentioned they found the creative tasks (e.g., designing activities for learning) very useful, I'm planning to add a few more of those.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)