

**WRITING COURSE**  
(KIRJALIKU VÄLJENDUSE ÕPETUS)  
**FLGR.01.238**  
COURSE OUTLINE

**Semester:** Autumn 2013 - Spring 2014  
**Time and place:** Requalification Programme study sessions  
**Instructor:** Natalja Zagura  
**Home page:** [www.ut.ee/~n\\_zagura/Writing](http://www.ut.ee/~n_zagura/Writing)  
**E-mail:** [natalja.zagura@ut.ee](mailto:natalja.zagura@ut.ee)  
**Office hour:** by appointment  
**Format:** seminar  
**Credits:** 3 EAP, graded

**Aims:**

This is a practical course aiming at familiarising the students with the conventions of writing in English and contributing to the development of their writing skills. The aims will be met through the students

- 1) reading theoretical background material and discussing it in seminars;
- 2) reading and analysing samples of various types of writing;
- 3) using the acquired information in a variety of practical writing tasks.

**Content:**

The topics that will be covered within the course include the following: types of sentences and major punctuation rules; quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing; writing informal and formal letters/ emails, letters of application and CVs, the report, the essay and the research paper (writing and supervising it). In addition, major problem areas in the use of language structures and vocabulary/register will be discussed as part of feedback on writing assignments.

**Required reading:**

Pöldsäär, R. and Türk, Ü. 2009. *Style Sheet*.

The course reader

Both the documents are available online at [www.ut.ee/~n\\_zagura/Writing](http://www.ut.ee/~n_zagura/Writing) in a PDF format.

**Recommended reading:**

Students will need to use a good English-English dictionary, a grammar reference book and a book on English usage. The following reference materials can be consulted:

Cambridge, Collins Cobuild, Longman, Merriam-Webster, Oxford, etc. dictionary

Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. 2006. *Cambridge Grammar of English: a Comprehensive Guide. Spoken and Written English Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge, NY etc: Cambridge University Press.

*Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*. 2002. Oxford, New York: OUP.

Swan, M. 1980. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

**Course requirements:**

As this is a practical course, **regular attendance** is absolutely essential. If students miss a class, they will be to study the issues/ complete the tasks covered in the seminar independently. Missing more than two classes (out of eight) without a serious reason will lower the final grade. If students have attended less than four seminars, they will have to re-take the course.

Home assignments will be of two kinds: reading/ completing exercises and short writing assignments. All the assigned readings with accompanying exercises must be studied by the given date. **Active participation** in class discussions demonstrating your knowledge of the content of the readings and your ability to present and support your views will be essential for getting a positive grade. All **writing assignments** must be handed in by the set deadlines, unless students

have a valid excuse, in which case the instructor should be informed at least three days prior to the deadline. On those occasions, a delay of one session is allowed. Constant lateness will affect the final grade.

The extra materials discussed in seminars as well as links to recommended Internet materials are available at the course home page ([www.ut.ee/~n\\_zagura/Writing](http://www.ut.ee/~n_zagura/Writing)). Descriptions of current assignments will be provided there as well.

In order to pass the course, at least 4 seminars (out of 8) have to be attended and all the writing assignments have to be completed. The students who have met these criteria are allowed to take the quiz (see detailed information below), which the course ends with.

Your course grade will take into account the work done in class and at home, the result of the quiz as well as your personal progress throughout the course.

### **Guidelines for writing assignments:**

Most writing assignments have to be word processed (*Times New Roman*, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, margins 2.5 each, indented paragraphs, justified) and handed in as hard copies. In that case, mailed and handwritten assignments are acceptable only if you have asked and were given permission to do so. Some assignments will have to be submitted electronically, the instructor will inform you about those cases in advance. All assignments should have titles and be marked with the author's name, the course name and the date of completion.

### **Your writing assignments will be assessed according to the following criteria:**

#### **Content:**

- Are the writer's main idea and primary purpose clear?
- Does the beginning make the reader want to read on?
- Have all the aspects of the topic been covered?
- Is all the information relevant to the topic?
- Are the main ideas supported by specific examples or evidence?
- Is the text as a whole interesting to read?

#### **Organisation:**

- Are the overall structure and format appropriate to the set task?
- Is there a clear introduction and a clear conclusion?
- Is the sequence of the ideas clear?
- Does the text have clear paragraph divisions?
- Is each paragraph built around one main idea or topic?

#### **Use of sources (when use of sources is required):**

- Is it clear which ideas are the author's own and which come from some source?
- Are in-text references used correctly and appropriately?
- Are the sources listed correctly at the end of the work?

#### **Cohesion and coherence:**

- Are the connections between the ideas clear?
- Have the connecting words been used appropriately?  
(for a short selection of signalling devices see [http://lepo.it.da.ut.ee/~n\\_zagura/Signalling\\_Devices](http://lepo.it.da.ut.ee/~n_zagura/Signalling_Devices))
- Is each reference item used clearly and appropriately?

#### **Vocabulary and register:**

- Is the vocabulary used varied enough?
- Is the vocabulary appropriate to the task  
(register, collocation and connotation words)?

#### **Language structures:**

- Is there a large enough variety in the structures used?
- Have all the grammatical structures been used accurately?

#### **Mechanics:**

- Is spelling accurate?
- Have punctuation marks been used accurately and effectively?

#### **Each of the aspects will be marked out of four, where**

- 4 = excellent, cannot be improved on much
- 3 = good, a few minor problems which can be edited out easily
- 2 = satisfactory, in need of some revision and editing
- 1 = poor, needs major revisions and/or editing
- 0 = does not meet the requirements, should be revised extensively

## FORM OF ASSESSMENT

The **mark for the course** will be given on the basis of the results of writing assignments and a quiz (there will be no exam); attendance, punctuality with presenting papers and personal development will also be taken into account.

The **quiz** consists of six questions. There are four theoretical questions concerning the main types of writing discussed during the course (see *Topics for Revision* below) and the topic of supervising students' research projects (we do not discuss it in class, but you are expected to work with the suggested articles on your own). In the fifth question you will be asked to comment on the register used in a passage and justify your opinion. In the final question you will be asked to integrate quotation in a text and document the source.

The **final exam** taken at the end of the entire Requalification Programme also contains two parts/papers related to the content of Writing Course. You will be asked to (1) write a text 200 words in length (a letter, report or essay – depending on the task) and (2) correct mistakes in a text, which can also be a letter, an essay or a report.

## TOPICS FOR REVISION

### Informal letters

- types and their functions
- structure, main elements
- layout
- language and style: distinctive features

### Semi-formal letters

- distinctive features

### Formal letters

- types and their functions
- structure, main elements
- layout
- language and style: distinctive features

### CV

- two main types: their advantages and disadvantages
- aims and content

### Reports

- types and their functions
- structure, main elements
- distinctive features (as compared with essays): layout, content, style

### Essays

- types and their functions
- structure, main elements
- introductions and conclusions: content and possible techniques
- language and style: distinctive features
- writing process

### Research paper

- process of working on a project
- structure, main elements, content
- language and style
- roles of the supervisor

### Referencing and documenting sources

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## Writing Course: paper template

Student's Name  
*Writing Course*

28 September 2013

### Title of the Paper

Essays can be the primary form of assessment or one assessment component in various courses. They have to demonstrate your knowledge of the course content and the ability to critically engage with it, combine the acquired knowledge with independent reading and/or research, formulate an opinion and support it with logical argumentation and evidence. (Pöldsaa, Türk 2007b: para. 2)

All essay and research paper assignments must comply with the formal requirements set by the Department. The formal requirements apply to the layout, structure, style and referencing (see *Style Sheet*). The lecturers have the right not to read assignments which do not comply with the requirements. (ibid.: para. 4)

Leave margins of 2.5 cm on all sides. The text should be fully justified. You should use *Times New Roman* (point size 12) or a similar non-Microsoft font for the main text. Longer quotations require a smaller font (point size 10 or 11). Size 14 may be used for main headings and 13 for the sub-headings. Do not employ flashy styles and never mix fonts, except, possibly, in headings. **Bold** can be used for headings, sub-headings and for special emphasis. *Italics* can be used for special emphasis but should definitely be employed for book, journal, newspaper and film titles (note that titles of articles are not italicised!). Italics are also used to offset foreign words used in an English sentence (e.g., the sentence contained a *double entendre*) as well as for words, letters and numbers mentioned as themselves (e.g., a large 3 was painted on the door). The latter can also be put in single quotation marks (e.g., the Estonian for 'dog' is 'koer'). Use 1.5 spacing for essays and other current papers and double spacing for longer research papers except for long quotations (four lines and more) which should be single spaced. All paragraphs should be indented (five spaces). Do not use block style or leave an empty line between paragraphs. (Pöldsaa, Türk 2007a: para. 1-5)

### References

Pöldsaa, R. and Türk, Ü. 2007 a. *Style Sheet*. Available at

[http://www.ut.ee/fleng/files/style\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.ut.ee/fleng/files/style_sheet.pdf), accessed 11 September 2009.

Pöldsaa, R. and Türk, Ü. 2007 b. *Writing Assignments*. Available at

[http://www.ut.ee/fleng/files/writing\\_assignments.pdf](http://www.ut.ee/fleng/files/writing_assignments.pdf), accessed 11 September 2009.