

English 566: Teaching and Testing ESL Grammar
Fall 2018
Professor: Alex Poole, PhD
Online course
Office: A6 Cherry Hall
Office Phone: 745-5780
Office Hours: M, TH-1100-1200; by appointment
(Remember: You can meet with me on the phone, as well)
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Students will learn about:

- How ESL learners' grammar develops
- The methods and techniques used to teach ESL grammar
- Methods of evaluating ESL students via standardized and non-standardized tests and policy issues related to assessment

Narrative explanation: We will discuss the theoretical issues about second language grammar acquisition and the techniques used to teach second language grammar. Finally, we will look at the issue of language assessment, in general, and with specific regard to grammar. Issues such as validity, reliability, and standardized testing will be introduced.

It is important to remember, however, that we will not learn everything about grammar and assessment; instead, we will look at the major issues with the aim of having you become a more critical and self-directed teacher and curriculum designer. It is also important to note that we have both public and non-public school teachers in this class; therefore, readings will vary accordingly.

Kentucky Teacher Standards addressed: Designs/Plans, Manages Instruction, Assessment, Reflection, Collaboration, Content Knowledge, and Technology.

TESOL Standards addressed: 1) Language: Describing Language; Language Acquisition and Development; 2) Instruction: Planning for Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction; Managing and Implementing Standards-Based ESL and Content Instruction; 3) Assessment: Assessment Issues for ESL; Language Proficiency Assessment; Classroom Assessment for ESL.

Note on computer access: This course assumes you have a computer that can access the university's website and the web, in general, with little difficulty. Those whose computer access is not reliable need to find other facilities. Although occasional technical problems are understandable, computer crashes and the like are not valid excuses. As a rule, you should have access to another computer in case yours goes down; likewise, save all of your work not only on your computer, but also in two other places, preferably on a flash drive and as an email attachment. Let me know if you have any questions regarding how to do such things.

Course texts: All course texts are required. You can get them at the university bookstore or order them on-line at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or any other bookseller. You should get them ASAP. Likewise, as you will note below, we have other articles. I will post these articles under the "content" section of Blackboard.

1. Herrera, S., Murry, K., & Cabral, R. (2013). *Assessment accommodations for classroom teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Boston: Pearson.
2. Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to teach grammar*. Harlow, UK: Pearson.

Abedi, J. (2002). Standardized assessment tests and English language learners: Psychometric issues. *Educational Assessment*, 8, 231-257.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326977EA0803_02

Scheffler, P., & Cinciala, M. (2011). Explicit grammar rules and L2 acquisition. *ELT Journal*, 65, 13-23.
<https://doi:10.1093/elt/ccq019>

Evaluation:

- A. Blackboard Discussions: 260 points
- B. Paper: 225 points
- C. Mid-Term Exam: 200 points
- D. Final Exam: 200 points

Grading Scale

90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 0-59=F

Grades will not be curved. I will post all of your grades in the grade book on Blackboard.

Blackboard Discussions

Each week there will be questions under the "content" section that you must answer. These will be posted by Tuesday. These will be based on the week's readings/videos. I will also post notes/lectures (yes, you get to see me every week!) under the "content" section for several readings. I encourage you to read/watch these in order to make the material more comprehensible. **Responses to each week's questions must be posted by the following Monday at 1000AM.** If they are late, you get a zero for that particular posting. Answers are to be substantial, and must neither simply reject nor support another's assertion; instead, thoughtful analysis and explanation are expected. There is no minimum word length; simply put, you should fully answer the question. The rubric is on Blackboard.

Paper

You are to write a paper that focuses on one aspect of assessment that is relevant to the setting in which you teach (or wish to teach). You have the freedom to pick what you discuss about that issue; however, you cannot merely do a report. In other words, this does not merely entail describing an issue. Instead, you must discuss theoretical and practical problems and/or specific applications.

Possible examples include:

- Practical difficulties in using WIDA-ACCESS placement tests
- Authentic assessment and the non-literate adult
- Assessment accommodations in the college classroom
- Use of TOEFL for college admissions
- Portfolios in the writing classroom
- Performance testing in K-12/college settings
- Informal assessment and validity and/or reliability issues
- Validity/reliability problems with formative assessments
- Validity/reliability problems with summative assessment
- Background knowledge in content-area assessment

Whatever you decide to do, you must have your topic approved by me by **October 5th (email me)**. If you do not do

this on the specified date, I will take off four (4) percent from your final paper grade. I will also take off four (4) percent if you don't do the following two things: On **November 1st**, you will send me (via e-mail) (1) a 250-word synopsis of your paper (i.e., what you plan to do and why); (2) and a list of your sources (in APA style). On **November 15th**, you will send me a complete draft of your paper. I will review this and give you suggestions. Below are more specific requirements:

This paper must use a minimum of ten (10) library sources (none from the course materials).

This must be typed with 12 point font, Times New Roman style.

This paper must use APA style.

A creative and descriptive title is necessary.

No more than 100 words may be quoted.

Length: 10 pages (excluding title page, abstract, and citations). If you write fewer than 8 pages, you get a zero; if you write more than 13 pages, you get a zero.

- **Due date for final draft: December 6th**
- **Hand it in on Blackboard. The rubric is also on Blackboard. It should guide how you write the paper.**

Mid-Term Exam

I will post it **October 19th** and you will return it to me **October 26th** (on Blackboard, of course). This will be essay in format. The breadth and depth of answers, among other things, will determine one's grade. More specifically, the exam will involve students demonstrating clear evidence of (1) comprehending the material, (2) being able to give examples of how it is applied in instructional settings, (3) and being able to show its theoretical and instructional faults and limitations. No quotes are allowed; you must paraphrase instead.

Final Exam

This will be comprehensive. I will send it to you **November 27th** and you will return it to me **December 5th** (on Blackboard). This will be essay in format. The breadth and depth of answers, among other things, will determine one's grade. More specifically, the exam will involve students demonstrating clear evidence of (1) comprehending the material, (2) being able to give examples of how it is applied in instructional settings, (3) and being able to show its theoretical and instructional faults and

limitations. No quotes are allowed; you must paraphrase instead. The rubric is on Blackboard.

Course Calendar

Week One:

- Thornbury, chapters 1 & 2
- Themes: What is grammar? Why teach grammar?
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl_n2jm0fJY

Week Two:

- Thornbury, chapter 3
- Theme: How to teach grammar from rules
- Scheffler and Cinciala article

Week Three:

- Thornbury, chapter 4
- Theme: How to teach grammar from examples

Week Four:

- Thornbury, chapter 5
- Theme: How to teach grammar through texts

Week Five:

- Thornbury, chapter 6
- Themes: How to practice grammar; communicative grammar with multiple proficiency levels
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx2aZgvbSvA>

Week Six:

- Thornbury, chapter 7
- Theme: How to deal with grammar errors (or is it grammatical errors? Hmmm)
- http://tapestry.usf.edu/responding_to_errors/

Week Seven:

- Thornbury, chapters 8 & 10
- Themes: How to integrate grammar; how not to teach grammar
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpIFqdTYDUA>

Week Eight:

- Thornbury, chapter 9
- HMC, chapter 1
- Themes: How to test grammar; the purposes of testing

Week Nine:

- HMC, chapter 2
- Theme: Authentic assessment

Week Ten:

- HMC, chapters 3 and 4

- Themes: Response to intervention, preinstructional assessment, and the CLD student; assessment of acculturation

Week Eleven:

- HMC, chapter 5; Abedi article
- Theme: Assessment of language proficiency

Week Twelve:

- HMC, chapter 6
- <http://tapestry.usf.edu/assessments/index.html>
- Theme: Assessment of content-area learning; assessment accommodations

Week Thirteen: Work week

Week Fourteen:

- HMC, chapter 8
- Theme: Postinstructional Assessment

Week Fifteen:

- Finals week

Essential due dates:

Blackboard: Weekly (by Monday, 1000AM)

Paper: Topic–October 5th; synopsis–November 1st; rough draft–November 15th final draft–December 6th

Mid-Term: October 26th

Final exam: December 5th

Student Disability Services

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Note for week four: Talk about what you could do with the text in the video to focus on grammatical forms;

e.g., writing using the forms; do the language
experience approach and correcting the forms.