

English 566: Teaching and Testing ESL Grammar
Fall 2021

Professor: Alex Poole, PhD

Online course

Office: HCIC 2035

Office Phone: 745-5900

Office Hours: By appointment

(Remember: You can meet with me on the phone, Zoom, as well)

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All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with CDC guidelines and practices of all public universities and colleges in [Kentucky](#), the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations can be requested in special cases through the Student Accessibility and Resource Center ([SARC](#)): 270-745-5004 (voice), 270-745-3030 (TTY), or 270-288-0597 (video).

All students must immediately report a positive Covid-19 test result or close contact with a person who has tested positive to the Covid-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019. The assistance line is available to answer questions regarding any Covid-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by public health agencies or the office of the governor. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

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.

Books:

- Gilliland, B., & Pella, S. (2017). *Beyond "teaching to the test."* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
2. Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to teach grammar.* Harlow, UK: Pearson.

Articles:

- 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: 210 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 **September 15th (see Blackboard for where to put it)**. If you do not do this on the specified date, I will take off four (4) percent from your final paper grade. I realize that this might seem early, but I want you to get going early on this. The paper is a process, so what you propose is tentative. I will ask you questions and you will ask me questions. This dialogue will lead you something concrete.

I will also take off four (4) percent if you don't do the following two things: On **October 6th (see Blackboard for where to put it)**, 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 1st** (**see Blackboard for where to put it**), 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; however, these sources could include journal articles, books, government reports, reports from education-focused organizations—things physically found in a library or online).

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. I'm looking for concision—writing short papers is more challenging than writing long ones.

- **Due date for final draft: December 1st**
- **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 11th** and you will return it to me **October 18th** (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 30th** and you will return it to me **December 8th** (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: August 23rd–August 27th

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

Week Two: August 30th–September 3rd

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

Week Three: September 6th–September 10th (you can hand in your Blackboard posts on Tuesday instead of Monday due to the holiday)

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

Week Four: September 13th–September 17th

- Thornbury, chapter 5
- Theme: How to teach grammar through texts
- Pape topic due September 15th

Week Five: September 20th–September 24th

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

Week Six: September 27th–October 1st

- 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: October 4th–October 8th

- Thornbury, chapters 8 & 10
- Themes: How to integrate grammar; how not to teach grammar
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpIFqdTYDUA>
- Synopsis and sources due October 6th

Week Eight: October 11th–October 15th

- Thornbury, chapter 9
- HMC, chapter 1
- Themes: How to test grammar

Week Nine: October 18th–October 22nd

- Mid-term due: October 18th
- Abedi article
- Theme: Assessment of language proficiency

Week Ten: October 25th–October 29th

- <http://tapestry.usf.edu/assessments/index.html>
- Theme: Assessment accommodations continued (You will have to download the video from the site)

Week Eleven: November 1st–November 5th

- Paper rough draft due November 1st
- Gilliland and Pella, chapters 1 and 2
- Themes: accountability and equity; principles of accountability for equity

Week Twelve: November 8th–November 12th

- Gilliland and Pella, chapters 3 and 4
- Themes: text analysis; exploring voice

Week Thirteen: November 15th–November 19th

- Gilliland and Pella, chapter 5
- Theme: Formative Assessment

Week Fourteen: November 29th–December 3rd (This is not a mistake–no new assignments during Thanksgiving week. Just hand in your Blackboard assignment on November 22nd)

- Final paper due December 1st
- Gilliland and Pella, chapters 6 and 7
- Themes: High-stakes tests; advocacy

Final exam due: December 8th

Essential due dates:

Blackboard: Weekly (by Monday, 1000AM)

Paper: topic- September 15th ; synopsis and sources–October 6th; rough draft–November 1st; final draft–December 1st

Mid-Term due: October 18th

Final exam due: December 8th

Student Disability Services

Other Important Dates

Last day to add a class or to drop one with a full refund:
Wednesday, August 25th

60% point: Monday, September 20th

Last day to drop a class with a W (fee applies): Wednesday,
September 22nd

Students who stop attending class before the 60% point will
be assigned an FN rather than an F.

Resolving Complaints about Grades

The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is for
the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with
the course instructor. See the Student Handbook, available
at <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/> for additional guidance.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to
supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's
Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at
<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and the
Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at
<https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf>.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or
sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If
you experience an incident of sex/gender-based
discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you
are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator,

Deborah Wilkins, 270-745-5396 or Title IX Investigators,
Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

ADA Accommodation Statement

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.