

**Department of Political Science
ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ECONOMY**

Dr Denise Filmer



Part I

1.1 General Information

- Full course title: English for International Law and Economy
- Type of course: Compulsory
- Level of course: Master programme
- Year of study: 1st
- Number of ECTS credits allocated: 6, 42 hours of lectures, 50 hours of language practice.
- Name of lecturer(s) and office hours: Denise Filmer, Researcher, Department of Filology, Literature and Linguistics (office hours to be confirmed); Elizabeth MacDonald, language instructor, (office hours to be confirmed).

1.2 Course aims and description

The aims of the course are two-fold: the first part led by the language instructor is designed to provide the participants with the necessary linguistic skills to attain a B2+ level in general English according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). An introduction to academic English and essay writing will be a key part of the language input in the first semester, along with consolidation and development of grammar, oral production and reception skills. In the second semester, the lectures are held by Dr Filmer and focus on the acquisition of lexis for specific topic areas including immigration, comparative law, global economy. The analysis of authentic materials

such as news texts, TED talks, and other audiovisual products are an integral part of the programme. In particular, students will explore the notion that in newspaper discourse, meaning is created through the choice of language. The basic theoretical and methodological posits underpinning critical discourse analysis will be introduced as tools to aid a deeper reading and comprehension of the construction of news in Anglophone media, skills, which are essential to understanding how current affairs and world events are represented by the news media.

The teaching approach is communicative and highly interactive. Debate and participation in English are heartily encouraged during the lectures and will form one of the criteria for evaluation.

1.3 Learning outcomes

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- write simple academic texts in a clear, concise and correct manner to B2 level;
- communicate ideas and express opinions verbally in English at B2+ level on topic areas specific to the course;
- recognise, understand and effectively use key terminology in specialised discourse on general legal and economic themes specific to the course;
- understand the persuasive function of linguistic choices in news texts and the nature of news discourse;
- apply the main threads of critical discourse analysis in order to critically read a news text

1.4 Course requirements

B2 level of general English

Students will be required to attend not less than 80% of classes and be prepared for class discussions. Reading of the assigned materials, which will be made available on Moodle, and active engagement in class discussions are compulsory.

1.5 Grading plan

Class participation – 20%

Oral Presentation – 20%

Final written test – 20%

Final oral Exam – 40%

Students are expected to attend all the language practice and lectures:

- Oral presentation 20%. A presentation (up to 15 minutes) is given by each student based on the representation of an event relevant to the course of study in various Anglophone newspapers or other news outlets. The presenter should briefly summarise of the event and how it has been portrayed possibly offering a critical interpretation. A few critical questions should further be offered for the class to discuss collectively.
- Final written test 20%. The written test must be passed in order to sit the final oral exam. The test consists in a reading comprehension with questions on a recent news article and a section on grammar.
 - Final oral exam 40%. A 10/15-minute individual evaluation in which the student is asked three or four questions based on the content of the course in a conversational style with the course chair

Part II

2.1 Course content

First semester

Topic 1 B2 Grammar

Topic 2 Academic English

In the first part of the course (with the English language Instructor), particular attention will be paid to developing and improving academic writing skills necessary to effective essay and thesis production. Academic writing techniques such as hedging, citing and paraphrasing, writing captivating introductions and conclusions, and constructing paragraphs will be covered. Grammar topics relevant to the B2 level will be divided between first and second semester.

Second semester

Topic 1 Introduction to the course and entry test.

Topic 2 The language of the News.

Topic 3 Brexit, the British economy, and globalization.

Topic 4 The United Nations, human rights, and the language of NGOs.

Topic 5 Naming the Other in news discourse: migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Topic 6 A question of citizenship: documents, ID cards and permits.

Topic 7 What is International Law?

Topic 8 What is Comparative Law?

Topic 9. An introduction to the criminal law system in Anglophone countries.

Topic 10 Investments, bonds, and white collar crime.

Topic 11 Recession, The world economy, and China's silk road.

2.2 Course content and readings by topics.

Readings and authentic materials will be made available on Moodle before the relevant lectures. They will need to be downloaded and brought to class.

Topic 1 Entry Test

An overview of the course and its aims will be provided and an entry test of grammar and reading will be carried out in order to ascertain the students' level of English. The corrections will be carried out in class in order to discuss any points that need clarifying and discussing.

Topic 2 The Language of Newspapers

An overview of the main newspaper brands in the UK and the US, their ideological and political stances, and the ways in which these impact on the linguistic choices they go to create meaning in how events and news is reported. Students will be introduced to the style and content of each publication. The main theoretical notions pertaining to Critical Discourse Analysis will be outlined in order to provide the students with the foundations on which to make informed observations regarding the use of language in the Anglophone news text that will be analysed throughout the course.

Readings: Machin, D. and Mayr, A. 2012. *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal introduction*. London: Sage. Introduction, Chapters 1.

Topic 3 Brexit, the impact on the British Economy and Globalisation

The first topic examines the issues surrounding Brexit (and possible no-deal scenarios) and the lexicogrammatical structures that are used in news discourse to describe and inform the audience on its developments. Lecture 2 will focus on the implications of the Brexit mindset on a global level in a TED talk given by Professor Alexander Betts.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Topic 4 The United Nations, human rights, and the language of NGOs

Using a combination of audiovisual texts, video clips and authentic texts produced by various NGOs such as UNHCR, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the lectures will look at the language choices and lexicogrammar used in the humanitarian literature in order to create meanings.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Topic 5 Naming the Other in news discourse: migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees

Closely linked to the previous lectures, here we will see the ways in which terminology pertaining to immigration is exploited in news discourse to reflect different ideologies in comparison with usage in NGO publications and websites.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Topic 6 A question of citizenship: documents, ID cards and permits

Focuses on the terminology of citizenship and the discourse on citizenship applications comparing British and Italian governmental websites.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson

Machin, D. and Mayr, A. 2012. *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal introduction*. London: Sage. Chapter 4.

Topic 7 EU and International Law

First, definitions of the terms “EU law” and “International law” are provided. Then question is raised; can a nation state be compelled to obey the regulations of a supranational legal framework? In particular, how are cases where a single nation comes into conflict with international legislation represented in news discourse? News articles dealing with examples of such violations themes will be explored and discussed in class.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson

Krois-Lindner, A. and Firth, M. 2008. *Introduction to International Legal English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10.

Topic 8 What is Comparative Law?

The topics of "Comparative law" and "International Law" in the context of the English Language classroom are viewed through a very different lens from that of the legal scholar. The lectures not only introduce the English lexis necessary to discuss the themes but also brings into in the classroom the possibility to discuss with the students their opinions on issues like jury Vs magistrate, the thorny issue of translation of legal texts, capital and corporal punishment, and many others, which are used as instruments to promote reflection and discussion on cultural difference in international legal contexts.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Krois-Lindner, A. and Firth, M. 2008. *Introduction to International Legal English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 9 and 10.

Topic 9. An introduction to the criminal law system in Anglophone countries

An overview in comparative vein of the legal system in UK in particular with a focus on terminology and the different roles played by key figures on the legal system. Video clips of TV series provide additional material to the text to be analysed.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Krois-Lindner, A. and Firth, M. 2008. *Introduction to International Legal English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.

Topic 10 Investments, bonds, and white collar crime

The focus of this topic is the key terminology needed to describe and explain financial and economic phenomena as reported in the media. The concept of "white collar crime" is discussed and explained within the context of UK criminal law.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson

Krois-Lindner, A. and Firth, M. 2008. *Introduction to International Legal English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4

Topic 11 Recession, the world economy, and China's silk road

Through the lens of Anglophone news discourse this topic looks at the representation in new media of economic recession on national and global levels and the ways that the emerging economies, the so-called BRIC countries, and developed economies are portrayed in debates on global economic issues.

Readings: authentic reading materials will be provided on Moodle before the lesson.

Compulsory reading:

Machin, D. and Mayr, A. 2012. *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis. A Multimodal introduction*. London: Sage. Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 7, 8.

Krois-Lindner, A. and Firth, M. 2008. *Introduction to International Legal English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3,4,8,9,10.

Authentic materials that will be analysed together in class such as news articles and video clips will be made available on Moodle to be downloaded before each lesson.

Further reading

Busà, G. 2014. *An introduction to Language in the News*. London and New York: Routledge

Fowler, R. 1991/2013. *The Language of the News*. London and New York: Routledge

Richardson, J. 2007. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*
London: Palgrave.

Van Dijk, T.A. 2008 “Discourse, News and Ideology”

<http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/News,%20Discourse%20and%20Ideology.pdf>

Internet sources

Improving English

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/index.shtm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/>

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/>

<https://www.flo-joe.co.uk/fce/students/strategy/p3pt3a.htm>

Newspaper websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05hw4bq/episodes/downloads>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nq0gn>

<https://www.theguardian.com/international>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/index.html>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/>