

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
www.mlcs.ualberta.ca

**2015-2016      MLCS 555 X01**  
***Teaching Strategies for Postsecondary Language Instructors***  
(Fall Term)

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Time: M 5:00 – 8:00pm  
Place: HC 2-29  
Office Hours: M 11:00am-12:00pm  
or by appointment

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**Course Prerequisite:**      Consent of department

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes                       No, not needed, no such projects approved

**Community Service Learning** component

Required       Optional       None

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course is designed to introduce new teaching assistants to a variety of issues in post-secondary foreign language teaching and learning. We will examine the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of second language (L2) instruction, and we will apply new concepts in the design and completion of a variety of tasks. Students will be expected to participate in practical activities and projects particularly oriented to teaching, such as classroom observations, lesson planning, materials development, etc. As foundational knowledge is acquired, students will develop their critical awareness of the issues involved in teaching a second/foreign language and acquire some tools to address these in their teaching. Effective teaching involves ongoing, personal learning. By reflecting continually on one's experiences as both a student and a teacher of languages, the course aims to help teaching assistants to become reflective teachers and to enhance their teaching experience.

In this course, students will:

- 1) Acquire knowledge about the theories underlying teaching practices,
- 2) Develop teaching practices based on current pedagogical approaches and theories,
- 3) Learn how to effectively write lesson plans and design activities,
- 4) Engage in reflective writing to explore course materials and issues related to (their) teaching,
- 5) Develop reflective, analytical and critical skills when assessing their own teaching skills,
- 6) Observe other instructors and write formal observation reports,
- 7) Demonstrate a classroom activity to the class,

8) Develop a teaching portfolio, including a teaching philosophy, dream syllabus, lesson plans and activities.

**Required Text:**

- Brandl, Klaus (2008). *Communicative language teaching in action: Putting principles to work*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

**Additional resources**

- Larsen-Freeman, Diane, & Marti Anderson (2011). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lightbown, Patsy M., & Nina Spada (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (2001). *Teaching Language in Context*. (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Richards, Jack C. & Rodgers, Theodore S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Online course “Foreign Language Teaching Methods” at the University of Texas, Austin: <http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

Participation	10%
Course Discussion Forum (3)	10%
Classroom Observations (3)	25% (due Sept. 24, Oct. 26, and Dec. 7)
Online Module Summary/Reflection	5%
Presentation of Classroom Activity	10% (dates vary, see below)
Teaching Portfolio	40% (due Dec. 11, 2015)

**Revised Grade Distribution for students who are neither instructors nor apprentices:**

Participation	10%
Course Discussion Forum (3)	10%
→Classroom Observations (5)	40% (due dates for additional obs: Oct. 8 & Nov. 16)
Online Module Summary/Reflection	5%
→Presentation of Classroom Activity	5% (dates vary, see below)
→Teaching Portfolio (reduced)	30% (due Dec. 11, 2015) [no self-assessment of classroom activity; no teaching self-evaluation]

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

**Participation (10%): Regular attendance and participation** are essential for optimal performance in a graduate course and **are considered a prerequisite for obtaining a B or higher in this course**. More than one unexcused absence will result in a final mark no higher than a B, no matter how successful students are with regards to other grade components. Since class discussions focus on the assigned readings, students should prepare them carefully at home, engage in the material in a thoughtful and informed manner so that they contribute to a productive class discussion. At her discretion, the instructor might administer pop quizzes throughout the semester which will count towards students’ participation mark.

**Course Discussion Forum (10%):** Students will share experiences, ideas, or questions regarding teaching and learning a foreign language during this first semester. Three times during the semester, they will

write an entry on the course discussion forum (on moodle), reflecting on their own experiences in the classroom and trying to relate them to what we read/discuss in this class. In the following week, they will give feedback to one other student in the discussion forum, sharing experiences, giving advice, etc. Please check the schedule for exact dates.

**Classroom Observations (25%):** Three times during the semester, students will observe a language class taught by a different instructor. They will be asked to observe a particular aspect of the class (e.g. teacher's language use), reflect critically on what they saw and prepare a written report (ca. three pages, double-spaced, typed; including a description of the lesson plan and a critical reflection). Students who are neither instructors nor apprentices will conduct two additional observations; topics will be provided (due dates for additional observation reports: Oct. 8 & Nov. 16, 2015).

The assignments will be evaluated on the completeness of the observations, the depth and breadth of the analysis and reflections, and clarity of expression. The instructor to be visited should be asked several days in advance whether s/he agrees to an observation and when the observer can come in. Students should be punctual and courteous when visiting someone else's class, and thank the instructor afterwards for allowing them to observe their class.

**Online Module Summary/Reflection (5%):** Students will work through the module "The Language Learner" from the Foreign Language Teaching Methods online course at the University of Texas, Austin and write a 2-3 page summary of the main points and a reflection on what they learned, due Oct. 16, 2015.

<http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>

**Presentation of Classroom Activity (10%):** Students will present a successful activity (not an entire lesson plan) that they have devised themselves (i.e., not presented in the textbook) and presented in their own class (except students who are not teaching). At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for one of the following categories of classroom activities: vocabulary activities (Oct. 19), grammar (Oct. 26), listening and reading (Nov. 2), oral communication (Nov. 16), writing (Nov. 23), or culture (Nov. 30). The activities will serve as further examples for the chapter we read on these particular days, so you should make sure to read the chapter before you design your activity.

**Teaching Portfolio (40%):** For the final project for this course, students will develop a teaching portfolio (due on Dec. 11, 2015). The teaching portfolio showcases one's work as a teacher. It will be evaluated on the quality of its components, its completeness, the clarity of expression, and the depth and breadth of the reflections. The portfolio must include at least the following items:

- Statement of your teaching philosophy
- Lesson plans and sample activities that you have developed accompanied by their rationale and a critical self-assessment on how the class/activity went and how it could be improved
- A dream syllabus
- Your teaching self-evaluation: what you have learned, what you have to make progress on, and how you intend to do that (go back to your journal entries to recall some of these issues).

Students who are neither instructors nor apprentices will submit a reduced portfolio for 30% of their final grade. They will neither include the critical self-assessment of the activities nor the teaching self-evaluation.

Remember that a portfolio should be **structured, selective, and representative**. As a documented evidence of one's teaching, it should contain a range of evidence from a variety of sources.

## **Required Notes:**

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.

### ***Academic Integrity:***

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

### ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

### ***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) ) <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.3.html#23.3> ) and 23.5.6 (<http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5>) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course**, participation is an essential component; therefore, it is **very important to attend class every day**.

**a. Excused absences** are not automatic; therefore, in cases of potentially excusable absences (emergency conditions, incapacitating illness, religious convictions or legitimate University-related business), students may apply for an excused absence for missed classes, term work, or exams. Please note:

- For an absence to be considered excused, I will request adequate documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence (i.e. in the form of a “Medical Declaration Form for Students” <https://uofa.ualberta.ca/arts/-/media/arts/student-services/documents/medicaldeclarationformforstudents.pdf>). Please, note that a “Statutory Declaration” submitted at the end of term covering multiple absences during the term will not be accepted.
- A student must inform the instructor within two working days following the class which was missed, or as soon as the student is able, having regard to the circumstances underlying the absence.
- For missed term work, **no extension will be given after this deadline has elapsed and a grade of ZERO will be assigned.**
- For an excused absence where the cause is religious belief, a student must contact the instructor(s) within two weeks of the start of Fall or Winter classes; and within three days of the start of Spring or Summer classes.
- **No request for make-up for missed work will be considered without proper documentation.**
- Providing any kind of document(s) does not imply an automatic approval; it will be at the discretion of the instructor to accept or decline a document and/or grant the student’s request for an excused absence.
- For further explanation regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult section 23. 3 of the University Calendar.

**b. Unexcused absences are not allowed in this course. One point out of the ten total points will be deducted from the student’s participation grade for each unexcused absence.** In addition, a **grade of ZERO** will be given for any assignments that are not handed in or completed as a result of an unexcused absence.

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. . Formal **written** documentation may be required to consider granting an extension. In cases of medical emergencies or severe domestic affliction, the instructor must be given a written message (email) within two working days of the due

date explaining why the assignment was not handed in on time. If the explanation is not deemed reasonable, a grade of zero will be recorded. Otherwise, all assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed-in in time or unexcused late assignments will not be given any marks. Late excuses will **not** be accepted for any reason.

**Student Accessibility Services:**

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB [www.ssds.ualberta.ca](http://www.ssds.ualberta.ca) ).

**Grading:**

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Graduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

**MLCS Graduate Grading Scale**

A+	97-100	Excellent
A	93-96	Excellent
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Good
B	79-86	Good
B-	74-78	Satisfactory
C+	68-73	Satisfactory
C	63-67	Failure
C-	58-62	Failure
D+	54-57	Failure
D	50-53	Failure
F	00-49	Failure

**Class Schedule** (subject to minor, announced changes):

Date	Topic/ Readings (have to be read for this date)	Assignments due
Sept. 14	Introduction to course and materials; Principles of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Instruction (Brandl, ch. 1)	---
Sept. 21	Teaching Methods and Beyond: SLA theories (Lightbown/Spada, ch. 2); On teaching a language: principles and priorities in methodology (Omaggio, ch. 3); The post-methods era (Richards & Rodgers, ch. 19)	Observation 1(due by Thursday, Sept. 24)
Sept. 28	Short-term and daily lesson planning (Brandl, ch. 2);	Write entry on discussion forum

	Instructional sequencing and task design (Brandl, ch. 6)	
Oct. 5	Feedback and error correction (Brandl, ch. 5); ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century	give feedback to one entry on discussion forum
Oct. 12	Thanksgiving – no class	watch “The Language Learner” at <a href="http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/">http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/</a> and write summary/reflection (due by Friday, Oct. 16)
Oct. 19	Getting started: Introducing vocabulary (Brandl, ch. 3); warm-up activities	Classroom Activities: Vocabulary
Oct. 26	Grammar and language learning (Brandl, ch. 4)	Classroom Activities: Grammar; Observation 2 due
Nov. 2	Developing listening skills (Brandl, ch. 7); Developing reading skills (Brandl, ch. 9)	Classroom Activities: Listening; Reading; write entry on discussion forum
Nov. 9	Fall Reading week – no class	Watch “Pragmatics” at <a href="http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/">http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/methods/</a>
Nov. 16	Developing oral communication skills (Brandl, ch. 8)	Classroom Activities: Oral Communication; give feedback to one entry on discussion forum
Nov. 23	Becoming proficient in writing (Omaggio, ch. 7)	Classroom Activities: Writing
Nov. 30	Teaching for cultural understanding (Omaggio, ch. 8)	Classroom Activities: Culture; write entry on discussion forum
Dec. 7	Assessment and language learning (Brandl, ch. 10)	Give feedback to one entry on discussion forum; Observation 3 due

**Teaching Portfolios are due on Friday, Dec. 11, 2015.**