Stockholm University

Oral Presentations in Academic English (7.5 credits)
Spring 2025
Teacher: Andrew Cooper (main teacher)
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Course description

This course is designed to meet the needs of students in diverse disciplines and provide them with the skills necessary to:

(a) actively participate in seminar discussions,
(b) present their arguments in a convincing manner, and
(c) participate in conferences and similar events.

In this course we will work with strategies for tying together different parts of a presentation, review structural patterns and provide the students with communicative strategies needed to attract the audience's attention and to convey the content of their presentations effectively. Each participant will give different kinds of oral presentations on a topic of their own choosing, starting with shorter presentations and building up to producing a talk similar to those given in research conferences. We discuss how to design, plan and deliver presentations in English on different topics and for different purposes.

Intended learning outcomes

In order to pass the course, students are expected to be able to:

- identify stylistic and structural conventions of academic speaking in English;
- recognise and apply effective communicative strategies for public speaking;
- produce a coherent and well-structured academic oral presentation in English;
- express themselves in academic English.

Grading

The course adopts the 7-grade SU scale (A-F).
To receive a final grade, students must have completed all obligatory elements and the examination assignments [not fulfilled the obligatory elements or not done all examination assignments=no grade].
To receive a passing grade (A to E), students must complete and pass all the examination assignments, and thus demonstrate that they achieved all the learning outcomes at least at the minimum level (see "Grading criteria" below).

Course activities

The course consists of the following activities:

- Seminars;
- Reading and preparatory tasks;
  Before each seminar, students are expected to:
  - Prepare an assignment for submission to Athena,
  - Read relevant chapters of the course textbook,
  - Other preparatory tasks as assigned by the teacher.
- Student presentations (see Examination and Assignments for details).

Examination

Students are required to complete the following:

1) Submit a written analysis of a recorded spoken presentation (Pass/Fail).
2) Present a very short initial presentation "Elevator Pitch" (Pass/Fail).
3) Present a short intermediate presentation "*PechaKucha*" (Pass/Fail).
4) Present a longer final presentation (A-F).
5) Attend the seminars: Attendance at all five seminars is obligatory. Only 40% of the seminars (i.e., 2 seminars) can be compensated with a replacement assignment (see Athena for instructions).

Details about the assignments are in Assignments.

Course readings

Obligatory:

Wallwork, Adrian. (2016). *English for Presentations at International Conferences*. Springer. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-26330-4

Further Reading:

Chivers, Barbara & Michael Shoolbread (2007). *A Student's Guide to Presentations*. London: SAGE.
Hyland, Ken (2009). *Academic Discourse*. London: Continuum. (Chapter 4)
Jordan, Robert R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 13)
Kapterev, Alexei. (2011). *Presentation Secrets*. Wiley.Morgan, Barrett & Whitener, Scott. (2006). *Speaking about Science: A Manual for Creating Clear Presentations*. Abe Books.

Schedule

Zoom rooms for Andrew and Josep can be found on Athena. All seminars in Spring term 2025 are between 15:00 and 17:00 on Wednesday evenings.

#	Date & teacher	Chapters from Wallwork	Topics and seminar activities
1	Date March 26 Andrew & Josep		1 – **"What are OPs and why do we do them?** *Submission before class*: a self-reflection (c 100 words) – "How I feel about speaking in public" - Course information and introductions - What makes a talk "academic"? - Analysing academic talks – structural features - Types of presentations
2	Date April 9 Josep	Preface + Chapters 1-3	2 **– "Why speaking is not writing"** *Submission before class*: Analysis of online talk for structural features (Pass/Fail) - Turning ideas into a script - workshop - Making a first impression - What makes a presentation good or bad? - Designing and practicing an "elevator pitch"
3	Date April 23	4-8	3 – **"Being in the room: what do we do as well as talk?"** *Submission before class*: Notes or script for elevator pitch

	Andrew		- Elevator Pitches 1 - Creating visual support, what works well - Designing and practicing a short formal talk: *PechaKucha*
4	Date May 7 Josep	9-12	4 – **"Adapting to format and genre conventions"** Submission before class: PechaKucha Slides - *PechaKucha* Presentations - Designing and practicing a conference talk, asking and dealing with questions
5	Date May 21 Andrew	13-16	5 – **"Saying what we want to and not saying what we don't"** *Submission before class*: Forum comments for Peer review activity - Feedback and workshop on slide design based on *PechaKucha* - Peer review activity in small groups on slide design - Turning a script into notes - workshop - Preparations and descriptions for final examinations
	Date June 4 Andrew & Josep		**Examination** In-class final presentations
	Date August 13 Andrew		**Re-examination** In-class final presentations

Please note that there may be occasional changes to seminar dates/times. Check Time Edit regularly for updates.

Students who do not do all the required assignments during the course can still do such assignments on the Department deadlines for late submissions (see Department website).

Assignments

1) A written analysis of a recorded spoken presentation (Pass/Fail).
2) A very short initial presentation "Elevator Pitch" (Pass/Fail).
3) A short intermediate presentation "*PechaKucha*" (Pass/Fail).
4) Present a longer final presentation (A-F).

Grading criteria

Preliminary assignments grading criteria

Short oral presentations (Elevator Pitch & *PechaKucha*)	
Pass	The student presents a coherent talk on an academic topic in English with visual support if appropriate. The talk adheres to time.
Fail	The student presents an incoherent talk. The topic is not academic. The talk is too short or too long.

Written Assignment	
Pass	The student writes an informative and coherent analysis of the structural features of a spoken presentation in academic English.
Fail	The student writes a text which is uninformative, incoherent, does not address structural features or is off-topic.

Final oral presentation grading criteria

Grade	Description
A. Excellent	The student shows excellent ability to: - Complete an excellently structured spoken presentation in academic English - Create highly informative visual materials to support their talk - Use highly effective communicative strategies - Speak freely with the use of notes - Use academic English for public speaking
B. Very good	The student shows very good ability to: - Complete a well-structured spoken presentation in academic English - Create informative visual materials to support their talk - Use highly effective communicative strategies - Speak freely with the use of notes - Use academic English for public speaking
C. Good	The student shows good ability to: - Complete a structured spoken presentation in academic English - Create helpful visual materials to support their talk - Use generally communicative strategies - Speak freely with the use of notes - Use academic English for public speaking
D. Satisfactory	The student shows adequate ability to: - Complete a mostly structured spoken presentation in academic English - Create mostly helpful visual materials to support their talk - Use partly effective communicative strategies - Speak while depending heavily on notes - Use academic English for public speaking
E. Adequate	The student shows minimally adequate ability to: - Complete a partly structured spoken presentation in academic English - Create mostly helpful visual materials to support their talk - Use occasionally effective communicative strategies - Speak while depending heavily on notes - Use academic English for public speaking
Fx. Fail (inadequate)	The student's work demonstrates some but not all of the required skills at an adequate level. Some additional work is required.
F. Fail	The student's work does not demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the course. Much more work is required.