



COURSE (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course (module) title	Code
Academic Debate / Akademiniai debatai	

Teacher(s)	Unit(s)
Co-ordinator: Assoc. Prof. Dr Liudmila Arcimavičienė	Department of English Philology Faculty of Philology

Cycle of studies	Level of course (module)	Type of course (module)
BA	Optional	Optional

Mode of implementation	Period of instruction	Language(s) of instruction
Face to face	Spring	English

Requirements for students	
Standard reference categories of linguistic description	Additional requirements (if any): English proficiency level: B2-C1

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Independent study hours
5	135	32	103

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed
<p>This course is designed to enhance students' critical thinking, research, and argumentation skills through the practice of academic debate. In the theoretical part of the course, students will explore the structure of arguments, while in the practical component, they will engage in structured debates on a variety of pressing issues. As a key outcome, students will participate in the Academic Debate Tournament hosted by the Faculty of Philology, where students will compete for the Best Debating Team award. This event provides a unique opportunity for students to demonstrate the argumentation skills they have developed during the course and refine their rhetorical abilities, which are essential in both academic and professional contexts. By emphasising the importance of intellectual debate and public speaking, the course fosters an environment where students learn to appreciate the complexity of issues, uphold principles of reasoned argument, respect diverse viewpoints, and celebrate the power of language.</p> <p><u>Generic competencies to be developed (as per the aims of the English Studies programme):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' responsibility to set goals, choose and use resources necessary for completing tasks, plan their time effectively and meet deadlines. • Students' teamwork and cooperation by setting common goals, sharing information, and collaboratively finding solutions. • Students' intercultural competence through respect, openness to other cultures, and the ability to work in a multicultural environment. • Students' problem-solving skills by identifying problems in their field and related areas, analysing and critically assessing relevant information, generating new ideas, and selecting optimal solutions. • Students' openness to change by being receptive to new ideas, embracing creativity and innovation, evaluating the quality of their actions and achievements, and striving to acquire competencies necessary for future changes. <p><u>Subject-specific competencies (as per the aims of the English Studies programme):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential knowledge of argumentation theory. • Critical awareness of structural aspects and types of argumentation. • Understanding how research-based arguments are constructed and research-based evidence is substantiated. • Ability to conduct content analysis of research articles. • Ability to draw thematic intersections between research-based evidence and specific real-life examples.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to effectively articulate argumentative positions. Ability to present research findings orally to an academic audience and provide research-based arguments in a public debate setting. 		
Learning outcomes of the course (module)	Study methods	Assessment methods
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:		
The ability to understand the peculiarities of argumentation, its types and structural aspects.	Interactive seminars, study reading, note-taking, prepared and impromptu speaking prompts (points of information), debates.	Cumulative assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposition debate motion (40%) Opposition debate motion (40%) Points of information (20%)
The ability to construct researchable arguments and substantiated research-based evidence.	Interactive seminars, study reading, note-taking, prepared and impromptu speaking prompts (points of information), debates.	
The ability to draw thematic intersections between research-based evidence and specific real-life examples.	Interactive seminars, study reading, note-taking, prepared and impromptu speaking prompts (points of information), debates.	
The ability to persuasively debate and communicate with the audience.	Interactive seminars, study reading, note-taking, prepared and impromptu speaking prompts (points of information), debates.	

Topics	Contact hours							Independent study time and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Practice	Laboratory work	Practice	Total contact	Independent work	Assignments
1. Introduction to the course unit: Aims, structure, assessment. Key debate terms. Argumentation types. Convergent vs. multiple structure.	1		1				2	8	Kienpointner, 228-241. Toulmin, 25-29.
2. Academic debate: structure. Proposition argumentation. Key concepts and the status quo. Proposition case-split. Proposition argumentation types. Research-based evidence. Specific examples. Individual and team recap.	1		1				2	8	Harrel, 595-610. Toulmin, 25-29.
3. Academic debate: structure. Opposition argumentation. Key concepts and the status quo. Opposition case-split. Argumentation	1		1				2	8	Kock, 437-464. Toulmin, 25-29.

types. Research-based evidence. Specific examples. Individual and team recap.									
4. Academic debate practice. Motion: Language and Cognition			4				4	12	Interactive debate tasks, points-of-information, reflection sessions, peer review.
5. Academic debate practice. Motion: Advertising and Emotions			4				4	12	
6. Academic debate practice. Motion: Social media and Personal Relationships			4				4	12	
7. Academic debate practice. Motion: Human Rights and Environmental Justice			4				4	12	
8. Academic debate practice. Motion: Youth employment and Robotisation			4				4	12	
9. Academic debate practice. Motion: Artificial Intelligence and Education			4				4	12	
10. Public debate			2				2	7	
Total	3		29				32	103	

Attendance requirements

Students must maintain a minimum attendance rate of 70% as there is a well-established and significant link between class attendance and academic performance. If a student's seminar attendance is less than 70%, they will not be eligible to receive an accumulative assessment at the end of the course. Should a student miss over 30 percent of the classes, they will be advised to retake the course.

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Assessment time	Assessment criteria
Proposition debate	40%	Week 2 to 7	Proposition argumentation requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content (research-based argumentation, content analysis with a specific example) 20% Structure (introduction, pro-argument premises, argumentation, conclusion) 10% Delivery and style (intelligibility and contact with the audience) 10%
Opposition debate	40%	Week 8 to 16	Opposition argumentation requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content (research-based argumentation, content analysis with a specific example) 20% Structure (introduction, counter-argument premises, argumentation, conclusion) 10% Delivery and style (intelligibility and contact with the audience) 10%
Points of information	20%	During the semester	POI requirements: During practice debates, students must offer at least five POI (1 POI x 4%) during the semester. POI is a spontaneous short question or a remark that is raised from the audience to debating teams. Each POI is assessed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content (pragmatic competence) 10% Structure (linguistic competence) 10%

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical	Publishing place and house or a web link
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			or volume of a publication	
Compulsory reading list				
Harrell, M.	2022	Representing the Structure of a Debate	<i>Argumentation</i> , 36(4), 595-610.	https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-022-09586-2
Kienpointner, M.	2017	Rhetoric and argumentation.	<i>The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies</i> , 228-241.	Routledge.
Kock, C.	2013	Defining rhetorical argumentation.	<i>Philosophy & Rhetoric</i> , 46(4), 437-464.	Penn State University Press.
Toulmin, S. E.	2006	Reasoning in theory and practice.	<i>Arguing on the Toulmin model: New essays in argument analysis and evaluation</i> , 25-29.	Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
Additional reading list				
VLE/Moodle	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research articles and their worksheets - Debate guidelines - Debate vocabulary worksheets - Proposition argumentation guidelines - Opposition argumentation guidelines 		
Harrell, M.	2016	What Is the Argument?		Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press.
Hasan, M.	2023	Win Every Argument: The Art of Debating, Persuading and Public Speaking.		Pan Macmillan.

The course description was revised and updated on October 11, 2024.