COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Academic Writing / Akademinis rašymas	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Dr. Adam Mastandrea adam.mastandrea@flf.vu.lt	Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University
Study cycle	**Type of the course unit**
First cycle (Bachelor's)	Elective

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face-to-face (interactive lectures, workshops, tutorials, group work)	Spring	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: English B2	Co-requisites (if relevant): None

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	135	48	87

Purpose of the course unit

To develop the academic writing skills in English that students need to take part in academic activities at university. Students learn to find, read and evaluate academic sources, and to plan, draft, revise and edit research-based argumentative essays that follow APA style (7th edition).

The course moves from a collaborative group essay, drafted in class section by section and reviewed by peers, to an individual research-based essay on a topic of the student's choice. Each essay is first planned in a graded full-sentence outline with an APA reference list, so that students receive feedback on their thesis, line of reasoning and sources before they write the full text. Throughout the course students lead and take part in group discussions during in-group drafting and peer review, and reflect on their development as writers.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Find, read and evaluate credible academic sources (academic journals, research databases, infographics), take notes and map ideas from reading, and synthesize sources in support of an argument.	Library and database workshops; lateral-reading practice; note-taking and mind-mapping workshops; guided reading.	Assessment 1 (Group essay outline); Assessment 4 (Individual essay outline); Assessment 5 (Individual research-based essay).
Plan a research-based essay in a full-sentence outline with a focused research question, an arguable thesis, topic sentences, supporting evidence and an APA reference list.	Interactive lectures; outlining workshops; in-class group outlining.	Assessment 1; Assessment 4.

Write a research-based argumentative essay with an effective introduction and thesis statement, body paragraphs that integrate evidence and address counterarguments, and a conclusion that restates the argument and discusses its implications.	In-class group essay drafting; writing workshops; individual tutorials on drafts.	Assessment 3 (Group research-based essay); Assessment 5.
Use APA style (7th edition) accurately for in-text citations, the reference list and formatting, and paraphrase, summarize and quote sources without plagiarism.	Interactive lectures; citation and paraphrasing workshops; editing practice.	Assessments 1–5.
Take part in group drafting and the peer-review process, give constructive feedback using the writing rubric, and present a peer review to the class.	In-class group essay drafting; peer review with the writing rubric; peer-review presentations.	Assessment 2 (Group peer-review presentation); Assessment 3.
Revise and edit one's own writing for organization, grammar, punctuation and spelling, act on feedback, and reflect on one's development as a writer.	Redrafting and editing workshops; learning journal and reflective writing practices.	Assessment 3; Assessment 5.
Use digital tools and generative AI critically and responsibly when researching and revising, verifying every source and documenting AI use.	Workshops; AI-use log.	Assessments 1–5.

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. Introduction to the Course Course aims, writing assignments and the writing rubric; diagnostic writing task; starting the learning journal.			1				**1**	2	Write a short diagnostic paragraph; two personal writing goals.
2. Finding, Reading and Evaluating Sources Turning a topic into a research question and search terms; searching the databases available through the VU Library and Google Scholar; peer-reviewed research, reports and news sources; reading abstracts to judge relevance; lateral reading to check credibility (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019); reading as part of academic writing; note taking and making mind maps from reading.	1			3			**4**	8	Read Wineburg & McGrew (2019, selected sections) and Creme & Lea (2008, chapters as assigned); with your group, find and take notes on at least five sources for the group essay topic and build a mind map.
3. The Research-Based Academic Essay and the Outline Academic writing as a genre (Hyland, 2008); the structure of a research-based essay; selecting and narrowing a topic; writing a full-sentence outline: thesis, topic sentences, supporting evidence and sources for each point; drafting the reference list in APA 7th edition. In-class group essay writing: outline. ***Assessment 1: Group Essay Outline***	1			3			**4**	7	Complete and submit the full-sentence outline and APA reference list (Assessment 1).

4. Introductions and Thesis Statements Constructing an introduction and a thesis statement; background reading; citation styles and APA in-text citations; paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting; avoiding plagiarism. In-class group essay writing: introduction.	1			3			**4**	6	Read Street (2015); revise the group outline in response to feedback; draft your part of the group introduction.
5. Body Paragraphs and Research-Based Argument Topic sentences and paragraph unity; making a research-based argument and persuading with specific examples; integrating and synthesising evidence from several sources; counterargument and rebuttal; hedging; APA formatting and style guide. In-class group essay writing: body paragraphs.	1			7			**8**	12	Draft your assigned body paragraph(s) of the group essay, each integrating at least two sources and addressing one counterargument.
6. Conclusions Constructing a conclusion; organising a restatement; discussing implications and future trends. In-class group essay writing: conclusion.				2			**2**	4	Draft the group conclusion; check that it follows from the thesis and body paragraphs.
7. Redrafting, Editing and Peer Review Redrafting and editing processes; spelling, grammar and punctuation; checking in-text citations against the reference list; peer review of another group's essay with the writing rubric; group peer-review presentations. ***Assessment 2: Group Peer-Review Presentation; Assessment 3: Group Research-Based Essay***			4	2			**6**	10	Review another group's essay with the writing rubric and prepare the peer-review presentation (Assessment 2); revise and submit the group essay (Assessment 3).
8. Planning the Individual Research-Based Essay Choosing and narrowing a topic of one's own; finding and evaluating sources independently; writing the individual full-sentence outline and APA reference list; individual tutorials on topics and outlines. ***Assessment 4: Individual Essay Outline***		2		2			**4**	10	Choose a topic, find at least six credible sources, and write a full-sentence outline with an APA reference list (Assessment 4).
9. Writing the Individual Research-Based Essay Drafting from the approved outline; individual tutorials on drafts; peer feedback on drafts; redrafting and editing; learning journal and reflective writing practices. ***Assessment 5: Individual Research-Based Essay***		4	4	6			**14**	26	Write, revise and submit the individual essay with your AI-use log;
10. Reflection Session Reviewing development as a writer across the course; course feedback.			1				**1**	2	Compare your diagnostic paragraph with your final essay;
Total	**4**	**6**	**10**	**28**			**48**	**87**	

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria

Assessment 1: Group Essay Outline	10	Week 3	A full-sentence outline: a focused topic and research question; a clear, arguable thesis statement; a topic sentence for each body paragraph with the supporting evidence and source for each point; at least one counterargument identified; a planned conclusion; a reference list of at least five credible academic sources correctly formatted in APA 7th edition.
Assessment 2: Group Peer-Review Workshop	15	Weeks 9–10	Accurate, specific feedback on another group's essay draft using the writing rubric; a balance of strengths and suggestions for revision, supported by examples from the text; contribution of every group member.
Assessment 3: Group Research-Based Essay	30	Week 10	Graded with the class writing rubric: pragmatic competence 40%; linguistic competence 40%; structure 10%; citations and references 10%. The final version shows how the group acted on outline feedback and peer review.
Assessment 4: Individual Essay Outline	10	Week 11	A full-sentence outline: a topic narrowed to a focused research question; a clear, arguable thesis statement; a topic sentence for each body paragraph with the supporting evidence and source for each point; at least one counterargument and rebuttal; a planned conclusion; a reference list of at least six credible academic sources correctly formatted in APA 7th edition.
Assessment 5: Individual Research-Based Essay	35	Week 16	Graded with the class writing rubric: pragmatic competence 40%; linguistic competence 40%; structure 10%; citations and references 10%. The essay develops the outline submitted for Assessment 4 - AI-use log submitted with the essay.
The group peer-review presentation is graded with the class writing rubric. Outlines are graded with the outline criteria above and returned with feedback before the full essay is written. **Grading scale:** 100–95% = 10; 94–85% = 9; 84–75% = 8; 74–65% = 7; 64–55% = 6; 54–45% = 5; 44–35% = 4; 34–25% = 3; 24–15% = 2; 14–5% = 1; 4–0% = 0.			
Gen-AI use statement: Some course assignments will allow the use of AI and some will not; the instructor will specify when and how AI use is allowed during the course, following the GenAI-use guidelines adopted by the Faculty of Philology. In this course, students may use generative AI to brainstorm search terms, to locate sources, and to get feedback on a draft they have written themselves, provided that they verify every source and claim and record their AI use in an AI-use log submitted with each outline and essay. AI may not be used to generate or rewrite outline or essay text, and students may not submit AI-generated text as their own. The graded outlines and drafts document each student's writing process. Because AI-text detectors are unreliable and biased, if the instructor has doubts about AI use, students may instead be asked to discuss their writing and sources in a short individual conference. Ethical conduct is mandatory, and students who breach ethical principles bear the responsibility provided for in VU legal acts.			

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Kriaučiūnienė, R., & Arcimavičienė, L.	2023	English for academic purposes and research (C1)	Units as assigned; ISBN 9786090707906	Vilnius University Press
Street, B. V.	2015	Academic writing: Theory and practice	Journal of Educational Issues, 1(2), 110–116	Macrothink Institute. https://macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jei/article/view/8314
Creme, P., & Lea, M. R.	2008	Writing at university: A guide for students (3rd ed.)	Chapters as assigned	Open University Press / McGraw-Hill Education

Hyland, K.	2008	Genre and academic writing in the disciplines	Language Teaching, 41(4), 543–562	https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005235
Wineburg, S., & McGrew, S.	2019	Lateral reading and the nature of expertise: Reading less and learning more when evaluating digital information	Teachers College Record, 121(11), 1–40	https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811912101102
American Psychological Association	2020	Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)	Sections as assigned	American Psychological Association. https://apastyle.apa.org
Recommended reading				
McKinley, J.	2015	Critical argument and writer identity: Social constructivism as a theoretical framework for EFL academic writing	Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 12(3), 184–207	https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2015.1060558
Fernsten, L. A., & Reda, M.	2011	Helping students meet the challenges of academic writing	Teaching in Higher Education, 16(2), 171–182	https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2010.507306
Liang, W., Yuksekgonul, M., Mao, Y., Wu, E., & Zou, J.	2023	GPT detectors are biased against non-native English writers	Patterns, 4(7), Article 100779	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2023.100779

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