A College-Level Course Syllabus
Course Title: Seminar in Language Teaching
Instructor: R. Esfandiari (PhD)
E-mail Address: esfandiari.ra@gmail.com
Autumn 2014

A. Course Description: The description and organization of the course read as follows:

Designed for the MA students of Teaching English as a foreign language, Seminar in Language Teaching (henceforth referred to as SLT) provides an appropriate forum, encouraging students to discuss the latest developments, to debate areas of contemporary interest, and to share and exchange ideas in language teaching. SLT provides an opportunity for students to read the most recent papers on a wide range of (inherently) thought-provoking topics of current research, heated debate, and unresolved nature in advance, to discuss the findings and implications of those papers with each other, and to share their ideas with other students in class. The purpose of SLT, therefore, is twofold: (a) to help students to stay abreast of current developments, and (b) to afford them the opportunity of becoming autonomous, being capable of choosing an appropriate topic and conducting an independent study. To those ends, we adopt a hybrid approach in which selection of themes and provision of articles are carefully done by the instructor. On the one hand, we strive to select areas of research and highly disputed topics of debate, as well as raising highly controversial issues; on the other hand, we attempt to supply students with some high-quality, peer-reviewed research papers from internationally well-known and universally acclaimed language teaching journals. Students must discuss the contents of these papers in class and share ideas. By doing so, we help students to know what is state-of-the-art, thus enabling them to come up with some new ideas for their own research. This systematic approach (theme-based organization coupled with relevant materials) has the added benefit of relieving students of being constantly obsessed with finding research topics. To reach our highly desirable goals, we split the present syllabus into three main blocks. In the first block, we familiarize students with the format and contents of the MA research proposal. In the second block, students read the papers, ponder over the contents of these papers, and discuss them in class, interacting with other students to exchange information and to share ideas. This part results in the generation of new ideas for research. We next ask students to communicate to the instructor the research topics they have already chosen to work on, as well as reporting on the progress they make regarding their research proposal. Hopefully, students will have completed a modest research proposal when the term draws to an end. Finally, in block three, students will sit the comprehensive exam. We give students this exam to ensure that they will have covered the papers by then.
B. **Course Objectives:** In the present course, we fully intend to
- present students with the most recent areas of research in the field, latest developments, and unresolved issues,
- provide students with the most recently published research articles from journals in the field, offering them food for thought,
- create an opportunity for students to interact with other students, discussing issues and problems in English language teaching in the world in general and in Iran in particular,
- help students to locate related journals, websites, databases and repositories in the field very effortlessly,
- raise students’ awareness of the format and contents of MA proposals and dissertations, using some model proposals and dissertations,
- familiarize students with the state-of-the-art research in the world in general and in Iran in particular, and
- enable students to choose topics which really appeal to them, helping them undertake to conduct an original study.

C. **Course Syllabus:**

**Block One: Proposal Writing**

Week One: Introduction to the course: Setting the scene

| Time and day of the class | 1393,07,02 | Wednesdays |

Week Two: Format, various parts, and language issues of a research proposal

| Time and day of the class | 1393,07,09 | Wednesdays |

- Introduction to APA manual
- Introduction to journals and websites
- Introduction to SPSS and other computer programmes for data analysis

**Block One: Central Themes**

Week Three: English for specific purposes

| Time and day of the class | 1393,07,16 | Wednesdays |

- Atai, M. R, & Fatahi-Majd, M. (2014). Exploring the practices and cognitions of Iranian ELT instructors and subject teachers in teaching EAP reading comprehension,
- Hsu, W. (2013). Bridging the vocabulary gap for EFL medical undergraduates: The establishment of a medical word list,
- Knock, U. (2014). Using subject specialists to validate an ESP rating scale: The case of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rating scale,
- Rusanganwa, J. (2013). Multimedia as a means to enhance teaching technical vocabulary to physics undergraduates in Rwanda,

Week Four: Language assessment issues

| Time and day of the class | 1393,07,23 | Wednesdays |

Week Five: Computer assisted language learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,07,30</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Week Six: Task-based instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,08,07</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Skehan, P., Xiaoyue, B., Qian, L., & Wang, Z. (2012). The task is not enough: Processing approaches to task-based performance.

Week Seven: Glossing and lexical bundles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,08,14</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Hyland, K. (2008). As can be seen: Lexical bundles and disciplinary variation.
• Qin, J. (2014). Use of formulaic bundles by non-native English graduate writers and published authors in applied linguistics.

Week Eight: Vocabulary and grammar,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,08,21</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Week Nine: Feedback-related issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,08,28</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Li, S. (2014). The interface between feedback type, L2 proficiency, and the nature of the linguistic target.

Week Ten: Strategies and learning styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,09,05</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Marco, E. (2013). Strategies for language learning and for language use: Revising the theoretical framework.

Week Eleven: Language skills: Listening and reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,09,12</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to learn or learning to listen?

Week Twelve: Language skills: Speaking and writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,09,19</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Week Thirteen: Miscellany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>1393,09,26</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Week Fourteen: Input, interaction, and output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Block Three: Comprehensive Exam

Week Fifteen: Comprehensive exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and day of the class</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

D. Course Requirements: The following will constitute grist to the mill of our course:

- Reading, discussing, and commenting on all the materials listed in the Course Syllabus section in class, and
- Choosing a research topic, writing a research proposal, and submitting the proposal for evaluation.

E. Course Evaluation: Since student performance is more than a single score on a single test at a single moment, the overall assessment of performance will be based on the following grading plan illustrated in terms of areas and percentages. The proper evaluation in SLT will be conducted in two phases: (a) students will have to take a comprehensive exam, the date of which is set in the Course Syllabus section, and (b) they will have to submit a completed research proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active classroom participation</td>
<td>10% (2 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive exam</td>
<td>40% (8 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>50% (10 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Active Classroom Participation:** This will involve reading the assigned materials prior to class, discussing them in class, and lecturing on relevant topics. Two students lead the discussion every weekly meeting, with other students contributing substantially to it.

- **Comprehensive Exam:** Comprehensive exam measures students’ knowledge of the contents of research papers contained in the Course Syllabus section. The exact date of the midterm exam is given in the course syllabus section. Comprehensive exam is primarily aimed at making sure the students will have read the papers, because
studying those papers helps students to identify gaps in the literature, thereby being able to find a researchable topic.

- **Research proposal:** Students will have to choose a topic and write a research proposal on it. Students either can refer to the topics listed at the end of this syllabus or should feel free to select any topic which really appeals to them. They are supposed to undertake a literature review on the topic at hand and conduct exhaustive in-depth research, following appropriate methodology. Students are strongly advised to follow APA manual (sixth edition) to draft their proposal, but the following points are in order. Students must type it on an A4 size paper, using the standard font Times New Roman and regular font size 12 or 14, with the pages double-spaced, the right lines left ragged, and the margins set as Word default. The research proposal must bear a concise title on the front cover, containing four main parts: introduction, literature review, methodology, and a reference list. The length of the research proposal—which may range from 5,000 to 8,000 thousand words—is sufficiently flexible, depending on the topic, variables of the study, as well as paradigm, design, and methods of the study. A well-executed research proposal should not exceed this word range. Students need to exercise due caution to avoid making strong claims and failing to acknowledge the sources used. Students are strongly advised to avoid plagiarizing. Plagiarism is grossly unethical, and if it happens to be detected, the student will lose the allotted grade. Students must submit their research proposals one month after their last final exam, with the same proposals sent to the instructor’s e-mail; this deadline is non-negotiable, and it will never be extended. Delayed submissions will be declined.

**F. Language teaching journals:** The following constitute the most important internationally acclaimed peer-reviewed journals in which students can search for original articles, research papers, state-of-the-art articles, literature reviews, meta-analyses, commentaries, forums, and many other useful features including Key Concepts which provide students with numerous pieces of invaluable information for the purpose of proposal and dissertation writing. Students are strongly advised to avoid consulting other on-line, less reputable journals not listed below.

1. **English for specific purposes journals:**
   - English for Specific Purposes (formerly known as ESP Journal) available at: [http://www.journals.elsevier.com/english-for-specific-purposes/](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/english-for-specific-purposes/)
   - Ibérica Journal available on line at: [http://www.aelfe.org/?l=en&s=revista](http://www.aelfe.org/?l=en&s=revista)
   - ESP Across Cultures available on line at: [http://old.unifg.it/esp/](http://old.unifg.it/esp/)
   - The Taiwan International ESP Journal available on line at: [http://www.tespa.org.tw/tespa-eng.html](http://www.tespa.org.tw/tespa-eng.html)
2. Language assessment journals:
- Language Testing available at: http://ltj.sagepub.com/
- Language Assessment Quarterly available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hlaq20/current
- Assessing Writing available at: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/assessing-writing/#description
- Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation available on line at: http://pareonline.net/Articles.htm

3. Computer-assisted language learning journals:
- Computer Assisted Language Learning available on line at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ncal20/current#.Ut1XUiehVdg
- Computers and Education available on line at: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/computers-and-education/
- Language Learning & Technology available on line at: http://llt.msu.edu/index.html

4. Generative SLA journals:
- International Journal of Bilingualism available at: http://ijb.sagepub.com/
- Language Learning available on line at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%29291467-9922
- Second Language Research available on line at: http://slr.sagepub.com/
- Studies in Second Language Acquisition available on line at: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=SLA&tab=currentissue

5. Second language writing journals:
- Written Communication available on line at: http://wcx.sagepub.com/

6. Journals publishing literature reviews and state-of-the-art articles:
- Language Teaching available (Formerly Language Teaching & Linguistic Abstracts) at:
7. Discourse analysis journals:
   - Critical Discourse Studies available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcds20#.Ut5-cSehVdg
   - Discourse and Society available at: http://das.sagepub.com/
   - Discourse Processes available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hdsp20/current#.Ut588CehVdg
   - Discourse Studies available at: http://dis.sagepub.com/
   - Journal of Multicultural Discourses available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rmmd20/5/3#.Ut59fCehVdg

8. Journals specifically tailored to practical language teaching issues:
   - English Language Forum available at: http://americanenglish.state.gov/english-teaching-forum
   - Language Awareness available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rmla20/current#.Ut6sKCehVdg
   - Language Teaching Research available at: http://ltr.sagepub.com/
   - System available at: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/system/
   - The Language Learning Journal available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rllj20/41/3#.Ut6pUiehVdg
   - RELC Journal available at: http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal201741
9. **Refereed Iranian Journals**: These journals include the latest empirical research pertaining to the Iranian context. Some of these journals are indexed in ISC.

- Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics at: [IJLA.TMU.AC.IR](http://IJLA.TMU.AC.IR)

G. **Internet websites**:

  The largest e-book library, this online site is an extensive open-access repository which enables its users to search for copies of books largely available in PDF files and download them free of charge. This searchable database does not require that users register first to be able to use it.

  This site fulfils a dual purpose, for users can search for both books and papers. Two different search spaces allow students to look for the books and the papers they need. The paper search part is very rich as it is linked to the majority of research journals students may not have access to in the institute in which they are studying. Easy to navigate, this site is highly recommended, as it is comprehensive and accessible.

H. **Dissertation Databases**:

- UMI ProQuest dissertations and theses: [www.umi.com/pqdauto](http://www.umi.com/pqdauto)
  This is the richest database in which students can search for dissertations of all kinds.

  Irandoc is the Iranian repository for dissertations. Using this site, students can search in to make sure the topic they would like to work on has not already been investigated.

I. **Recommended topics for research proposal**:

  **English for specific purposes**

- Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of stakeholders toward using mobile devices in academic venues
- Contrastive genre analysis of research articles across various disciplines
Corpus analysis of written, spoken, and digital discourse
Creation of academic word lists for particular disciplines
Creation of learner corpora for genre analysis purposes
Critical approaches and ESP
Identity issues in academic writing
Micro and macro analysis of occluded genres
Methods of teaching and learning genres
Move analysis of research articles within and across disciplines
Needs analysis of undergraduates in and out of the classroom venues
The effectiveness of ESP courses in Iran
The role of lexical bundles in academic writing
The role of metadiscourse such as boosters in academic writing
The role of multimedia in teaching ESP courses
Triangulated methods in investigating ESP-related issues

Language assessment
Authenticity and its realization in language tests
Classroom-based assessment
Cross-comparison of the types of rating scales to rate second language writing performance
Current standardized language tests and their relation to current innovations in language testing developments
Dynamic assessment
High-stakes Iranian national admission language (BA, MA, and PhD) tests and principles of language assessment
Measurement of communicative language ability in language testing
Quantitative approaches to investigate language assessment-related issues
Rater errors in second language assessment
Techniques used to test second language listening, speaking, reading, and writing
Test-taking strategies in language testing
The roles of self-assessment and peer-assessment in language testing
Training and its effect on raters to rate second language performance
Automated assessment of speaking and writing
Pragmatics testing

Other topics of particular interest
Bilingualism and multilingualism
Contrastive study of discourse markers
Corpus analysis and grammar teaching
Corpus and language teaching
Corpus and syllabus design
Corpus-based discourse analysis
Critical pedagogy
Critical thinking in academic writing
Discourse-based approaches to teaching grammar
Dynamics of selves and motivation
Feedback and recast
Focused communicative tasks
Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)
• Input processing (structured input)
• Instructional conversation (prolepsis)
• Interaction and negotiated interaction
• Interactional feedback
• Learning styles and strategies and language learning
• Learner uptake
• Lexical inferencing
• Modified Input and output
• Motivation and language learning
• Motivation, gender, and L2 selves
• Multiglossing and vocabulary learning
• Multimedia and vocabulary learning
• Non-interface position
• Noticing and language learning
• Peer feedback
• Planning time, task repetition, and complexity, accuracy, and fluency
• Pushed output
• Reflective practice and reflective teaching
• Scaffolding
• Self-efficacy, self-regulation, and their relationship
• Textual enhancement (visual/typographical enhancement)
• The role of connectionism in second language acquisition
• **Willingness to communicate (WTC)**
• Written corrective feedback
• Zone of proximal development (ZPD)

**J. Bibliography:** For further information regarding the terms, concepts, and other key issues, students are advised to consult the following books and papers specifically designed and prepared to meet their needs in this course.

• De Silva, R. (2014). Writing strategy instruction: its impact on writing in a second language for academic purposes. Retrieved from [http://ltr.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/07/12/1362168814541738.pdf](http://ltr.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/07/12/1362168814541738.pdf)


Good luck with your course syllabus!