

HUMA1000A Cultures and Values: Language, Communication, and Society SPRING2025 Tentative Course Outline

Lecturing faculty:

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Course Description:

When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the “human essence,” the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to man.

- Noam Chomsky

Languages are considered complex repositories of cultures, where meanings are created and articulated, verbally and non-verbally, about the artefacts, norms, beliefs, and values of cultures¹. Language use, an integral part of human communication, mirrors the inextricably entangled psychological, social, and cultural facets of human cognition and interaction. Building upon a fundamental exploration of the nature of human language, this course will delve into the closely interlinked notions of *language, communication and society* as manifested in our daily life, in the context of globalization and increasing border-crossing and intercultural exchanges. Through a lingua-cultural lens, we will probe a range of issues rooted in language and culture: language and thought; identities, self and ‘othering’; cultural diversity in verbal and nonverbal communication; language, gender and sexuality; popular culture and global cultural flow; language and power; globalization and language planning and policy in different cultural contexts. Through discussions of such, the course aims to cultivate an appreciation and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, communicative sensitivity, and social equality.

Course highlights:

- 3-credit HUMA common core course with no exam but one essay, Canvas online peer discussion, and one quiz.
- Learn how to convince others in writing.
- Learn more about three specific values: language, communication and society.

The objectives of the course are two-fold:

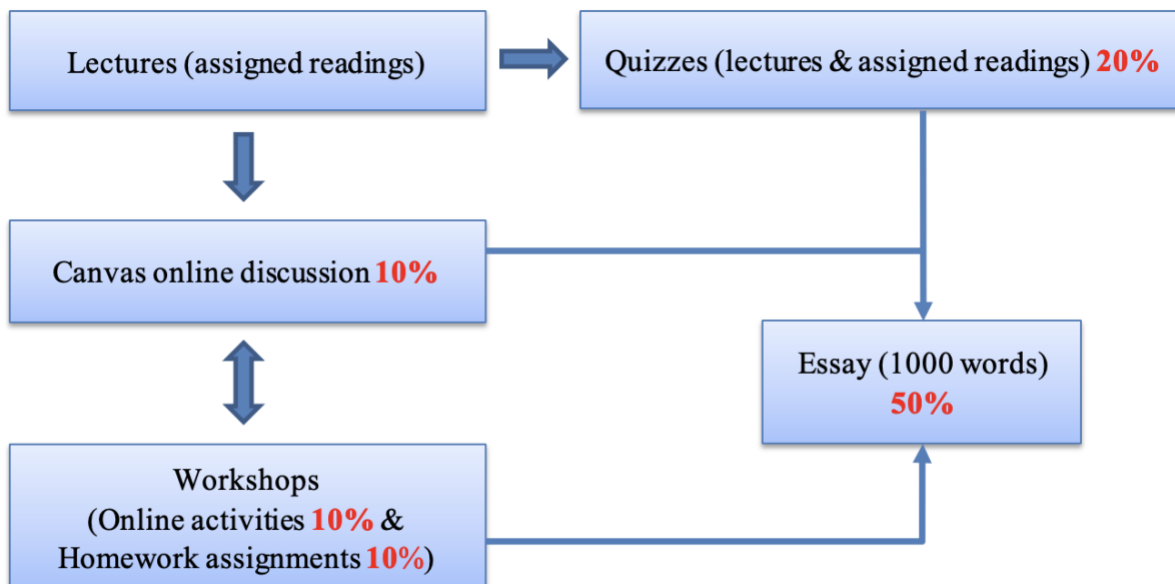
(1) For communicative capacity building through humanities knowledge and

¹ See, for instance, Sorrells, K., 2020.

(2) For enrichment of values and perspectives corresponding to the mission and vision of UST.

The course encompasses three **interrelated** strands of learning:

- a) Lectures on specific humanities perspective and values;
- b) Writing workshops to sharpen communication skills for the essay; and
- c) Canvas online discussion for exchange and comments among peers on lectures and essays.



Assessment:

(See **appendices** for rubrics of online discussion & essay)

1	Lecture quizzes	Multiple choice questions	20%
2	Canvas online discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer exchange forum on questions and issues pertinent to lectures & weekly readings; • Three deadlines over the process of the discussion; topics given by each would be closed afterwards – see “Grade Scheme for Canvas Discussion” for details. 	10%
3(a)	Writing workshops: Online activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View online content and complete all quizzes on Canvas; 	10%
3(b)	Writing workshops: Classroom sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend all five writing workshops on time. Attendance: Absence will be penalized if without justifications. Poor attendance will affect your final grade for the course. 	10%

		<p>Punctuality: You will be marked absent if late for more than 15 minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all homework assignments on Canvas, including the draft essay. 	
4	Essay (including revision efforts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a persuasive essay of 1000 words; • Which is revised at least once; • Which shows evidence of response to feedback on your first draft. 	50%

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

This course has defined “language and culture” as the specific aspect of **humanities perspective** to form the contents of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Within this framework, three basic values will be explored: Language, Communication and Society.

- ILO#1: Communicate in writing persuasively and effectively.
- ILO#2: Demonstrate a **humanities perspective** in communication.
- ILO#3: Question assertions related to humanities, especially culture and values.
- ILO#4: Show appreciation of different views and contribute to constructive feedback.
- ILO#5: Apply existing empirical and logical skills to make independent judgments about personal values and priorities.
- ILO#6: Appreciate the complexity of: Language, Communication and Society.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks:

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Lecture quizzes	ILOs 2,3,6	Help both students and instructor to measure how well the ILOs have been achieved
Online discussion	ILOs 2-5	Provide students a way with which to extend discussions beyond the classroom
Workshop performance	ILOs 1, 3, 4, 5	Allow students to exchange views and interact face-to-face with fellow classmates and instructors
Term essay (including revision efforts in profile)	ILOs 1-6	Consolidate students’ ability to write persuasively and in a professional manner

Course Schedule (subject to changes):

Week	Lecture Topic
1	Course Introduction: Overview of the course and topics to be covered, with a brief mention of the issues, activities, and expectations.
2	Language being 'Human': Nature and psychology of human language.
3	Language being symbolic and representational: Language and thought; language and power.
4	Language and belonging: Language, culture, and identity.
5	Verbal communication: Cultural variations of communication styles, speech functions, and linguistic politeness.
6	Language and social justice: Language, gender and sexuality.
7	Lecture Quiz I
8	Communication in a global context: Media, popular culture, and intercultural communication.
9 (1)	Language and society: Nation-building and language policy – the case of modern China.
9 (2)	Language and society: Linguistic landscape in global cities.
10	Language and society: Culture, identity, and language policy in Hong Kong
12	Lecture Quiz II

(Note: Public holidays in Week 11 and Week 13.)

Recommended books and resources:

(Note: Weekly readings and supplementary materials will be available on Canvas.)

1. Jackson, J. (2024). *Introducing language and intercultural communication* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
2. Marian, V. (2023). *The power of language: How the codes we use to think, speak, and live transform our minds*. Penguin Publishing Group.
3. Preece, S. (ed) (2016). *The Routledge handbook of language and identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
4. Salzmänn, Z., Stanlaw, J., & Adachi, N. (2018). *Language, culture, and society* (7th ed.). Boulder CO: Westview Press
5. Sorrells, K. (2020). *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix 1 Marking Rubric for Essay

	Argument (1/3)	Ideas (1/3)	Revisions (1/3)
A	<p>A precise and contextualized thesis with some nuance and perhaps individuality or originality</p> <p>Organization and development are wholly clear and coherent and typify the persuasive essay genre</p>	<p>Thoughtfully considered and extended individual ideas with careful, interesting, or original thinking or expression</p> <p>Support for main ideas from wholly humanities perspectives through effectively integrated and perhaps parenthetical citations</p>	<p>Revisions respond expertly to the feedback, or the draft required no or minimal revisions</p>
B	<p>A clear and constrained thesis</p> <p>Organization of the text is generally satisfactory and sustained by a mostly satisfactory development of ideas</p>	<p>Satisfactory or reasonable ideas with some extended development across paragraphs</p> <p>Support from largely humanities perspectives and citations that generally integrate into the ideas but may merit further development</p>	<p>Revisions generally respond or attempt to respond to major suggestions in the feedback</p>
C	<p>An understandable but maybe imprecise, unconstrained, common or unconnected thesis</p> <p>The organization of the text or the development of ideas may dissatisfy or seem formulaic or may sometimes impair reading or understanding</p> <p>Text disobeys the word limit</p>	<p>Ideas may lack sustained development or may depend on formulaic or generic thinking or expression</p> <p>Limited support from humanities perspectives or misapplied or inappropriate support</p> <p>Citations might seem superficial rather than integrated or developed</p>	<p>Some revisions respond ineffectively to major suggestions in the feedback</p> <p>Draft essay submitted late (within 24 hours)</p>

D	<p>An unclear or flawed thesis</p> <p>The text lacks a clear or expected organization or consistent development of ideas</p> <p>Language problems noticeably impair understanding</p>	<p>Ideas seem to misinterpret or misunderstand the prompt or some sources</p> <p>No sources from a humanities perspective or no matching sources cited in the essay body <i>and</i> references list</p>	<p>Final essay submitted without citations <i>and</i> a matching list of references</p> <p>No summary of revisions or no cover sheet</p>
F	<p>No obvious or understandable thesis</p>	<p>Ideas or essay seem unconnected to the prompt</p> <p>Indications of possible academic misconduct</p>	<p>Draft essay submitted more than 24 hours after the deadline, or no draft essay submitted</p>

Notes

- **Argument** assesses the quality of the thesis and how the text satisfies the conventions of a persuasive essay.
- **Ideas** assesses how the essay responds to the prompt and how it draws on appropriate humanities perspectives and supporting views and examples.
- **Revisions** assesses how the final essay responds to the feedback on the draft.
- Essays received **after the deadline** incur a grade penalty of one fine grade on the **Argument** band for every 24 hours or part thereof, e.g., 'B' → 'B-'. Essays not received 72 hours after the deadline receive an 'F' grade.

Appendix 2 Rubric for Canvas Peer Exchanges

Instructions:

- 1) The Canvas peer exchanges will function as an extension of the activities and discussion carried out in the lectures. You will join your discussion group, which is the same with your writing workshop group, and exchange views with your peers. The discussion starts around Week 3 or 4 and ends in Week 13.
- 2) **The forum values your active, on-going and regular contribution over the semester. There are 3 deadlines, by each of which the topics that have been given will be closed (Subject to changes).**
 - **Topic 1: Week 6**
 - **Topic 2: Week 10**
 - **Topic 3: Week 13**
- 3) Your mark will be out of 10 and will be calculated according to the following scheme:
*(*The forum coordinator is entitled to adjust the grade whenever it is appropriate.)*

Mark range	Descriptors
10	<p>You will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> taken the initiative and responded to all the discussion topics actively and regularly; addressed the questions with reflective thoughts; and contributed to the understanding of the issues among your group; supported your arguments with sound evidence, such as your personal experience, the lecture contents, the readings, or any other relevant sources; given credit to the sources you quoted by indicating where they are from (i.e., give references); Demonstrated your reading and appreciation of the viewpoints of your peers; and Responded to your peers timely and constructively.
7-9	<p>One or more of the following will apply to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You responded to most but not all of the topics; Your participation has been largely but not consistently regular; You have not responded to your peers adequately or on time; Not all of the topics were thoroughly addressed; Not all of your arguments were well grounded with supportive evidence.
4-6	<p>One or more of the following will apply to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your participation was marginal; you responded to no more than 50% of the discussion topics; Some (if not most) of your posts were given very late, close to the deadline(s); Some (if not most) of your arguments were difficult to read or poorly organized, lack of substantial ideas or reflections; You have provided very little or even no feedback on your peers' discussion; All of your posts were submitted very late (i.e., close to the deadlines), though most of them still contain substantive contents.
1-3	Your contribution was minimal, with 1 or 2 underdeveloped posts; or a few very short and poorly written ones posted upon the due date(s).
0	No participation at all.