

St. Joseph's University
School of Languages
Department of English

General English Syllabus

Over the last fifteen years, the Department has worked out a model of General English teaching which works by combining three processes: **streaming, semester goals in reading and writing** that allow individual teachers to be syllabus makers, and **testing that privileges the ability to transact with the language** over content recall. The semester goals in sequence are: Writing from Personal Experience, Understanding Narrative, Understanding Argumentation and Controversion.

Streaming is initiated through a diagnostic test conducted at the beginning of the I Semester. The test separates students of Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences and Commerce into three streams each, based on their abilities in reading and writing.

Communication Skills I (CS1 Stream) shall comprise students with problems in writing and reading that require closely monitored remediation.

Communication Skills II (CS2 Stream) shall comprise students who may possess basic communication skills such as being able to construct meaningful sentences, carrying out Level I Comprehension efficiently etc. They may have some difficulties in writing on their own and in dealing with inferential tasks and may therefore need to put in some effort in that direction.

Communication Skills III (CS3 Stream) shall comprise students who are able to write comfortably and to carry out complex inferential activity unaided while reading.

The three streams may be separated by skills, but will nevertheless pursue common writing and reading goals. We see Semester I as leading to greater skill with writing about personal experiences, while Semester II must develop the ability to respond to narrative in various forms. Semester III must introduce students to the skills necessary in understanding and responding to prose argument, while Semester IV must build skills with challenge, debate and controversion.

Since 2012, we have been working with a modified version of the streaming process. After two semesters of work, in the third semester, interested students from across the three streams will be allowed the option of choosing between a Special English Course I or stay in the Regular English Course I that will focus on expository writing and the specific semester goal through various texts. Students may choose once again, irrespective of stream, in the IV semester between Special Course II and Regular Course II.

Here, we wish to clarify that the semester’s broad learning objectives are common between the Regular and Special courses. Expository writing and Argumentation are emphasised in Semester III and Controversion is the focus in Semester IV. English Across the Curriculum model is spread across the third and fourth semesters. The distinction between Regular and Special courses occurs primarily in the organisation of material offered as a part of the classroom experience. While literary texts/popular narratives constitute material for the Regular Course making for some diversity in reading, the Special Courses have a narrow focus, as mentioned earlier, encouraging students to read around a specific discipline.

In terms of testing, we will continue with the model where the student can choose between three themes in the first two end-semester exams. In the third and the fourth semesters, there will be a Regular Course question paper and Special question paper for each specific course.

Scheme of Work

SEMESTER I & II (STREAMED)	SEMESTER III (CHOICE)		SEMESTER IV (CHOICE)	
Communicative Skills I, II & III	Special Course I	Regular Course I	Special Course II	Regular Course II

The papers that make up the semester plan (shown above) are discussed in detail as follows:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS I (CS 1)

Course Objectives

This course will be offered in Semester I & II to all students of BSc, BA, BCA, BSW, BVC BCom and BBA. It is designed to ensure that such students may have an opportunity to acquire the language skills necessary for undergraduate work. More specifically, this course will help them work towards their entry into subsequent courses in the semesters ahead.

Skills to be developed

- (i) Rapid-reading skills to develop the habit of independent reading.
- (ii) Comprehending simple/simplified texts.
- (iii) Comprehending and responding to classroom discourse.
- (iv) Writing – Guided Composition.
- (v) Vocabulary development.

- (vi) Correct use of basic grammatical structures.
- (vii) Reference Skills – Consulting a dictionary/index/ library catalogue/ searching for material on the internet/collecting information from newspapers and magazines.
- (viii) Mechanics of writing: basic punctuation, avoiding errors in spelling, understanding the use of capital/small letters.
- (ix) Competence in transferring information from the visual to the verbal; interpreting the visual.

Elaboration of Objectives

Extensive Reading (4 hours)

Developing rapid reading skills and moving from short passages to longer pieces—thus towards enjoying reading as a habit. While this process may begin in the classroom, the teacher must ensure that the student progresses towards independent reading outside of the learning situation. It is suggested that teachers use cartoons and comic-strips as one component of this activity.

Intensive Reading (15 hours)

Reading pieces in the classroom, drawn from a variety of genres. Picking out the essentials in the passages given and answering factual questions orally and in writing. Information Transfer: Pictures/Diagrams/Maps rendered in words

Responding to Classroom Discourse (4 hours)

Note-taking during lectures: exercises towards effective note-taking. Participating in general discussions arising out of intensive reading. Responding to real-life transactions, making short presentations, answering questions/asking questions effectively in such situations.

Guided Writing (10 hours)

The student must be able to carry out basic tasks such as description, narration and process-analysis by the end of the semester. These skills are to be elicited rather than taught and, therefore, the emphasis here should ideally be on situations drawn from the world that the student comes from.

Reference Skills (8 hours)

Using a dictionary for spelling, pronunciation, meaning and usage.
Improving Vocabulary through exposure to simple crosswords/word-games
Understanding variations in meaning and how they depend on context
Guessing meaning from context
Identifying alternatives for words with the help of a thesaurus.
Locating information in a table of contents/index/catalogue.
Using the library to obtain specific information/ searching the Internet

Remediation for Grammar, Vocabulary, and Writing (4 hours)

Remediation of faulty constructions noticed in composition

Words often confused: familiarity with synonyms and antonyms

Avoiding errors in punctuation: using the comma and the semi-colon.

Course Methodology

(i) Learning-centred: encouraging students to bank on their own resources to deal with a simple text. Teachers facilitate comprehension and acquisition of new skills through exercises in class accompanied by regular evaluation of student progress. (ii) Students are encouraged to express themselves freely—via available inter languages and perhaps even their own languages initially. Emphasis on communication rather than correctness to begin with, followed by gradual remediation.

(iii) Translation to English from familiar languages as a means of promoting vocabulary development and ideation.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS II (CS 2)

Course Objectives

This course will be offered in Semester I & II to all students of BSc, BA, BCA, BSW, BVC BCom and BBA. It is designed to ensure that such students may have an opportunity to acquire the language skills necessary for undergraduate work. More specifically, this course will help them work towards their entry into subsequent courses in the semesters ahead.

Skills to be developed

- a) Intensive Reading: 13 hours
- b) Extensive Reading: 8 hours
- c) Written Communication & Study Skills: 15 hours
- d) Speaking & Listening: 6 hours
- e) Library Skills: 3 hours

Elaboration of Objectives

Intensive Reading: 13 hours

1. Understanding the meanings of words, phrases and sentences in context.
2. Understanding logical relationships between statements—specifically, recognizing linkers and the cohesive relationships they produce
3. Inferring facts, opinions, reasons, causes, results, conclusions and general statements from a given passage.

4. Skimming a passage to identify general ideas and information
5. Surveying a passage to get an overall impression
6. Scanning a passage to locate specific details/particular information
7. Pinpointing arguments in a given passage
8. Retrieving relevant information from charts/graphs/time-tables etc.
9. Analysing advertisements, responding to pictures and photographs

Extensive Reading: 8 hours

The student will read two books---One each of fiction and non-fiction-from a prepared list and submit a written assignment on one of the books. Teachers are encouraged to hand out excerpts from graphic novels for a few classroom exercises.

Communication & Study Skills: 15 hours

1. Training the student to write coherently and familiarising them with different writing strategies such as description; narration, expository writing etc.
2. Specific focus on descriptive writing linked to objects, places and persons: narrative writing emphasising chronological order and different points of view leading to independent narrative writing; expository writing with an emphasis on definition, comparison/contrast, cause-effect etc.

Speaking & Listening: 6 hours

1. Training in listening to identify key words in speech, specific information in normal speech, to discriminate between specific information and detail/redundancies, taking down main points and notes while listening to a lecture.
2. Training in speaking for day-to-day activities and for making presentations in class.

Library Skills: 3 hours

Using dictionaries and reference works
Basic note-making skills

Course Methodology

The teacher's role is that of facilitating the learning process. The teacher will provide feedback and reformulation by enabling the learner to rephrase utterances. Lecturing of the explicatory kind to be minimised. Activity-oriented classroom situation using pair work and small-group work.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS III (CS 3)

Course Objectives

This course will be offered in Semester I & II to all students of BSc, BA, BCA, BSW, BVC BCom and BBA. It is designed to ensure that such students may have an opportunity to acquire the language skills necessary for undergraduate work. More specifically, this course will help them work towards their entry into subsequent courses in the semesters ahead.

Skills to be developed

- a) Intensive Reading: 13 hours
- b) Extensive Reading: 8 hours
- c) Written Communication & Study Skills: 15 hours
- d) Speaking & Listening: 6 hours
- e) Library Skills: 3 hours

Elaboration of Objectives

Intensive Reading: 13 hours

1. Rapid scanning of longer passages for specific information
2. Summarising the main ideas of the passage
3. Judging the tone of the passage
4. Selecting information from a passage for a particular purpose
5. Understanding implication through close reading

Extensive Reading: 8 hours

The student is encouraged to read extensively, and more importantly to read outside his/her zone of comfort/familiarity, and to transact with different kinds of texts—graphic novels, cinema, documentaries, TV series, YouTube videos and the like.

Written Communication & Study Skills: 15 hours

1. Training the student to write coherently and familiarising them with different writing strategies such as description; narration, expository writing etc.
2. Specific focus on descriptive writing linked to objects, places and persons: narrative writing emphasising chronological order and different points of view leading to independent narrative writing; expository writing with an emphasis on definition, comparison/contrast, cause-effect etc.

Tasks must involve extended writing with an emphasis on inferential skills and on responding to nuance, in addition to exploring personal experience.

Speaking & Listening: 6 hours

Enhancing the learner's transactional communication skills through exposure to cinema/television followed by classroom debate and discussion.

Library Skills: 3 hours

Consulting dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopaedias
Making use of the library in locating information for writing assignments
Using the Internet wisely.

Course Methodology

A learner-focused and learning -oriented approach will be employed with the teacher continuing to play the role of facilitator.

Course Content for Semester I:

Semester Goal: Personal Writing

The list provided here is meant only to indicate a possible range, from which teachers may take excerpts to class.

Everybody Loves a Good Drought by P. Sainath
Butter Chicken in Ludhiana by Pankaj Mishra
Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie
The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh
Ooru Keri by Siddalingaiah
House on Mango by Street Sandra Cisneros
The Wanderer by Samanth Subramanian
My Grandmother's Home by Kamala Das
The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
Folktales from India

Comic strips in the daily newspaper, Newspaper middles, long form pieces

A.K.Ramanujan—Selections from *Relations*

Audio,video and other visual media that fits in with the semester goal could also be chosen.

The student may also work on fiction/non-fiction of his/her choice.

Course Content for Semester II

Semester Goal: Understanding Narrative

The list provided here is meant only to indicate a possible range.

The Story of an hour- Kate Chopin

The Perks of being a Wallflower

Persepolis- Marjane Satrapi

Folk Tales Intro: The Story and the Song (from RK Ramanujan's The Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales

Fairy tales – Little Red Riding Hood versions by Perrault and the Grimm brothers

Re-tellings - Humour: James Thurber, "The Girl and the Wolf"; Horror: Angela Carter "The Werewolf"

Extract from Karthika Nair's Until the Lions.

The Jumping Mouse story – from the Sioux tribe (Native American)

History and music - Slaves songs from America

Goodbye Party to Miss Pushpa- Nissim Ezeikel

Boy on the Burning Deck from Twelve Preludes (Graphic Piece)

Heroine of Pain by Gavin Aung Than (Zen Pencils)
Laetitia Colombani's He Loves Me He Loves Me Not (Film Text)
Anne Sexton—Selections from *Transformations*
Raymond Carver--Selections from *All of Us*

Testing

Continuous Internal Assessment: 40 marks

One Test, Written Assignments /Oral Presentation

End Semester Examination (60 marks)

Based on unseen passages

REGULAR COURSE in semesters III and IV

The III Semester Regular Course is expected to build on reading and writing skills taught in Semester II. It will combine elements of the English Across the Curriculum focus while also broadening the student's acquaintance with literary texts and popular narratives. The IV semester course will continue this effort, and build argument and controversion skills.

OBJECTIVES/Skills to be developed

- i. To develop the student's abilities with regard to expository writing and following an argument.
- ii. To enable students to arrive at a sense of romance with the sciences via readings in popular science writing.
- iii. To enable students to understand the connections between pure sciences and the humanities.
- iv. To help students expand their scientific vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology will include a judicious blend of lecture inputs, library work, guided reading and writing, assignments, group discussions, seminars, and projects.

ELABORATION OF OBJECTIVES

Teachers must choose from the list suggested here, but may augment it with other material of their choice. At least half the readings done in class must come from this list.

Readings across the curriculum:

- a. Encountering—and negotiating with—content and form across a wide range of text types related to the public communication of science, social science, ideas in commerce and management.

- b. Passages taken from science magazines like New Scientist, Scientific American, Omni, Discovery. etc. and professional journals like Nature, Science, Current Science, etc.
- c. Selections from authors like Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins, Timothy Ferris, Jared Diamond, David Quammen, Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking
- d. Readings in the Science Vs. Humanities debate: George Orwell, Ashis Nandy and Stephen Jay Gould.
- e. Passages taken from magazines like the Economic & Political Weekly, Seminar, History Today, National Geographic, The Economist, Time and from academic journals.
- f. Selections from works of popular history/ popular social science such as The Spice Route, Food-A History, Empires of the Monsoon, Travels with a Tangerine, Theodor Zeldin's An Intimate History of Humanity, and A History of Private Life.
- g. Readings in the Science Vs. Humanities debate: C.P Snow, George Orwell, Ashis Nandy and Stephen Jay Gould.
- h. Selections from Jagadish Bhagawathi and Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz

Readings in the Popular: (20 hours)

- a. Encountering Science Fiction. Selections from Isaac Asimov, H.G. Wells, Arthur C. Clarke and Ray Bradbury.
- b. Dystopias in Cinema: Children of Men, V for Vendetta, Gattaca, and similar films, leading to the student reading both the sources for these films and dystopic literary narratives such as 1984, We, and Brave New World.
- c. Encountering History in the Graphic Novel. Selections from Persepolis, Safe Area Gorazde, and Berlin
- d. History and Society in the Contemporary Novel. Selections from Monica Ali's Brick Lane, and Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies.
- e. TED talks

Reference Skills for the Sciences: (4-8 hours)

- a. Getting acquainted with the library classification system, general encyclopedias, specialized scientific encyclopedias, science magazines and journals.
- b. Learning to use the index of a reference book.
- c. Understanding documentation and research conventions
- d. Using the internet for tracking down reference sources.

Writing Skills: (16-20 hours)

- a. Building an argument
- b. Examining evidence in an argument
- c. Writing over a good length—to produce an essay.

Testing

Continuous Internal Assessment: 40 marks

One Test, Written Assignments /Oral Presentation

End Semester Examination (60 marks)

Based on unseen passages

Special Course for Semester III

SPECIAL COURSE FOR THE B.Sc. PSA GROUP

Science and the Making of Modernity

The primary skill that is sought to be fostered is argumentation

This course will raise a few key questions and engage in a search for answers to them. Some of the key issues that will be explored can be articulated in the form of questions such as these: What is the nature of science? How does science distinguish itself from other human pursuits (such as the arts, religion, philosophy, social sciences, humanities) How are reason and method deployed in science? Do imagination and intuition have a role in science? What are the ways science has evolved over the past half a millennium? How does science articulate its identity? How does science defend itself from attack? To what extent is science contingent on culture, social milieu, politics, the spirit of the times, individual scientists? Is science universal? Is it Western? Has big science sold out to corporate interests and ignored the problems of ordinary people? Who are scientists accountable to?

These questions will be engaged with **through readings** from a wide range of writers who have addressed such issues including Isaac Asimov, Jacob Bronowski, Thomas Kuhn, Karl Popper, Carl Sagan, Meera Nanda, Ziauddin Sardar, Michel Foucault , Ashis Nandy, Richard Dawkins (about 8 for classroom analysis and the others for extensive reading). For their assignment and presentation, students will be required to apply the insights they gained to the exploration of specific problems/controversies in this domain.

Testing

Continuous Internal Assessment: 40 marks

One Test, Written Assignments /Oral Presentation

End Semester Examination (60 marks)

Based on unseen passages

SPECIAL COURSE FOR THE B.Sc. NSA GROUP

Reading Nature

The course aims at introducing students to the genre of popular science writing with a special focus on nature-writing and biology in the time of climate crisis. Through the readings, it is hoped that the students will develop an active interest in writing for the layman and a nuanced awareness of some of the live debates in the life sciences. Specific

issues such as the debates over teaching evolution in the United States and the debate over sex education in India will be taken up for consideration.

TASKS VISUALISED:

The course aims to generate writing responses from students through a series of classroom and independent writing activities. Interested students may also curate an exhibition on an idea that they find stimulating, or maintain an online journal that details the discoveries they have made through further reading.

Modes of Evaluation: Two pieces of independent writing, one expository in nature and one requiring a coherent argument towards Internal Assessment. The mid-term test will use unseen passages sourced from debates introduced in the classroom to test the same skills. The end-semester exam will assess the progress the student has made with these two writing skills.

SUGGESTED READING:

1. David Quammen—The Narcotic of Empire
2. David Quammen—God’s Weakness for Beetles
3. Stephen Jay Gould—Selections from Bully for Brontosaurus!
4. Purnachandra Tejaswi’s Nature writings
5. E.O. Wilson: Storm over the Amazon
6. Lewis Thomas: Selections from The Medusa and the Snail
7. The nature versus nurture debate—JB Watson and Theodosius Dobzhansky 2. John Horgan —The End of Evolutionary Biology
8. Stephen Jay Gould—What is the Dreaded E Word, Anyway?
9. Richard Dawkins—The Angry Evolutionist
10. H.Allen Orr—Devolution
11. London Research Institute Milestone: “Why Can’t a Woman Be More Like a Man?”
12. Sally Lehrmann—Going Beyond X and Y
13. David Quammen—Spatula Theory
14. The Edge Debate—The Science of Gender and Science, Steven Pinker and Elizabeth Spelke

Testing

Continuous Internal Assessment: 40 marks

One Test, Written Assignments /Oral Presentation

End Semester Examination (60 marks)

Based on unseen passages

Special Course for Semester IV

Consuming the City: Bangalore as text

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course aims at developing a more engaged understanding among students of the varied ways in and through which young people know the city and also the variety of ways in and through which the city comes to them. The effort on this course is to map and construct a cultural youth geography by encountering and understanding youth spaces and social histories related to them. This would aim at understanding how youth relate to their city and what identities emerge out of that inter-relation. This effort will be juxtaposed with perspectives of the city drawn from other sources, namely from historians, culture theorists, popular local writers, journalists.

TASKS VISUALISED:

The course aims to generate texts from students through a series of classroom and personal assignment activities. It visualises the production of texts of local histories and cultures from a variety of tasks that will include pictorial representations, brief documentaries of local experiences, interviews with informants of the city— like with family, friends, and other city dwellers. This will be discussed in relation to written texts that will include personal and professional narratives and analyses of the city.

SKILLS:

This course aims at developing among students skills of analysis and argument in writing based on more effective and systematic interpretative skills of reading. The generation and reading of texts will be systematically explored in classroom activities through oral presentations, writing tasks and discussion activities.

Modes of Evaluation:

The Evaluation procedures involved in the assessment of students on this course will continue to test writing that represents the skills of argument. The Assignments that will be used for Continuous Internal Assessment will expect students to use methods of Social Sciences, such as the compilation of information through interviews, analysis of data collected and building arguments from such compilations.

SUGGESTED READING:

Extracts and articles from the following will be used for the purposes of classroom discussions:

- a) Janaki Nair, "Bangalore: The promise of a Metropolis"
- b) Ajit Saldhana, "Sapad Raman"

- c) “ Time Out”(Magazine Archives)
- d) “Citizen Matters (Magazine Archives)
- e) Peter Colaco “ In and Out of Bangalore”
- f) N Jagadish, “Our Bangalore: A Journey through Time
- g) Ramachandra Guha: The Hindu and Deccan Herald Archives
- h) Walter Benjamin “The Arcades Project”
- i) Kanta Vartje “ Brahmins and Bangalore
- j) Selections from Sugata Srinivasaraju, “Pickles from Home”
- k) O-Eight-O(Magazine Archives)
- l) Anjum Hasan, “Neti, Neti”(Fiction)
- a) Janaki Nair, “Bangalore: The promise of a Metropolis”
- b) Walter Benjamin, “The Arcades Project”.
- c) Selections from UR Ananthamurthy’s newspaper writings
- d) Selections from Nataraj Hulyar’s newspaper writings.
- e) Selections from Sugata Srinivasaraju, Keeping Faith with the Mother Tongue”.
- f) AK Ramanujan on Folklore, “Who Needs Folklore”
- g) Selections from RK Narayan’s Malgudi series
- h) Brinda Charry, “Naked in the Wind” (Fiction)
- i) K.R. Usha, “Monkey Man” (Fiction)
- j) The Satanic Verses Debate
- k) U.R. Ananthamurthy—The Educated have Lost Their Almanac (interview)

Testing

Continuous Internal Assessment: 40 marks

One Test, Written Assignments /Oral Presentation

End Semester Examination (60 marks)

Based on unseen passages