SCHOOL of PROFESSIONAL & EXTENDED STUDIES
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

The International Gateway Program at American University Undergraduate

Course Descriptions

Principles and Approaches to Written Academic Communication

This course helps undergraduate students develop critical academic reading and writing skills. The focus is on vocabulary acquisition and utilization of advanced grammar structures in order to comprehend and express, through various genres of reading and writing. Students engage in reading a variety of academic texts and writing assignments that include a combination of reports and essays, a research paper, and collaborative writing projects.

Principles and Approaches to Oral Academic Communication

This course helps develop academic oral communication skills and strategies necessary for success in the university. The focus is on comprehension of oral communication in the classroom as well as participation in oral communication in the classroom. Students engage in small- and large-group discussions and various forms of group work. By the end of the semester, students will be able to: (1) demonstrate the ability to understand the gist and details of an academic lecture; (2) incorporate strategies of effective verbal and non-verbal communication; (3) employ conversation management and repair strategies; (4) summarize and paraphrase from oral sources; and (5) deliver oral presentations.

The Culture of U.S. Higher Education

This course explores the cultural assumptions underlying academic practices and personal interactions in U.S. university communities. It focuses on decisions students make to define their relationships within the academic cultures in which they find themselves. Special attention is paid to how U.S. cultural norms are viewed by observers from other countries. Course topics include, but are not limited to: understanding the educational institutional context, including the role of academic integrity; examining student-faculty interactions; U.S. academic writing; and successful cultural adaptation.

Post-WWII Film Studies

This course complements the core IGP courses, Written Academic Communication and Oral Academic Communication. By viewing one or two films per decade since WWII students witness the evolution of American culture, history, and society over the past seven decades. Students watch one film per week on their own and come prepared with a completed worksheet and a journal entry about the film. Class discussions dissect the film's meaning beyond the plot, make connections to the key events of the film's time period and explain the zeitgeist of the film's era. In the process, students hone their critical thinking skills, awareness of American culture and history, and improve their oral and aural skills by actively participating in class, leading discussions, and giving presentations on key events of each decade. Keeping a weekly journal and writing analytical essays help sharpen students' writing skills. In addition, the course advances students' knowledge of idioms and cultural references.

Elective course

Students will enroll in an American University course selected from the list of general education courses recommended specifically for IGP students. Course options are as follows:

- Anthropology-110: Culture and Human Experience
- Arts-100: The Studio Experience
- Communication-105: Visual Literacy
- Economics-100: Macroeconomics
- Psychology-105: Understanding Human Behavior
- Sociology-100: U.S. Society
- SIS-110: Beyond Sovereignty
- SIS-140: Cross-Cultural Communication
- SIS-210 Human Geography: Peoples, Places, and Cultures
- Mathematics

Course Content

IGP will facilitate the development of students' academic communication skills to ensure their long-term success at AU. In addition, students will expand and build upon their academic vocabulary in five academic content areas:

1. The Natural Sciences
2. Literature
3. History and Government
4. Psychology and the Social Sciences
5. The Creative Arts