

Reading Between the Lines

Offered to: All UG Programmes + MA (Sanskrit)

Course Category: Elective

Schedule of Offering: Semester III

Course Credit Structure: 3

Course Code: CK162/CK662

- **Lecture: 3**
- **Tutorial: 0**
- **Practical: 0**

Contact Hours per week: 3

Instructors: Saurabh Singanapalli

1. Introduction

This course is primarily activity-driven and aims to introduce the students to critical reading, writing and thinking, mainly in an academic context. Students will be taken through samples of different genres of writing, with the dual purpose of evaluating the content and the form for coherence, soundness, accessibility and elegance. They will then apply these same principles in their own writing, and develop the skills of writing rigorous and engaging prose. Students will be given brief guidance in techniques for fine-grained reading, effective writing and perceptive criticism.

The course will be carried out in English, and primarily aims to develop critical skills of reading and writing in English. However, the skills learnt through this course can be extended to other languages as well.

2. Course Objectives

Through this course, the student should learn to:

- 1) read a text effectively and locate it within the disciplinary context
- 2) review the writing and evaluate it in light of the larger debates
- 3) judge the writing in terms of composition and structure, flow and cogency, rhetorical techniques used, and the strengths and weaknesses of logic used.
- 4) cultivate the skills of good writing and composition across different genres
- 5) review others' and their own writing to be able to spot and edit common errors of writing
- 6) use online tools for better reading and writing effectively

3. Course Outcomes

- 1) Students will be able to identify, understand, and critically evaluate samples of different genres of academic writing.

- 2) Students will be able to recognise and analyse the arguments in pieces written by others, and also will develop a coherent and convincing argumentative writing style.
- 3) Students will be able to organize, proofread, and edit their written pieces effectively.
- 4) Students will be able to apply principles of composition to achieve fluency and clarity in their own writing.
- 5) Students will be able to use computers and online resources to draft, edit and prepare reference lists for different genres of academic writing.

4. Pre-requisites

There are no prerequisites. Since this is a skill-development course, students must be willing to work hard, and actively engage in cultivating the skills of reading, writing, and reviewing each other's work.

5. Readings

Primary Texts:

1. William, J., & Strunk, W. (1963). *The Elements of Style*. Allyn and Bacon.
2. Bailey, S. (2011). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*, 3rd ed. Routledge.

Recommended Reading:

1. Pinker, S. (2014). *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. Penguin.
2. Hayot, E. (2014). *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*. Columbia University Press.

6. Module-wise topics

Module 1: Introduction (3 sessions)

- Reading smart, writing well and thinking clearly
- What makes good writing good? – pt. 1
- Registers and genres

Module 2: Effective Reading and Writing (7 sessions)

- Dealing with new words: search or run on?
- Looking up a new concept: how deep do you go?
- Reading Exercise 1: Text and Context
- Reading Exercise 2: Resources to deal with new words and concepts
- The Process of Writing
- Writing Exercise 1: Free Writing

Module 3: Writing Skills (5 sessions)

- What makes good writing good? – pt.2
- Writing exercise 2: Popular Writing – Blog post and newspaper article
- Editing and reviewing online
- Online tools for spelling and grammar, dictionaries, encyclopaedia entries, thesauri

Module 4: Styles of Reading (5 sessions)

- Skimming and scanning
- Taking notes
- Summaries, synopses and abstracts
- Active reading: cracking the code of the text
- Taking notes - Keywords and phrases (exercise)

Module 5: Critical Reading (6 sessions)

- Challenge what you read
- What makes bad writing bad? (ambiguity, inconsistency, poor organisation, syntax errors)
- Reading exercise 3: Register and genres
- Time audit for reading tasks
- Evaluate and appraise writing

Module 6: Academic Writing (6 sessions)

- Does good academic writing have to stink?
- Reading exercise 4: Samples of good academic writing
- Writing exercise 3: Abstract and paper review
- Mutual review and editing
- Stylesheets
- Giving references using online and offline tools

Module 7: Argumentative Writing (6 sessions)

- Reading and Analysing Arguments
- Arguing effectively using connectors
- Principles of good argumentative writing
- Writing exercise 4: Argumentative Essay

Module 8: Other writing skills (7 sessions)

- Writing Formal Letters
- Preparing Personal Statements/ Personal Essays
- Preparing Research Proposals
- Communicating research effectively
- Wrapping up

7. Pedagogy

The teaching in this course will be through a combination of lectures and classroom exercises. The instructors will introduce concepts and reading material, drawing attention to good practices and common pitfalls in writing samples. They will also help in applying lessons from the reading exercises into students' writing. Discussions may be initiated by the teachers, but are expected to be student-driven. As this is a skill-development course, one in every five sessions will be completely devoted to practice tasks and feedback.

8. Evaluation Pattern

This course seeks to help learners develop their analytical and critical reading skills and the ability to write clearly and concisely. It thus requires regular practice of both reading and writing different kinds of texts, in various registers, throughout its duration. Keeping this in mind, the evaluation components consist largely of written assignments, reviews and presentation tasks that a student must work on continuously throughout the semester. Assessment will be based not just on the absolute quality of the assignments or classwork, but also on the improvement in work done over time.

- Classroom presentations (2) (20%)
- Monthly Assignments (3) (30%)
- Portfolio (20%)
- End-semester exam (30%)