

**Развитие мягких навыков через английский язык: как мыслить критически и
уметь адаптироваться.
Soft skills through English: how to think critically and adapt to changes.**

Approved by the Academic
Council of SoFL

Developer	N. Kudinova, Y. Chanturidze
No. of credits	3
Contact hours	52
Independent study (hours)	62
Year of study, degree programme	The second year of study, bachelor's degree
Study format	With the use of an online course

Abstract

In order to survive in today's "info-loaded" and diversified world, one is required to think critically and break free from the familiar routines to adapt to new circumstances. Sadly, no one is born with these skills. Yet, they can be developed and, luckily, we know how to do that! This semester we offer a brand-new online course «Soft skills through English: how to think critically and adapt to changes» that will help you sharpen their critical thinking skills and exercise adaptability. Throughout the course, you will discuss some of the most controversial topics such as the death penalty and ethical norms in video games, to name but a few. You will watch thought-provoking documentaries and gripping episodes of award-winning TV series. You will learn how to structure a persuasive argument to win debates, how to select reliable and credible information sources, and how to adjust to an unexpectedly changed situation. On top of that, you will definitely have a whale of a time!

Objectives, Results of the Course Study

This course is aimed at helping students develop their critical thinking skills and adaptability in an academic environment through English.

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Apply critical thinking and argumentation to real world problems and issues
- Assess a situation from various perspectives, evaluate alternative solutions, and choose the optimal response
- Disengage from an unattainable goal and re-engage in an alternative, feasible goal
- Evaluate the reliability and credibility of information sources and the relevance of information itself
- Identify and establish cause-effect relations in arguments
- Identify types of argument and cases of bias within arguments

- Override the inclination to adopt familiar patterns
- Reject conclusions that seem believable but are not logical
- Select logically correct and persuasive argumentation
- Structure an effective argument (claim, reason, evidence) in both oral and written forms

Course Content

1. The World

- Can the belief that the Earth is flat be justified?
- What part does a human play in the world of social networking?
- Should humanity explore the possibility of finding an escape planet?
- What are common and alternative explanations of global warming?

2. The Arts

- What is art? Are video games and graffiti art?
- Should moral principles be adhered to when video games are designed?
- Who writes history?
- Should modern ethical norms be applied when evaluating the legacy of historical figures?
- “What did the author want to say in their work?” - is it a valid question?

3. Health / Medicine

- Who to trust?
- Mortal combat. Who wins: traditional medicine or alternative medicine?
- Are you pro-life or pro-choice?

4. Justice

- What is just? Is everyone equal or are some more equal than others: celebrities vs. an average Joe?
- Should cheating at school and university be penalised?
- Should death penalty be allowed?
- Why are women paid less?

Assessments

The final grade is composed of the following parts: 25% Written Assessment (WA) +20% Oral Assessment (OA) + 25% student Independent Work Assessment /online (IWA) + 30% Final Assessment (FA).

Only overall grade is rounded.

Written assessment elements can be taken during the course of 10 days after they took place if a student has a medical certificate. The 10-day period starts from the last day of the medical leave. This, however, does not apply to oral assessment and individual work assessment (elements cannot be retaken).

The Final Assessment may be taken again during the retake period. The first retake follows the structure of the Final Assessment. The second retake is conducted using unique Testing and

Assessment Materials which cover the materials of the whole course. The grade for the second retake corresponds with the grade for the entire course.

QUIZZES/TESTS ASSESSMENT (max 10 points)

Task completion chart:

96-100% - 10

91-95% - 9

86-90% - 8

78-85% - 7

71-77% - 6

61-70% - 5

51-60% - 4

36-50-% - 3

21-35% - 2

1-20% - 1

0% - 0

Answers containing spelling mistakes are considered incorrect.

- Final assessment

Period of Final Assessment: the final exam is held in class within 10 days before the exam period offline/online on MS Teams platform.

The release of examination papers: during the session.

The exam consists of speaking tasks. 0 points in case of cheating.

Retaking exams: till the 15th of October 2022.

Time limit: 10 minutes online/offline.

Tasks complexity: B2.

DIALOGUE (in the form of debates) ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (max 10 points)

Task Response (max 3 points)

3 points – the student fully addresses all parts of the task: initiates the conversation, shares opinions, demonstrates active listening and questioning skills, responds to questions; presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas; the student finds common ground, presents logical arguments, supporting evidence and examples, makes comments and draws conclusions, shows the interest in what another participant says; content corresponds with the topic of the dialogue;

2 points – the student addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others: the student takes an active part in the dialogue, shares some ideas, does not always hear the thoughts and ideas of the partner; presents a relevant position although the conclusions may be unclear or repetitive, gives arguments, some of which are not fully developed, extended or supported;

1 point – the student responds to the task only in a minimal way: the student is not an active participant of the dialogue, rarely shares ideas, does not propel the conversation; presents a position but it is unclear and/or the arguments are not fully developed, extended or supported; presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported;

0 points – the student does not adequately address any part of the task: the student is rather

passive, does not share any ideas or answer questions; does not express a clear position.

Coherence and Cohesion (max 2 points)

2 points – the student applies logic when organising ideas, effectively uses a wide range of cohesive devices, introductory constructions, etc., makes the points clearly but briefly, allows the partner to finish without interrupting, encourages the partner to speak by inviting him/her to give his/her opinion, shows agreement or disagrees politely;

1 point – the student applies logic when organising ideas but there might be an occasional breach in logic, cohesive devices are inadequate, repetitive, under- or overused, the student sometimes talks over the other speaker, disagrees harshly, dominates the conversation;

0 points – the student does not apply logic when organising ideas, there are no linking devices, introductory constructions and/or they are used inappropriately.

Lexical Resource and Register (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary including some advanced lexical items; the student uses appropriate phrases for better dialogue development;

1 point – the student uses appropriate but limited vocabulary; phrasal verbs and/or collocations are used inappropriately;

0 points – the student's vocabulary is too limited to comment on the topic; numerous mistakes impede communication; active vocabulary is not used or is used inappropriately.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a wide range of question forms and other grammar structures accurately, may make 1 minor mistake which does not impede communication, can correct the mistake;

1 point – the student uses a variety of grammar structures and may make 2 mistakes which could impede communication;

0 points – the student makes numerous grammar and stylistic mistakes which impede communication.

Fluency, pronunciation (max 1 point)

1 point – the student's speech is smooth and fluent, there might be some minor pronunciation mistakes but they don't impede communication; intonation is appropriate; all sounds are articulated clearly;

0 points – the speech is slow, it takes the student time to find words; he/she fumbles the words and ideas and/or makes numerous pronunciation mistakes, which impede communication; intonation is not appropriate; some sounds are articulated indistinctly; the final assessment includes a dialogue (in the form of a debate).

-Independent work

Note:

Independent work includes various types of activities that students do at home. To receive full marks, home assignments must be fully completed and submitted on time. A home assignment partially completed and/or submitted after the due date is not assessed. If an assignment does not have a due date, students must submit it before the beginning of a class. To submit a home assignment, a student does not need to be present in class. The final grade is calculated based on a 10-point scale. A student is awarded 1 point for each assignment that is fully completed and submitted on time.

-Oral assessment

Oral assessment includes a dialogue (debate) and a presentation.

DIALOGUE (in the form of debates) ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (max 10 points)

Task Response (max 3 points)

3 points – the student fully addresses all parts of the task: initiates the conversation, shares opinions, demonstrates active listening and questioning skills, responds to questions; presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas; the student finds common ground, presents logical arguments, supporting evidence and examples, makes comments and draws conclusions, shows the interest in what another participant says; content corresponds with the topic of the dialogue;

2 points – the student addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others: the student takes an active part in the dialogue, shares some ideas, does not always hear the thoughts and ideas of the partner; presents a relevant position although the conclusions may be unclear or repetitive, gives arguments, some of which are not fully developed, extended or supported;

1 point – the student responds to the task only in a minimal way: the student is not an active participant of the dialogue, rarely shares ideas, does not propel the conversation; presents a position but it is unclear and/or the arguments are not fully developed, extended or supported; presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported;

0 points – the student does not adequately address any part of the task: the student is rather passive, does not share any ideas or answer questions; does not express a clear position.

Coherence and Cohesion (max 2 points)

2 points – the student applies logic when organising ideas, effectively uses a wide range of cohesive devices, introductory constructions, etc., makes the points clearly but briefly, allows the partner to finish without interrupting, encourages the partner to speak by inviting him/her to give his/her opinion, shows agreement or disagrees politely;

1 point – the student applies logic when organising ideas but there might be an occasional breach in logic, cohesive devices are inadequate, repetitive, under- or overused, the student sometimes talks over the other speaker, disagrees harshly, dominates the conversation;

0 points – the student does not apply logic when organising ideas, there are no linking devices, introductory constructions and/or they are used inappropriately.

Lexical Resource and Register (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary including some advanced lexical items; the student uses appropriate phrases for better dialogue development;

1 point – the student uses appropriate but limited vocabulary; phrasal verbs and/or collocations are used inappropriately;

0 points – the student's vocabulary is too limited to comment on the topic; numerous mistakes impede communication; active vocabulary is not used or is used inappropriately.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a wide range of question forms and other grammar structures accurately, may make 1 minor mistake which does not impede communication, can correct the mistake;

1 point – the student uses a variety of grammar structures and may make 2 mistakes which could impede communication;

0 points – the student makes numerous grammar and stylistic mistakes which impede communication.

Fluency, pronunciation (max 1 point)

1 point – the student’s speech is smooth and fluent, there might be some minor pronunciation mistakes but they don’t impede communication; intonation is appropriate; all sounds are articulated clearly;

0 points – the speech is slow, it takes the student time to find words; he/she fumbles the words and ideas and/or makes numerous pronunciation mistakes, which impede communication; intonation is not appropriate; some sounds are articulated indistinctly.

PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (max 10 points)

If the content of the presentation does not relate to the topic, a student receives “0” for the whole presentation.

Task Response (max 3 points):

3 points – the student fully addresses all parts of the task: the presentation corresponds to the chosen topic; it is clearly divided into introduction, main body and conclusion, all content points are covered; introduction contains the purpose and the plan of the presentation, each part of the main body has an explicit pattern of organisation (illustration, cause and effect, comparison, definition, etc.); conclusion includes both summary and the final statement and rounds the presentation of appropriately; presentation contains appropriate references in APA style in speech and slides; various coherence devices are used;

2 points – the student addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others: the presentation partially corresponds to the topic, it is clearly divided into introduction, main body and conclusion and the parts of the presentation are connected with linking devices; presentation contains appropriate references in APA style in speech and slides;

1 point – the student responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential, the format may be inappropriate: the presentation partially corresponds to the chosen topic, not all the content points are covered it is not clearly divided into introduction, main body and conclusion; presentation is free from logical fallacies; presentation does not contain appropriate references in APA style in speech and slides;

0 points – the student does not adequately address any part of the task: the presentation is not divided into introduction, main body and conclusion and the parts of the presentation are not connected with linking devices; presentation does not contain appropriate references in APA style in speech and slides.

Language Use (max 3 points):

3 points – the speaker uses an appropriate amount of academic vocabulary, terminology is relevant to the subject, synonyms are used to avoid repetitions, the hedging strategies are applied when applicable, the speaker uses collocations and advanced grammar when needed, pronunciation and speech flow are natural, occasional vocabulary and grammar mistakes in speech causing no difficulties for the audience; texts on slides have no vocabulary and grammar mistakes; the speaker naturally fills in the pauses caused by breakdowns of different nature;

2 points – the speaker complies with academic register, the speech is characterized by fluency and adequate pace; the speaker does not use collocations, omits vocabulary and grammar mistakes that sometimes cause difficulties for the audience, and/or there are 1-2 vocabulary and/or grammar mistakes on slides; the speaker naturally fills in the pauses caused by breakdowns of different nature;

1 point – the speaker demonstrates limited language resource; the vocabulary and grammar are generally appropriate with a few non-impeding inaccuracies; the speaker fills in the pauses caused by breakdowns of different nature with effort;

0 points – the speaker demonstrates poor language resources, omits vocabulary and grammar mistakes that cause serious difficulties for the audience, and the speaker does not fill in the

pauses.

Manner of Delivery (max 2 points):

2 points – the presenter speaks with confidence maintaining a certain level of dynamics and keeping an appropriate posture and body language, maintains the adequate level of eye contact, uses stress, intonation and pausing appropriately; the presentation is given without reading off the slides or paper within the given time limit; the presenter makes 1-2 pronunciation mistakes in words of common use causing no difficulties for the audience, when answering questions; the speaker interacts with ease and responds appropriately;

1 point – the presenter makes 3-4 pronunciation mistakes causing difficulties for the audience and/or the presenter uses stress, intonation and pausing with limited control causing some difficulties for the audience; the presentation is given without reading off the slides or paper, when answering questions; the speaker interacts with effort or responds inappropriately; the speaker delivers the content within the given time limit;

0 points – the presenter makes 5 and more pronunciation mistakes in words of common use causing difficulties for the audience; the speaker does not interact with the audience; the presentation is given with reading off the slides or paper; the presentation does not fit the time limit.

Visual Aids (max 2 points):

2 points – the visuals are prepared in a certain style consistent throughout the presentation and well readable (font, colour); each visual has a heading relevant to the overall theme of the presentation, conforming to the academic register; each visual contains only key words and phrases without complete sentences; presentation as a whole has an adequate balance of graphic and verbal information;

1 point – the visuals are well readable (font, colour), contain both complete sentences and key words and phrases, presentation has a misbalance of graphic and verbal information;

0 points – the visuals are not well readable, and do not conform to the academic register.

- Written assessment

Written assessment includes an argument and a review (in the form of an op-ed). Assessment can be retaken if missed for a valid reason. The absence must be documented.

ARGUMENT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (10 points)

NB: * Each rubric contains several descriptors. To be awarded the highest score, a student's answer must meet all the requirements in the rubric for the highest score. In other rubrics, all the descriptors are used with "and/or", if not specified otherwise. For example, let us look at the Grammar Range and Accuracy criterion. If a student makes no grammar mistakes, but uses similar grammar structures throughout their work, they are to receive 0 points for the Grammar Range and Accuracy criterion.

Task Response (max 3 points)

3 points – the argument contains all structural elements (claim, reason, evidence). Claim is related to the topic. One of the studied types of evidence is used. The sources of evidence are reliable. The sources are provided.

2 points – the argument contains all structural elements (claim, reason, evidence). AND Claim is related to the topic. AND One of the studied types of evidence is used. AND The sources of evidence are reliable;

1 point – the argument contains all structural elements (claim, reason, evidence). AND Claim is related to the topic. AND One of the studied types of evidence is used. BUT The sources of

evidence are not reliable and the sources are not provided;

0 points – the argument does not contain one or more of the structural elements (claim, reason, evidence). AND/OR Claim is not related to the topic. AND/OR None of the studied types of evidence is used.

Coherence and Cohesion (max 2 points)

2 points – the text is coherent: there is a clear connection between claim, reason and evidence. If necessary, cohesive devices are used. There are no mistakes in using cohesive devices;

1 point – the text is not always coherent: evidence is not quite related to claim and reason. If necessary, cohesive devices are used. There can be 1-2 mistakes in using cohesive devices;

0 points – the text is not coherent: there is no clear connection between the structural elements. The reason does not support claim. If necessary, cohesive devices are used. There are more than 2 mistakes in using cohesive devices.

Lexical Resource and Register (max 2 points)

2 points – there are no mistakes in spelling or word formation. Lexical units vary and are used properly. There can be no more than 2 vocabulary mistakes;

1 point – there can be 3-4 vocabulary mistakes (spelling, word formation, word choice). Similar lexical units are sometimes used;

0 points – there are more than 4 vocabulary mistakes (spelling, word formation, word choice). Similar lexical units are used throughout the work.

Grammar Range and Accuracy (max 2 points)

2 points – Grammar structures vary and are used properly. There can be no more than 3 grammar mistakes;

1 point – Similar grammar structures are sometimes used. There can be 4-5 grammar mistakes;

0 points – Similar grammar structures are used throughout the work. There are more than 5 grammar mistakes.

Paragraphing (max 1 point)

1 point – the argument is organised into one paragraph;

0 points – the argument is not organised into one paragraph.

REVIEW (OP-ED) ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (max 10 points)

Recommended word count – 250-300

Task Response (max 3 points)

3 points – the student fully addresses all parts of the task (writes a title and a catchy introduction which identifies the reviewed item, gives a complete and fair description of the item, makes valid recommendations in conclusion); presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas (presents a thorough discussion);

2 points – the student addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others (writes a title and a relevant introduction, gives a narrow description, makes valid recommendations in conclusion); presents a relevant position although the conclusions may be unclear or repetitive; presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear;

1 point – the student responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate: the student does not write a title but writes an introduction, gives a short description of the item, makes invalid recommendations in conclusion; the student presents a position but it is unclear; presents some main ideas but they are difficult to identify and may be

repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported;

0 points – the student does not adequately address any part of the task: the student does not write an introduction, presents undetailed arguments, neither presents the personal impression nor the verdict; does not express a clear position; presents few ideas which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant.

Coherence and Cohesion (max 2 points)

2 points – the student writes a clearly structured objective review on the item, uses a variety of linking devices which connect the ideas appropriately, organises information in a logical order, uses paragraphing sufficiently;

1 point – the student writes a poorly structured review, uses a limited number of linking devices, does not use paragraphing sufficiently;

0 points – the student does not organise information and ideas logically, fails to use linking devices appropriately or repeats them.

Lexical Resource and Register (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a wide range of vocabulary specific to this topic without repetitions, makes 1 lexical or spelling mistake, the review is written in the appropriate register;

1 point – the student uses a limited range of vocabulary, fails to use active vocabulary items, makes 2 lexical or spelling mistakes, the student uses the appropriate register;

0 points – the student uses basic vocabulary, makes 3 or more lexical / spelling mistakes, the student uses an inappropriate register.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy (max 2 points)

2 points – the student uses a variety of complex grammar structures and makes 1 grammar mistake;

1 point – the student uses basic grammar structures and makes 2 grammar mistakes;

0 points – the student makes numerous grammar mistakes which impede understanding.

Sources (max 1 point)

1 point – all the sources are reliable and provided

0 points – one of the sources is not reliable and/or the sources are not provided.

% Interim assessment (3 module)

0.300 Final assessment

0.250 Independent work

0.250 Written assessment

0.200 Oral assessment

Types of classrooms:

Lecture / seminar classroom (52) MS Teams

Consultations MS Teams

Sources

Key recommended reading

Mastering English through Global Debate, , ISBN: 978-5-7598-2129-8, 2019

Bowell, T., Cowan, R., & Kemp, G. (2020). Critical Thinking : A Concise Guide (Vol. Fifth

edition). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Retrieved from
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&site=eds-live&db=edsebk&AN=2240045>

Recommended further reading

Cottrell, S. (2011). *Critical Thinking Skills : Developing Effective Analysis and Argument*. [N.p.]: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&site=eds-live&db=edsebk&AN=1525114>

Sources

Software

№p/p	Name	Terms for access/downloading
		<i>Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010 (from HSE University's internal network (agreement))</i> <i>Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS (from HSE University's internal network (agreement))</i>

Professional databases, information reference systems, e-resources (eLearning resources)

№p/p	Name	Terms for access/downloading
		<i>MS Teams, Webinar.ru</i> https://edu.hse.ru/

Supplies and technical support for the course:

- **type of classroom:** computer classroom or/ and lecture hall;
- **classroom procurement:** personal computer; multimedia projector, screen, whiteboard, laptop, screen, specialized furniture, blackboard, tables or desks, chairs, Wi-Fi Internet.

Organization of Studies for Persons with Limited Mobility and Disabilities

If necessary, learners with limited mobility or a disability (as per his/her application), as well as per his/her individual rehabilitation programme, may be offered the following options for receiving learning information with due consideration of his/her individual psycho-physical needs (e.g., via eLearning studies or distance technologies):

=for persons with impaired vision: enhanced fonts in hard copy documents; e-documents; audio files (transfer of study materials to an audio-format); hard copy documents with the use of Braille; individual consultation with a facilitated communicator; individual assignments and mentoring;

-for persons with hearing impairments: in hard copy; e-documents; video materials with subtitles; individual consultation with a facilitated communicator; individual assignments and mentoring;

-for persons with a muscular-skeleton disorder: in hard copy; e-documents; audio-files, individual assignments and mentoring.

Examples of Assessment Materials

Blocking elements are not present.

Reading which includes the following: predicting, skimming, scanning, detailed reading, guessing unknown words from context, understanding text organization, recognizing argument and counter-argument; distinguishing between main information and supporting detail, fact and opinion, hypothesis versus evidence; summarizing and note-taking.

Writing includes the following:

summary content and structure (patterns of organization, paragraphing, topic sentence and supporting ideas, coherence and cohesion, punctuation, quoting and referencing, avoiding plagiarism), review structure and content, preliminary thesis formulation, research question development;

- functions (generalization, definitions, exemplification, classification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, process and procedure, interpretation of data);
- style (passive constructions, avoiding verbosity);
- punctuation.

Listening includes the following:

general comprehension (listening for gist, listening for detailed information, recognizing relevant/irrelevant information, signposting and importance markers, recognizing sentence connections: reference, addition, contrast, cause and effect, listing; evaluating the importance of information);

- lectures (identifying the topic and main themes, identifying relationships among major ideas, comprehending key information, identifying supporting ideas and examples, retaining information through note-taking, retrieving information from notes, inferring relationships between information supplied in a lecture, taking efficient notes from a lecture).

Speaking includes the following:

seminar skills (agreeing and disagreeing, clarifying, questioning, persuading, emphasizing, concluding, interrupting; evaluating ideas and actions, presenting solutions, recommending action, comparing and contrasting, probability and possibility, cause and effect, criticizing);

- presentation skills (introductions and stating the purpose, signposting, creating interest and involving audience, using rhetorical questions, emphasizing and highlighting key points, preparing the audience for visuals, summaries, conclusions and closing courtesies; body language and non-verbal communication).