



## School of Humanities and Languages

# LING5003, Language Testing Semester 1, 2014

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## 1. Course Staff and Contact Details

Course Convenor			
Name	Dr Anikó Hatoss	Room	Morven Brown 220
Phone	93858340	Email	a.hatoss@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Time	Wednesdays and Thursdays 2pm-3pm		

## 2. Course Details

Units of Credit (UoC)	6		
Course Description	This course introduces participants to the fundamental principles and best practice of language testing. While the focus is on TESOL contexts, the testing theories and methods are applicable across various languages and diverse assessment contexts. The course has a dual focus on theory and practice. The sessions will take a workshop format with theoretical introductions and practical work such as the construction of test items and the design and validation of test scoring. We will take a critical perspective on common testing methods and procedures and explore their limitations with a special focus on validity and washback effects.		
Course Aims	1.	to introduce the basic types of language tests, and some of the important concepts and issues in language testing, as well as a few very basic statistical procedures;	
	2.	to provide guidance and practice in designing, trialling, and administering language tests;	
	3.	to introduce some approaches and issues in the evaluation of tests;	
	4.	to consider some of the important test administration issues in language testing.	
Student Learning Outcomes	Upon successful completion of the course students will:		
	1.	gain a grounding in language testing that will enable them to participate in the development and administration of tests in an educational institution setting	
	2.	be able to evaluate language tests critically	
	3.	demonstrate an understanding of the principles and terminology involved in language testing	
	4.	demonstrate an understanding of the major trends in language testing	
Graduate Attributes	5.	differentiate among different types of language test.	
	1.	Upon successful completion of the course students will develop the following attributes:  the skills involved in scholarly enquiry in linguistics	
	2.	the capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem-solving in linguistics	
	3.	the skills of effective communication	
4.	the ability to engage in independent and reflective learning		

### 3. Learning and Teaching Rationale

The content was carefully selected to cover all major topics in language testing. However, this means that the various topics are not explored in depth. The aim is to give an introduction to each topic so that students develop a good understanding of the field and the application of testing principles in teaching and research contexts.

### 4. Teaching Strategies

Classes will generally take a workshop format. While there will be some short introductions to the theories in lecture format, most time will be spent on interactive group discussions considering key concepts, issues and problems. These issues will be considered in the contexts of students' experience and home teaching/learning environments. Students will be expected to come to the sessions prepared, do the set tasks, answer focus questions and take an active part in the workshops. It is expected that at the end of the course, students will feel they have a solid grounding in language testing that will enable them to participate in the development and administration of tests in an educational institution setting, and to be able to evaluate tests critically. A workbook (Study Kit) including all activities and selected key readings will be available for students through the Moodle platform.

### 5. Course Assessment

Assessment Task	Length	Weight	Learning Outcomes Assessed	Graduate Attributes Assessed	Due Date
Assignment	2500 words	40%	1,2,3	1,2	4 April
Portfolio	3000 words	50%	1,2,3	1,2	16 May
Presentation	10 min	10%	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	Class roster

**Please Note:** In addition to fulfilling the above assessment requirements, students are expected to attend at least 80% of their lectures and tutorials in order to pass the course.

### Grades

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories see

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/GuideToUNSWGrades.html>

### Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assignments which are submitted to the School Assignment Box must have a properly completed School Assessment Coversheet, with the declaration signed and dated by hand. The Coversheet can be downloaded from <https://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>. It is your responsibility to make a backup copy of the assignment prior to submission and retain it.

Assignments must be submitted before 4:00pm on the due date. Assignments received after this time will be marked as having been received late.

### Late Submission of Assignments

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Late assignments will attract a penalty. Of the total mark, 3% will be deducted each day for the first week, with Saturday and Sunday counting as two days, and 10% each week thereafter.

The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

## 6. Attendance/Class Clash

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### Attendance

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Students are expected to be regular and punctual in attendance at all classes in the courses in which they are enrolled. Explanations of absences from classes or requests for permission to be absent from classes should be discussed with the teacher and where applicable accompanied by a medical certificate. If students attend less than 80% of their possible classes they may be refused final assessment.

**Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the student misconduct policy.**

### Class Clash

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A student who is approved a permissible clash must fulfil the following requirements:

- a. The student must provide the Course Convenor with copies of lecture notes from those lectures missed on a regular basis as agreed by the Course Convenor and the student.
- b. If a student does attend a lecture for which they had secured a permitted clash they will still submit lecture notes as evidence of attendance.
- c. **Failure to meet these requirements is regarded as unsatisfactory performance in the course and a failure to meet the Faculty's course attendance requirement. Accordingly, Course Convenors will fail students who do not meet this performance/attendance requirement.**
- d. Students must attend the clashed lecture on a specific date if that lecture contains an assessment task for the course such as a quiz or test. Inability to meet this requirement would be grounds for a Course Convenor refusing the application. If the student misses the said lecture there is no obligation on the Course Convenor to schedule a make-up quiz or test and the student can receive zero for the assessment task. It should be noted that in many courses a failure to complete an assessment task can be grounds for course failure.

## 7. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/>. They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student's work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here:

<http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf>

## 8. Course Schedule

Week Commencing:	Topic	Discussion questions and Exercises	Readings
3 March	Introducing testing and assessment	-Introduce fundamental concepts of assessment -Contrast classroom assessment with large-scale testing -Discuss the various purposes of language assessment and types of tests	Textbook Chapter 1-3
10 March	Validity and authenticity	-To provide a conceptual basis for making validity	Textbook Chapter 4 Bachman 1991 What does language testing have to offer? pp. 671-694

		<p>judgements of tests and testing processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To introduce concept of validity</li> <li>-To introduce key constructs and models used for describing language ability;</li> </ul> <p>To discuss elements and constraints of test authenticity</p>	<p>Brown 2008 Testing-context analysis pp.275-281</p> <p>Fulcher &amp; Davidson pp. 36-51 (Appendix 7)</p>
17 March	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To introduce the concept of reliability</li> <li>-To introduce methods of reliability analysis</li> </ul> <p>To discuss strategies for improving test reliability</p>	Textbook Chapter 5
24 March	Test specifications and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To introduce main considerations for developing test specifications;</li> <li>-Develop skills in spec-driven test assembly</li> </ul>	Hughes Ch 7 BULAT Test Specifications (Appendix. 1)
31 March	Writing items and tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To introduce common test techniques</li> <li>-To develop skills in writing specific test items</li> <li>-To raise awareness of the impact of task type on test performance</li> </ul> <p>To raise awareness of the beneficial</p>	<p>Hughes Ch 8</p> <p><b>Weir 1990</b> Test methods pp. 73-79 (wrong)&gt; pp.42-85</p> <p><b>Bachman 1991</b> What does language testing have to offer pp. 694-698</p>

		effect of moderation in developing test tasks and items	
7 April	Washback Communicative Language Testing	-To develop critical thinking about the impact of tests on language teaching and learning -To discuss the challenges and opportunities in reducing negative washback To develop survey design skills for evaluating the washback effect of a test	Textbook Chapter 5 Hughes Ch 6 Alderson & Wall 1993 Does washback exist?
14 April	Scoring language tests Developing proficiency descriptors	-To raise awareness of the impact of scoring on reliability and validity; - To compare different approaches to developing band descriptors and scoring -To critically discuss existing band scales for proficiency testing	Common European Framework (Appendix 6 in Study Kit) Weir 2005 Limitations of CEFR in Language Testing Journal .
5 May	Testing writing	-To enhance the understanding of and the metalinguistic skills in describing writing ability -To evaluate sample writing using band	IELTS band descriptions for writing (Appendix 9) Hughes Ch 9

		descriptors To enhance skills in writing evaluative feedback and comments	
12 May	Testing speaking and listening	-To enhance the understanding of and the metalinguistic skills in describing speaking and listening abilities -To develop speaking tests for specific target language contexts; To critically discuss characteristics of designed test	Hughes Ch 10 Hughes Ch 12  Brown 2003 Interviewer variation
19 May	Testing reading, grammar and vocabulary	-To enhance the understanding of and the metalinguistic skills in describing reading abilities -To develop reading tests for specific target language contexts To critically discuss validity of reading, grammar and vocabulary tests	Hughes Ch 11 Hughes Ch 13 IELTS Academic Reading Test description (Appendix 3)
26 May	Ethics, summary and evaluation	-To discuss ethical conduct in language testing -To provide peer feedback on presentations Summary	Shohamy 2001
2 June	Summary	Presentations	-



9. Course Resources
<b>Textbook Details</b>
Hughes, A. 2003. <i>Testing for Language Teachers</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: CUP. Study Kit LING5003 available for free download from Moodle study desk.
<b>Journals</b>
Language Testing
<b>Recommended sources:</b>
Fulcher, G. & Davidson, F. (2007) <i>Language testing and assessment</i> . Routledge.(highly recommended)
Alderson, C., C. Clapham & D. Wall. 1995. <i>Language Test Construction and Evaluation</i> . Cambridge: CUP. (A thorough, useful practical guide to the construction of tests.)
Bachman, L. 1990. <i>Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing</i> . OUP. (Advanced and theoretical)
Bachman, L. & A. Palmer. 1996. <i>Language Testing in Practice</i> . OUP. (A more teacher friendly, practical book than Bachman 1990)
Brown, H.Douglas. 2005, <i>Language Assessment. Principles and Practice</i> . Longman. (Very simple, easy to read, practical)
The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing /Call No: 418.0076/29
<b>Websites</b>
European Association for Language Testing and Assessment <a href="http://www.ealta.eu.org/">http://www.ealta.eu.org/</a>
University of Cambridge ESOL examinations (includes IELTS) <a href="https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/">https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/</a>
IELTS Overview <a href="https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/exams/academicenglish/ielts">https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/exams/academicenglish/ielts</a>
Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC, Melbourne) <a href="http://www.ltrc.unimelb.edu.au/">http://www.ltrc.unimelb.edu.au/</a>
Melbourne Papers in Language Testing <a href="http://www.ltrc.unimelb.edu.au/mplt/index.html">http://www.ltrc.unimelb.edu.au/mplt/index.html</a>

## 10. Course Evaluation and Development

Courses are periodically reviewed and students' feedback is used to improve them. Feedback is gathered using various means including UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

I am pleased to share with you that in 2012 I received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and this achievement was based on my continuous innovation in my teaching and the serious consideration of the feedback that students provide.

I have designed a Study Kit for this course in order to minimise the upfront lecture component and maximise class discussions. Students have indicated their preference to spend more time on practical applications and discussions based on the Study Kit. Therefore, most of the classtime will be spent on working through the Study Kit questions and activities. Students are expected to come to the class prepared about the set readings.

## 11. Student Support

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre's website at:

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>

## 12. Grievances

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors.

If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

## 13. Other Information

### myUNSW

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au>

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>

### OHS

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see

<http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/>

### Special Consideration

In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html>

## **Student Equity and Disabilities Unit**

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Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to or at the commencement of the course, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at: <http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au>

Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.