

MBCI ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS DEPARTMENT PRESENTS
TRANSACTIONAL 2016 - 2017

Instructor: Mr. W. Koslowsky

Room: 5104

Course Code: ELT40S

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Expressing ideas is at the heart of language arts instruction. This course concentrates on increasing students' independence in making meaningful and effective language choices. The emphasis is on the pragmatic uses of language: language that informs, directs, persuades and influences, analyzes, argues, and explains. Transactional language is "the language to get things done". It is all around us, found in the contexts of advertising, journalism, education, research, the professional sector, popular culture, mundane and complex social interactions, cultural texts and, of course, literature. To hone your transactional ability is to hone a life skill like none other. Totes.

SKILL OBJECTIVES

Students will be challenged to speak and write information in clear, concise and explicit form, attending to specific purpose and audience, and to listen, view, read, and represent information critically, efficiently, and with confidence.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The school year consists of 2 reporting periods (September – January, & January – June) worth 80% of the year, and a final project worth 20% of the year.

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

- **(40%) Comprehend & Respond** to various communications, including both print and non-print media.
- **(40%) Compose & Create** various works of creative and expository writing, presentations, and other forms of language arts.
- **(20%) Engage, Assess, & Reflect** with regards to course content, work ethic, group work, self and peer assessment, as well as overall awareness of self and society.
- **Final Project** assessing the student's overall mastery of material covered throughout the year.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

The aforementioned categories embody skills pertaining to the six different modes of literacy, which include speaking/listening, reading/writing, and viewing/representing. Each assignment, project, and test will fall into one or more of these categories, and will measure the student's ability as it pertains to each mode of literacy.

REQUIRED TEXT:

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier – Ishmael Beah

COURSE TOPICS

(IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, AND LIKELY BLENDED)

Voice, Style, & Language

- We will focus on expressing oneself within a variety of specific contexts, forms and purposes. Students will explore the subtleties of style and voice within the technical and expressive discourse.
- Topics include:
 - Public Speaking
 - Rhetoric and the Art of Persuasion
 - Writing: Voice, Style, and Editing
 - Technical Communications: Cover Letters, Résumés, Employment Interviews, Portfolios, Life

Language In Contemporary Culture

- Here we will focus on the use of language within specific contexts and cultural climates.
- Topics include:
 - Cultural Analyses: The History of Adversity Across the Globe
 - World Issues and the Impending “Need for Change” (see “Major Project” below)
 - The Industry Moguls of Pop-Culture: Film, Music, Literature, Art, and Technology

Media Studies

- This will include the study of media to develop a better understanding of the nature of mass media, popular culture, and the inherent “manipulation of the masses.” Students will explore the impact of media and its effect on society.
- Topics include:
 - Advertising
 - Propaganda
 - Conspiracy Theories
 - Popular Culture and Consumerism
 - Children: Childhood and The Culture of Consumerism

Major Project: World Issues and the Impending “Need for Change”

- This project will be ongoing throughout the year, and will bring together many of the language skills learned and practiced throughout. Students will research several human-led practices that are catalysts, if not the causes, of various global crises. Research will focus on the following: investigating the reasons behind the crises—including their causes and effects, detailing alternative and affirmative actions, and proposing, executing, and documenting, (using transactional skills) student initiatives that will help alter the courses of the crises.
- Topics include, but are not limited to:
 - Sustainable Living: Simplicity vs. Consumerism
 - The Food Industry: Where Our Food Really Comes From
 - The Shark and Dolphin Slaughter: Cultural Practices vs. Animal Welfare
 - Conflict Diamonds and Child Soldiers: The Costs of Consumerism and War
 - The Environmental Crisis: Our Global Footprints

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Respect** – The number one rule in this course is that both the instructor and the students must be respectful - to each other, to themselves, and to their surroundings. If everybody abides by this rule, everything will go swimmingly. If the necessary level of respect breaks down, however, the course will not work as it should. So, that being said, there will be little tolerance regarding disrespectful behaviour, and necessary actions will be taken to help fix any problems in this area.
2. **General Behaviour** – This classroom is not meant to be a rule-driven environment, but there are certain behaviours that are expected. They are as follows:
 - a. I am committed to help you succeed in this course and to take you seriously. If you have any questions or concerns regarding course material, please feel free to come and discuss them with me.
 - b. The onus is on you to engage with the material presented in this course. This includes engaging in class discussions, classroom activities, etc.
 - c. You are expected to arrive to class on time, seated before the final bell rings.
 - d. No food or drink in the class with the exception of water, tea, or coffee – unless, of course, that privilege is abused.
 - e. The use of cell phone and listening devices is permitted in the classroom only under the direction of the supervising teacher or staff member.
 - f. Mp3 players may be used on **teacher approved** occasions, such as certain silent reading, writing, or work periods, with the following caveats:
 - i. During these teacher approved situations, the device must be listened to at a reasonable volume so as not to distract others.
 - ii. At the request of the instructor, the use of the device must desist.
 - iii. If the device proves to be a distraction for the user, or if the student is unable to use it appropriately, this privilege will be revoked.
 - g. You should **not** leave the room during class time. (A.k.a. Go to the washroom before or after class.)
 - h. You are expected to complete all course work, and to do so on time.
 - i. All written work should be typed, following MLA conventions.
3. **Student Absences** – It is the student’s responsibility to catch up on any materials or information missed during an absence. Marks that are given for classroom participation, assignment deadlines, and presentations will not suffer due to **unavoidable** absences (see school policy). These marks, however, will be adversely impacted by **unexcused** absences, as attendance in this course is expected. Foreseen absences are to be discussed with the instructor beforehand. Students who miss a test will be required to write an alternative one in the QLC.
4. **Homework** – There will be regular homework assignments for the class, including reading, writing, researching, watching movies, as well as preparing for projects, presentations, and tests. Students at this level are expected to work towards being self-motivated and independent, taking responsibility for their own learning, organization, and levels of engagement. Sporadic homework checks will occur to assess the students in this regard.

5. **Assignment Deadlines** – Due to the intense nature of this course, deadlines are essential in order to cover and complete all of the necessary material planned for this program.
- a. If a student is unable to meet a deadline, it is advisable that he or she speak with the instructor **before** the due date to make alternate arrangements. Flexibility in this regard will vary, as some deadlines must be met, while others will allow for some leniency.
 - b. Extensions are reserved for exceptional circumstances – sports, music, assignments from other courses, or simply being too busy does not qualify as an exceptional circumstance.
 - c. Late assignments are subject to a 5% deduction per day. All projects and assignments must be completed during the reporting period in which they are assigned in order to qualify for a mark.
 - * Please note that weekends constitute the equivalent of one day late.
6. **Plagiarism** – Plagiarism is the use of the words, thoughts, and ideas of another person without acknowledgement, and includes handing in work that has been previously submitted in another course. Plagiarism will result in the student being given a zero for the assignment, as well as any administrative consequences that are deemed necessary and appropriate.