

University of Kansas “GradPrep” Pre-Academic Courses – Summer 2018

The courses below have been developed to prepare you for success as a graduate student in the United States and at the University of Kansas. We have developed and refined this content over the past 15 years in preparatory programs for Fulbright grantees coming to the US to pursue masters or PhD programs. We are confident that these mini-courses will give you a strong foundation for success in your program at KU!

Research Skills for Graduate Study

The purpose is to prepare you for a graduate research program. This course will introduce you to the principles and best practices regarding the research process in the U.S. higher education system. Topics covered include avoiding plagiarism, conducting ethical research, identifying a research topic, gathering and evaluating sources from an academic library database while importing them into a reference manager, and synthesizing research in the form of a research question. You will do assignments in your area of study. University research librarians in students’ disciplines will provide desk-side coaching in class sessions that focus on gathering sources and creating research questions.

Reading Strategies for Graduate Study

The purpose of this course is to prepare you for the rigorous reading demands of graduate study in U.S. higher education. The course will introduce you to theories behind rhetorical reading. You will then practice effective reading strategies including those for pre-reading (previewing, contextualizing, and pre-reading questioning) reading (additional passes and questioning techniques) and post-reading (reflecting, evaluating & summarizing). In addition, using a reading from your discipline, you will be introduced to a successful reading approach known as AURC: Accessing, Understanding, Re-creating and Critically questioning and discussing disciplinary content. With this approach, you will learn to exploit the pedagogical design of textbooks and articles. This includes becoming familiar with hierarchical organization, the use of visual representations, jargon, and highlighting techniques. You will also become familiar with discipline-specific presentation of content such as chronologies in history, flow charts in engineering, and diagrams of cells in biology.

Advanced English Language Grammar Tools

This course will help you polish your English language grammar accuracy and fluency in academic writing. You will identify your weak areas, develop self-editing skills, and demonstrate higher level academic grammar structures in your writing. You will also learn advanced grammar structures and concepts that enhance overall fluency in writing. The course will introduce you to the important idea that English grammar is not a set of rules but a range of choices available for you to use in graduate writing. Daily writing tasks are a key component of this course.

Writing Effectively in Graduate School

This course will help you gain an increased awareness of rhetorical writing conventions for academic purposes in the U.S. We will begin with an overview of academic writing characteristics including audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation. You will practice several important writing patterns and genres: general-to-specific and specific-to-general texts, problem-solution texts, and data commentary. You will use corpora and authentic materials including sample assignments written by graduate students in your field of study.

Communicating Effectively in Graduate School

This course provides opportunities for you to see the connection between strong speaking and listening skills and successful performance in graduate school. You will practice using appropriate discourse in a variety of educational and professional settings. A primary component is preparing and giving a presentation organized around themes about aspects of culture and history linked to the U.S. Midwest. You will also practice oral fluency and common forms of oral exchange in graduate-level academic contexts by participating in seminar-style discussions. Most discussions focus on culture and society around the globe. TED Talks will be the primary resource.