Dissertation Writing Skills in English

Teacher: Prof. Eoin Higgins (Language Teaching and Services)

Schedule: May 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31; June 5, 7 (14:00-16:00)

Total hours: 16

Classroom: 7.1.J04, Juan Benet Building (Leganés campus)

Level of English required: B.2 / C.1

All students must provide proof of their English level by presenting an official English certificate or through the Oxford Online Placement Exam with Language Teaching and Services.

Objectives

All theses, no matter what the subject or discipline, contain similar sections which involve similar language. In this course, we will analyze the standard structure of a typical doctoral thesis and study the language used for different sections. We will provide input, activities and personalized guidance to help doctoral students make their theses read/sound more natural, fluent and correct.

We will also discuss other issues involved in the writing process: language research, drafting, editing and proofreading, style and "wordiness".

Contents

- **Introduction:** stating the problem; explaining how you are going to deal with the problem; limiting your scope; outlining the structure of your thesis
- **Background:** presenting the relevant history and the context of your study; explaining current knowledge, theory and practice.
- **Core:** your hypothesis or research questions; explaining the methodology used to test your hypothesis; explaining why you chose the methodology; reporting the results
- **Synthesis:** discussing the implications of your research; drawing conclusions; checking your conclusions match the introduction

Methodology

Practical individual, pair work and group work activities of text analysis of samples from real doctoral theses; proofreading and editing activities; discussion of style; analysis of typical language and style errors.

Students will be required to do some writing as homework in order to practice the skills and language presented in class.

Evaluation

Students must attend 75% of the course to receive a passing grade. The final mark is based on continuous evaluation (50%) and completion of classroom assignments (50%).

Bibliography and references

Evans D, Gruba, P and Zobel J (2014) *How to Write a Better Thesis* (Third Edition), Springer

Godfrey, J (2013) *The Student Phrase Book: Vocabulary for Writing at University*, Palgrave Study Skills

Mewbur, I (2012) *Taming your PhD*, Thesis Whisperer Books

Morley, J (2015) *The Academic Phrasebank,* University of Manchester (http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/)

Williams, K (2010) *Planning Your PhD,* Palgrave Study Skills

Coordination and professor

Language Teaching and Services LTS, Ann Merry and Sarah Dague / Professor Eoin Higgins