English for Non-Native Professionals Series:

Course Title: The Art of Conversation
Course Code: COM 34
Instructor: Lisa Singleton Quijano

Course Summary & a Note from the Instructor:
This course focuses on developing more effective conversation skills and is geared toward advanced non-native speakers who have a strong knowledge of and significant experience with the language. We will focus on advanced interaction skills to help students become more effective in several areas, including description, narration, and negotiation, as well as supporting opinions, interrupting, speculating, and hypothesizing. Special emphasis will be placed on interactive listening, accuracy, and overall intelligibility. Activities will include storytelling, interviews, and conversational panel discussions.

The curriculum for COM 34 is based in part on the oral proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). In general, the course covers skills from the Advanced Level to the Superior Level. While it is not expected that students will see marked improvements over the course of the ten meetings, the goal is to facilitate awareness of the characteristics of these levels so that students move toward a higher level.

Materials:
The instructor will provide handouts, audio/video content, and other materials to facilitate and prompt class discussions and projects.

Because members of educated communities are often expected to communicate in an articulate and informed manner about a wide range of topics, students in COM 34 should expect to encounter subjects not directly related to their field of study, occupation, or profession. Our class activities and assignments will encompass a variety of subjects including American and global society, cultural issues, recent and current events, and developments in science and technology. These content-based activities will serve as vehicles for language development.

Assignments:

Recorded Speaking Tasks – Speaking submissions will be made by leaving a voicemail w/ my GoogleVoice phone #. Feedback will be given, and then students will make a second attempt at recording a similar commentary. [2 formats: description and narrative]

Final Project – Interview a native speaker (for 20 min+) and provide an informal report: either a 5-minute conversational report given in class or a short write-up sent via email.
Grade Options and Requirements:
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - All assignments will be graded on a completed/not completed basis
    - Attendance 40%
    - Recorded Speaking Tasks & revisions (4) 40%
    - Final Project 20%
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - A passing grade (for "Credit") = at least 70% of expectations accomplished
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.

*Please Note:*
1) If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

2) The instructor does not provide proof of enrollment, certificates, or transcripts. Transcripts are also not automatically issued; students should initiate the request. Contact the Continuing Studies Office for assistance: (650) 725-2650.

Highlighted Functions:
- Interacting in English on an advanced level, with an emphasis on appropriateness in terms of content, manner, style, usage, cultural awareness, and social awareness
- Participating in (and possibly leading) conversations, discussions & panels
- Expressing and supporting opinions in a clear, persuasive, and appropriate manner
- Receiving and responding to ideas and opinions, including opposing points of view
- Reaching consensus, especially as a means of concluding communication
- Employing strategies and techniques for interrupting and for providing appropriate feedback to other speakers concerning discussion content
- Analyzing, understanding, incorporating, and applying feedback: Students will correct their own errors and produce appropriate utterances based on comments and corrections provided by the instructor and/or classmates.
o Understanding recommendations for student success in everyday social situations and more specialized contexts; reinforcing cultural awareness and issues related to appropriate usage in interpersonal communication

o Conducting conversational interviews: Preparing and conducting an interview as a vehicle for engaging in extended conversation with others.

o Summarizing and paraphrasing in oral communication

The Nature of the Course:
There is no regulation regarding the level of students who sign up for this course. You may expect significant diversity—of background and needs—in our class, so please understand that the course will not focus on your specific interests at all times. The needs of all students must be considered.

Privacy:
We will be using a website for administrative purposes, and our main form of communication outside of this classroom will be email. Neither of these will show your email address to other students or to the public. Students should also be aware that, while I strive to protect your privacy during the course, the text, audio and video of ALL assignments may provide the source of in-class examples, discussion, and exercises.

Important Strategies:
One of the key skills we will be focusing on is being able to contribute to any conversation in a positive way. The following list of examples may serve as guidelines for how to respond when one is faced with a somewhat unfamiliar subject in an academic setting:

*Not acceptable*: “I don’t have an opinion about / I don’t want to talk about that topic.”

Acceptable (shift and generalize or speculate): “I don’t know much about topic X, but it sounds similar to Y [OR-- but in general, I think the most important thing is to do ‘Y’] [OR- but maybe...]”

*Not acceptable [before time is up]*: “That’s all.” or “That’s all I have to say.”

Acceptable [before time is up] (summarize and/or extend): “So overall / to summarize... / The reason why ‘X’ is so important. . . [OR- We can apply ‘X’ to....] [OR- ‘X’ may be used to...]”

Tentative Schedule (may be changed at the instructor’s discretion):

Week 1: Sept 28
[***NOTE: It is strongly advised that you do NOT miss the first day of class.***]
Introductions
Course syllabus & expectations
Fluency exercises (including an "elevator pitch" style activity)
Week 2: Oct 5
**Recorded Speaking Task 1 due (brief description)**
ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines reviewed
Ice breaker/ follow my lead
Conversational analysis: how to keep the conversation going
Video clip of conversation for analysis
Fluency exercises

Week 3: Oct 12
Creating connections in conversation
Video clip of conversation for analysis
Importance of anecdote
Fluency exercises (including keeping the conversation flowing relentlessly)

Week 4: Oct 19
**Recorded Speaking Task 1, revised version due (brief description)**
Interruption & interjection
Controversial topics
Video clip of conversation for analysis
Fluency exercises

Week 5: Oct 26
Resisting interruption & regaining the floor* (* = one's turn to speak)
Making commentary about almost any topic
Various fluency exercises

Week 6: Nov 2
**Recorded Speaking Task 2 due (brief narrative)**
Stress timing / intonation / focus words (Part I)
Giving an opinion in various ways / Supporting a point of view
Panel discussion (informal)
Fluency exercises

Week 7: Nov 9
Negotiating
Discussion breakdown (into multiple splinter conversations)
Fluency exercises

Week 8: Nov 16
**Recorded Speaking Task 2, revised version due (brief narrative)**
Expansion drill
Hypothesizing & speculating

**Week 9: Nov 30**
Final Project due (via email OR 5-min report in class as an alternative)
Persuasion in conversation

**Week 10: Dec 7**
Recap: description of a skilled conversationalist / LSQ Advice for the future
Topics related to the experience living in the U.S. / students' choice
Fluency exercises