

**Department of Computer Science & Engineering**  
**Batch 2013 - CS2952: Communication Skills**

CS 2952 is the 1<sup>st</sup> of a sequence of four soft skills modules required of CSE students. These modules aim to improve your ability to communicate (i.e. read, write, listen, speak, and present) effectively in English in both academic and professional arenas.

**Learning Outcomes:** The goal of CS 2952 is *to improve each individual's written communication in English*. This course will help you to

1. Recognise and employ accepted rules of grammar when writing in English
2. Increase your English vocabulary and practice using vocabulary words in multiple contexts
3. Plan, create, revise, and assess written compositions in English

**Course Supervisor:** Dr. Shehan Perera

**Course Assistant:** Ms. Hiroshi de Silva

**Schedule:** Labs will be held on Fridays from 8:15 - 11:15 in the Level II and Advanced Computing labs. A whole class meeting will be held every other Thursday from 1:15 - 2:15 in the seminar room (these meetings will be indicated on Moodle).

**Format of Module:** This module is *designed for cooperative peer and self-learning* during the 3 hour weekly labs using Moodle. Each lab will have the following 3 components:

1. **Grammar:** You will spend about 30 minutes *working in pairs* to review an interactive presentation (from *Grammar Bytes*, <http://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm>) on a particular point of English grammar. Next you will spend about 20 minutes *with your partner* on the interactive exercises to test your grasp of the rules discussed. Finally, you will *individually* make your 1<sup>st</sup> attempt on the 10 minute weekly quiz.
2. **Vocabulary:** First, spend about 30 minutes *with your partner* going through and discussing the weekly reading assignment. Look up meanings of words that neither of you know at the *Vocabulary.com* (<http://www.vocabulary.com/>) site using its Dictionary search. Next, *individually* identify 10 words from each reading that *you* wish to learn (i.e. practice using them whenever possible!) and copy them into your vocabulary notebook.

Finally, complete *at least 2* rounds (10 questions each) *individually* testing your knowledge and mastery of all words in the CS 2952 Batch 2012 list. Each week, the instructor will add at least 10 words from that week's reading (some of which may be on your list) to the list.

3. **Composition:** Most weeks you will spend about 30 minutes *working in pairs* to review feedback on previous compositions and to go through and discuss presentations on strategies that improve your composition skills. Most weeks you will next spend at least 30 minutes *individually* writing a 150 word essay on a given topic where you practice the strategy discussed, while incorporating others you have learned as well as previous feedback received. Compositions should be done without referring outside sources.

**Continuous Assessment & Feedback:** This course is designed to provide continuous assessment and timely feedback. Work on the grammar and vocabulary components receive immediate online feedback. Teaching assistants will give feedback on your compositions by the following week. The course assistant will help during the weekly lab as needed. The course supervisor and assistant will provide whole class feedback during the biweekly lecture and will check on and meet with individuals if needed to provide additional individual feedback.

### **Assignments:**

- **Quizzes** – The weekly 10 minute quiz will test that week's grammar content. The quiz can be taken up to 3 times. The highest score will be recorded. You should make the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt on the Tuesday of the lab and the 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt by 5 pm the following Monday. In order to encourage you to retain what you learned for longer periods, there is a minimum delay of 48 hours between quiz attempts. Even if you get a good score on your first attempt, you should take each quiz the permitted 3 times so as to gain additional practice.
- **Vocabulary Progress** – Maintain a small notebook with a record of the 10 vocabulary words **you** selected (from the assigned reading) to learn each week. Give the date and brief notes as needed (on meaning(s) of a word, use of word in sentences, etc.). Add other words you want to learn as they come up. The course assistant will check your notebook and your progress (maintained by Vocabulary.com) and assign you a holistic grade.
- **Compositions** – The weekly composition will be a 150 (occasionally 200) word essay. You must use the 5 step BODIR (Brainstorm, Organize, Draft, Improve, Refine) process discussed in class and maintain a record of all 5 steps on the Word document submitted. Your lowest composition score will be dropped in computing your final grade.
- **Midterm Exam** – The midterm exam will be held in 2 parts on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> during the Tuesday labs.
- **Final Exam** – The composition for the final exam will be held during the last week of classes (Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>) and the rest of the exam will be during the final exam period.

**Homework:** There will be NO assignments requiring work outside class time. Grades will be computed based on assignments completed during class time. ***Late assignments will not be graded, except in exceptional circumstances. Thus completing work during the lab is vital.***

### **Grading:**

This is a required, graded, GPA course. The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Quizzes – 15%
- Vocabulary notebook – 10%
- Final – 40%
- Compositions – 15%
- Midterm – 20%

**Honour Code:** In order to get credit, all work submitted for this course has to be accompanied by the Honour Code pledge. Please be sure to click the appropriate button when taking quizzes and to include the following statement on your compositions and exams:

*I \_\_\_\_\_ (name) pledge that I have followed the CSE Honour Code for this assignment. \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)*