

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Within the Bachelor of Arts, St. Thomas offers a unique English as a Second Language (ESL) program for students whose level of English proficiency is not high enough to pursue regular studies at an English-language university. These students are provided the opportunity to begin university studies for credit while they continue to improve their language skills in a planned, individualized program of study.

To be eligible for this program, ESL students must have TOEFL (computer-based) scores of between 173 and 230 or the equivalent on other tests. A combination of ESL courses and adapted courses in other disciplines enables students to achieve the level of proficiency in English necessary to be successful in regular university studies. All of the courses that students take in the ESL program carry academic credit.

A personal approach guides the ESL curriculum. Every student who has not yet fully mastered English is tested through an oral interview, a vocabulary and grammar test, and an essay assignment. Based on the results of these tests, an individualized curriculum is developed for each student suitable for his or her level. The curriculum will be challenging, but not overwhelming. It will be based on four options:

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ESL 1013 English for Academic Purposes: Reading and Writing I

ESL 1033 English for Academic Purposes: Speaking and Listening I

Two Integrated Courses

One Assisted Course (optional)

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ESL 1023 English for Academic Purposes: Reading and Writing II

ESL 1043 English for Academic Purposes: Speaking and Listening II

One Integrated Course

Two Assisted Courses (optional)

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This course is designed to assist ESL students in further developing their ability to meet the language-related expectations of university courses. The emphasis will be on refining writing skills. Attention will also be devoted to listening, speaking, reading, grammar, and vocabulary acquisition. Students will explore how the various language skills are interconnected in the university context. The course is intended for students whose first language is not English and whose TOEFL scores are between 550 and 599 (or a recognized equivalent). Prerequisite: ESL 2213 or Director's permission.

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An introduction for international students to a representative sampling of fiction and poetry written in English. The course will concentrate on the acquisition of close reading skills and expository writing skills. It will also be an exploration of some of the key themes of western literature. Open only to ESL students.

Students will learn the salient points of the geography, history, government, economics and social makeup of the Maritimes. The contributions and struggles of diverse groups living in the region will be examined, including First Nations, Acadians, English, Irish, Scottish and multicultural communities. In this interdisciplinary course, students will gain insight into the issues, problems and debates that inform Maritime society. They will also analyze the perceived status of the Maritimes within Canada and trends in the migration of Maritimers across the country.

Students will read a representative selection, in the original English or in translation, of short stories, poems and excerpts from novels and plays from major voices of the Maritimes, including First Nations, Acadians, Anglophones and multicultural communities. Challenges posed by writing and translating regional dialects and the languages of other groups will be examined. Students will also study films, visual art and music. They will investigate the category of identity and the tensions between regional/national and inclusion/exclusion. Analyze of status of the Maritimes in Canada and trends in the migration of Maritimers across the country.