ROSE STATE COLLEGE

Division Course Syllabus

Division  Humanities  Course Prefix and Number  LANG 1003
Course Title  CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE I (Variable)
Semester and Year Submitted  Fall 2014  Credit Hours  3
Prepared by  Edmund Gert
Hours Per Week:  Class  3  Lab  0
Course Description (as it appears in Catalog)

This is the first introductory language conversation course. It is an introduction to the target language with a focus on listening and speaking, providing intensive practice in the language on topics of everyday life. This should be taken by students who have never studied the language and who want to learn basic conversational patterns. Students may repeat this course in different languages.

Prerequisites  none

Text(s):  Title  Varies based on the language taught
Author
Publisher
Copyright Date
ISBN #
Reading Level

Supplemental Materials:
RATIONALE:

Conversational Language I is a course which has been added to the curriculum at the request of (1) individuals who want to master correct pronunciation and acquire knowledge of basic conversational patterns rather than study grammar, and (2) persons who want to learn the language, but are uncertain of their abilities.

Students who have no prior knowledge of the language have found it helpful to begin their language study with the conversational course; one or both conversational courses provide the student with an introductory experience which allows the student to determine interest level for future language study and/or gain a basic foundation on which to build additional language knowledge.

This class is offered as a variable class so that various languages may be taught with the same course number. In the same way that special topics classes need approval by the division curriculum committee, any new languages proposed must receive approval prior to being offered.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of Conversational Language I, the student should be able to:

1. Pronounce the language correctly with a minimum of “English” sounds.

2. Exercise a basic vocabulary in the target language.

3. Use basic conversational patterns effectively to obtain and provide information, and express emotion and opinions at a novice level.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture(s) studied and their differences.

5. Reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through language study while recognizing distinct viewpoints.

6. Demonstrate understanding the nature of language and cultures through comparisons of the language and cultures studied and their own language and cultures.

7. Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

EXPLANATION SHOULD BE HELD TO A MINIMUM. Students should be encouraged to read and study each assignment section of the textbook thoroughly before
coming to class. This procedure is very important in order to minimize the instructor’s explanation of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, culture and directions, and to maximize students’ use of the language during class time.

**DEMONSTRATION/MODELING** of new patterns. As much as possible, students should be instructed/encouraged to close their books and listen to directions and examples given in the target language. Professor uses and “echo-type” drill to model the conversational patterns; using this drill pattern, students do not originate appropriate language, but rather they “parrot” what the teacher is saying, focusing on good pronunciation.

**TEACHER-STUDENT EXCHANGES.** Following the introduction of new material, it is helpful to check the students’ understanding of the concepts by eliciting responses from the students with simple questions or statements. It is a good idea to start with something easy that everyone can master in order to reduce anxiety that accompanies speaking aloud.

**DIRECTED DIALOGUE** (in which the teacher directs one student in the language what to ask or say to another student in the language) is a very effective way of initiating STUDENT-STUDENT EXCHANGES. The teacher’s direction of what to say eliminates the delay that inevitably occur when beginning students are asked to produce original constructions in the target language extemporaneously.

“**CHAIN” DRILLS** are a kind of repetition drill in which each student has an opportunity to both ask and answer a given question. The “chain” begins with the teacher asking Student 1 a question which Student 1 answers; Student 2 then turns to Student 3, etc. This pattern drill is an effective way to review material that has been well-practiced. Important considerations are to (1) maintain the speed, and (2) build the “chain” in different ways by starting in varied locations within the classroom and adding “links” in various directions.

**PATTERN DRILLS** (also called REPETITION DRILLS) are an effective way to teach a concept that is especially difficult to master; the objective is to establish a language “habit” by multiple repetitions of a set pattern. Textbooks frequently use this methodology to teach verbs. It is important for the teacher to correct errors in pronunciation and/or grammar in order to avoid practicing poor usage of the language. Textbooks frequently use this methodology to teach verbs, but exercises practicing other grammar constructs (for example, object pronouns) to produce good results.

**ROLE PLAYING** is an effective way of reviewing what has been learned. In practice sessions during class, students are assigned situations by the professor and given fifteen to twenty minutes to prepare/practice a presentation using vocabulary/expression appropriate to the situation. Finally, students present the brief conversation in front of the class.
**GROUPS** of four students may be assigned by the teacher for the purpose of STUDENT-CENTERED drill activities. “Chain” drills which move in a circle (sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left) may be used in this setting, or PAIRED ACTIVITIES (with the foursome changing partners within the group) provide opportunities for several conversations to be happening at once. In this noisy setting, the professor serves as facilitator and moves about the room listening, encouraging, answering questions, modeling correct pronunciation, etc. To ensure that students stay on task, groups should be reassigned every four to six weeks, depending on the frequency of the activity.

**TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)** activities in which students respond physically, thus building a learning “bridge” that is kinesthetic rather than mental. While not easily employed on a daily basis, this approach does add variety to established routine. Using TPR, the professor may choose to address the entire class (“Toquen la cabeza…Toquen la pierna izquierda…”), or direct individuals (“Levántese…Cierre la puerta…”) in activities which require physical responses.

**TEACHING PROFICIENCY THROUGH READING AND STORYTELLING (TPRS)** uses a mixture of reading and storytelling to help students learn the language. New vocabulary structures are taught using a combination of translation, genstures, and personalized questions. Those structures are used in a spoken class story. Later these structures are used in a class reading.

**SONGS/CHANTS** offer diversion from the usual classroom activies while teaching grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation. Students who may be hesitant to sing in the presence of their classmates should be encouraged to simply chant or speak the words in rhythm with everyone else.

**AUDIO-VISUAL EXERCISES** via YouTube, DVDs or CDs are useful in helping students build aural comprehension and improve pronunciation.

**POWERPOINT SLIDESHOWS/TRANSPARENCIES** that depict the culture(s) studied provide the opportunity for greater awareness of cultural differences, and they are effective aids for eliciting conversational responses from students.

**ASSESSMENT** (Including Critical Thinking measurements):

Students who successfully complete Conversational Language I should be able to speak, listen, at a novice low to mid-level.

Speaking – Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-native speech.
Listening – Novice-level listeners can understand key words, true aural cognates, and formulaic expressions that are highly contextualized and highly predictable, such as those found in introductions and basic courtesies. Novice-level listeners understand words and phrases from simple questions, statements, and high-frequency commands. They typically require repetition, rephrasing, and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension. They rely heavily on extra-linguistic support to derive meaning. Novice-level listeners are most accurate when they are able to recognize speech that they can anticipate. In this way, these listeners tend to recognize rather than truly comprehend. Their listening is largely dependent on factors other than the message itself.

Recommended methods of assessment may include:

DAILY PREPARATION/PARTICIPATION
   Activities which may be assessed include:
      Dictations
      Pronunciation Recordings (online workbook and/or language lab)
      Listening Exercises (in class, online workbook, and/or language lab)
      Individual (memorized) presentations on specific subjects
      Short written assignments (in class and online workbook)
      Brief quizzes on assigned material
      Other language lab activities

PREPARED CONVERSATIONS
   Role playing/skits/mini-dramas should be used to evaluate the progress of students during semester. Two or three classmates create an original conversation using studied language patterns. Students select settings, prepare conversational exchanges and present the script to the professor for approval before memorization and presentation in class. It is important that students stay within the limits of what they have learned, and not try to develop a conversation in English and then translate it to the target language. The evaluation process should be clear to all prior to implementation.

WRITTEN OBJECTIVE MIDTERM EXAMINATION
   This may be the only “written” exam during the semester. It is given at midterm as a comprehensive check of the student’s understanding of the beginning grammatical concepts. It is recommended that a portion of it be oral and be given individually; to accomplish this, the oral part may be given on one day and the written part on another.

FINAL CONVERSATION or FINAL EXAMINATION
   This is a comprehensive exercise and should demonstrate, as much as possible, the accumulated knowledge and ability of the student.

   If the professor elects the final conversation option, students prepare a final conversation that is longer than the prepared conversations presented during the semester. Again, the conversation must be approved by the professor prior to
presentation to avoid memorization of incorrect material. Students should be given the choice of presenting the final conversation with a partner or alone (i.e. as a one-way telephone conversation, with a doll/puppet, or another creative way). Criteria for evaluation should be clearly understood.

If the professor elects the final examination option, students study for a comprehensive examination that tests in various ways the successful acquisition of course objectives. A part of the final should be given orally; the professor may speak individually to each student using a pre-determined set of questions or allow each student to draw questions and/or situations from a hat. Criteria for evaluation should be clearly understood by both professor and student.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

COMMUNICATIVE OBJECTIVES (Outcomes 1-7)
Specific communicative objectives will vary based on the language; however, they may include those described below.

On a written or oral examinations or in presentation, the student will be able to demonstrate that they can communicate about multiple topics. Specific communicative objectives for the proposed language will be submitted to the Humanities Division curriculum committee for approval.

Students’ ability to communicate orally will be gained through understanding of vocabulary and pronunciation. Although grammatical concepts are kept to a minimum in this course, a cursory understanding of them is needed for communication to take place. Specific grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation objectives for the proposed language will be submitted to the Humanities Division curriculum committee for approval.