

Academic Discussions in English

This is a six-week course for PhD scholars who wish to improve their performance at discussing their work at international conferences, public media, and meetings with granting agencies. The main goal of the course is to provide an opportunity for a guided practice using English in the academic context and the specific domain of your field. The course will help you develop linguistic tools to communicate your research to other professionals inside and outside your field, as well as to general public.

Week 1: Introduction: Who am I? What's my field?

As scholars, we are often asked to present ourselves and our academic fields. Learn strategies to create effective introductions for different audiences. The focus is on selecting the suitable information, the relevant amount of detail, and the appropriate words for your listeners' improved understanding.

Week 2: What is my PhD project about?

We are also often asked to present our current research projects. Practice a short and concise description of your PhD research project for different audiences: your colleagues and your peers, the media, or grant agencies.

Week 3: Metaphors and analogies

Use of metaphors and analogies to describe different terms, concepts, and processes in your field is very important because they allow your audience to understand and remember them. Practice using metaphors and analogies in relation to the terms and concepts you most commonly employ in discussions about your field or specific research project.

Week 4: Discourse markers and rhetorical devices

Academic discussions require precision, nuancing, and coherence. Practice various linguistic and rhetorical tools (e.g., discourse markers, rhetorical devices) to present your opinion, argue, and discuss issues in a coherent manner.

Week 5: Intonation, pronunciation, rhythm

Intonation helps you deliver pragmatic meaning more efficiently, while selecting the right rhythm and pace helps your audience to follow your speech. Pronunciation, especially of your key concepts, is also important. Practice using varied intonation at different paces and understand their effects on your audience's comprehension levels.

Week 6: Small talk

Small talk is essential for establishing rapport with colleagues, students, and research partners. Learn how to initiate and maintain small talk on different topics.

Course instructor:

The course is arranged by the Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use (CIP) at the University of Copenhagen and run by Associate Professor Slobodanka Dimova

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Read more about CIP and our academic language courses at www.cip.ku.dk