

TOEFL IBT PREPARATION COURSE

Seminar Leader: Abigail Kafka
Email: a.kafka@berlin.bard.edu
Seminar times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 14:00-15:30
Location: online
Office Hours: Tuesdays 15.30-17.30 (by appointment)
Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 US Credits
Expected Workload: 240 hours

Course Description

In this course, students will become familiar with the format of the TOEFL exam, develop strategies for taking the exam, and strengthen the skills necessary for achieving a minimum score of 88 on the exam.

Students will practice reading, writing, listening and speaking in the context of the TOEFL exam specifically and academic subjects like those found on the exam in general. In addition to tasks taken from practice exams, students will work on reading, writing, listening and speaking through the use of other materials, such as articles and lectures, based on the interests of the students themselves. During the course, students will take 4 practice tests and complete various tasks that will help them build knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, listening and reading strategies; as well as confidence in their test-taking abilities and overall English aptitude.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. If needed, please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Assessment

Students are expected to attend all classes and fully participate in all elements of class work and homework. They are also required to do the amount of self-study needed to reach their goals on the TOEFL IBT and submit weekly assignments TBD.

Policy on Late Assignments

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

It is very important that students complete homework assignments on time to the best of their ability, because homework assignments will be an important part of class activities. Repeated failure to complete homework assignments on time will negatively affect the student's class experience, as well as their grade.

Grade Breakdown

Preparation and participation: 50%

Written assignments: 30%

Exam improvement: 20%

Resources

In addition to books available in the college library, students will be provided with materials in pdf format as well as links to online resources. Supplemental course materials and notes will be compiled in a course Padlet. Students can also seek help with TOEFL-related issues during office hours (TBD).

Schedule

Module 1 corresponds to the Bard Berlin Fall term with 14 weeks of teaching. Please follow the Academic Calendar at BCB for the structure of the Fall term: <https://berlin.bard.edu/for-students/academic-calendars/>

Teaching starts: Monday, 31 August

Class cancelled: Tuesday, 15 September (rescheduled session TBD)

Fall Break: 19 - 23 October (1 week)

Completion Week: 14 - 18 December

Semester ends: Friday, 18 December

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Weeks 1-3

Exam format and scoring

Reading: Vocabulary questions, paraphrasing sentences, vocabulary skills and strategies

Listening: Basic comprehension, understanding details, taking notes

Speaking: Independent speaking questions

Writing: Planning essays

Week 4: Practice test and assessment

Weeks 4-6

Reading: Sentence insertion, pronoun referents

Listening: Understanding connections

Speaking: Integrated speaking questions

Writing: Introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions

Week 7: Practice test and assessment

Weeks 7-9

Reading: Understanding details, inference questions

Listening: Identifying topics

Speaking: Academic settings

Writing: Cohesion

Week 10: Practice test and assessment

Weeks 10-12

Reading: Summaries and charts

Listening: Making inferences and drawing conclusions

Speaking: Planning strategies

Writing: Editing and proofreading

Week 13: Practice test and assessment

Weeks 13-14

Further practice on exam areas as needed

Improving speed and time management

Self-study guidelines

Essay Deadlines

Practice TOEFL essays will be assigned throughout the course. Deadlines TBD.