



Syllabus

English Language



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Course Description

This course is designed to enhance learners' English language proficiency while engaging critically with contemporary digital challenges through narratives centred on democratic citizenship. Set in **Novaland**, a fictional European university bringing together students from Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Cyprus, the course immerses learners in a vibrant multicultural academic environment where linguistic development and civic reflection go hand in hand.

Delivered via a purpose-built app, the course consists of ten interactive units, each structured as a digital breakout challenge inspired by real-life issues of citizenship and democracy. Students collaboratively solve tasks and dilemmas that arise within the Novaland community, ranging from online misinformation and digital safety to equality, freedom of speech, and intercultural communication.

Through these engaging scenarios, learners develop their reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills, while also strengthening competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, in line with the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. The course promotes not only communicative proficiency in English but also active participation in democratic life, both online and offline.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Communicate effectively and confidently in English at a B2/C1 level across various civic and democratic contexts.
- Interpret and evaluate complex civic and societal issues using critical thinking and democratic literacy skills.
- Collaborate in respectful dialogue on controversial issues, using inclusive language, demonstrating openness, empathy, and cultural awareness.
- Produce coherent, well-structured written texts in English that address ethical dilemmas and societal challenges in the digital world.
- Use topic-specific vocabulary and advanced grammatical structures accurately to express nuanced ideas in spoken and written form.
- Understand, critically react to and analyse spoken and written input (e.g., debates, interviews, podcasts) on civic and digital issues.
- Apply democratic competences such as responsibility, civic-mindedness, and self-efficacy to respond constructively to real-life inspired digital dilemmas.

Course Structure and Content

Unit / Challenge	Learning outcomes	Language Input: Grammar & Vocabulary	Receptive Skills: Reading & Listening	Productive Skills: Speaking & Writing	Discussion & Reflection (Democratic competences)
1. Speak Freely? (on freedom of speech and its limits)	Learners will gain knowledge of freedom of speech, hate speech, and related language within democratic frameworks; develop skills to research, analyze, and communicate arguments effectively; show respectful, responsible, and civic-minded attitudes toward dialogue; and uphold values of free expression, dignity, equality, and constructive, evidence-based debate.	<u>Grammar:</u> - Reporting speech & expressing contrast (however, although...); - Sentence transformation: expressing cause-effect, justification. <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to freedom of speech, hate speech, censorship in digital media	<u>Reading:</u> - Free Speech or Hate Speech? The Democratic Dilemma. - Freedom of Speech in the Age of Artificial Intelligence. <u>Listening:</u> - Should Hate Speech Be Protected as Free Speech? - What is Freedom of Speech? - Freedom of Speech: Crash Course Government and Politics #25 - Hate speech VS Freedom of speech	<u>Speaking:</u> - FreeVoice podcast and 2-minute public hearing - Mini-debate "Should schools punish students for controversial online posts?" <u>Writing:</u> - Summary Report on Freedom of Speech vs. Hate Speech.	- Balance between free expression and protection from harm; - Effective language use for turn-taking, handling disagreements, and keeping the conversations respectful; - Respect, responsibility and conflict-resolution skills.
2. Truth Check (on fake news and media literacy)	Learners will develop knowledge of misinformation dynamics and academic integrity language; apply analytical and communication skills to verify content and manage institutional crises;	<u>Grammar:</u> Speculating about the past: "this may have been true, because...."; "this can't have been true, because..."	<u>Reading:</u> What is Fake News? Navigating crisis communications in higher education: strategies for an effective response <u>Listening:</u>	<u>Speaking:</u> - Expressing doubt and certainty; - Presenting counter-evidence; - Acknowledging different viewpoints;	- Responsibility in preventing the spread of misinformation; - Considering multiple perspectives in communication;



	demonstrate responsible, evidence-based, and transparent attitudes; and uphold values of truth, human dignity, and democratic transparency in academic contexts.	<u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to fake news, misinformation, opinion polarization, manipulation.	How We Can Protect Truth in the Age of Misinformation. What Role Do Crisis Communication Strategies Play in Managing Misinformation? What is Media Literacy? Crisis Communication — The Golden Hour and How to Immediately Respond to a Crisis.	- Emphasizing urgency. - 4-5 minute briefing & 2-3 minute Q&A session <u>Writing:</u> - Internal investigation report documenting investigation of the alleged exam leak.	- Effective language use for quick and accurate crisis communication; - Respect for truth, protecting human dignity, or fairness.
3. Join In (on civic engagement and youth participation)	Learners will understand concepts of civic engagement and democratic participation, using language of obligation and conditionals; develop skills to design and present civic campaigns through persuasive and visual communication; demonstrate initiative, inclusiveness, and collaboration; and uphold values of active citizenship, diversity, transparency, and evidence-based advocacy.	<u>Grammar:</u> - Expressing obligation; - Conditionals type 1 and 2 (“You must get involved”, “Unless you get involved, ...”, “If nobody got involved, ...”) <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to civic engagement and grassroots initiatives	<u>Reading:</u> - From Apathy to Action: Students Revive Novaland’s Civic Spirit; - Youth Engagement in Europe: What the Data Shows. <u>Listening:</u> - The Power of Youth Civic Engagement; - What Is Youth Activism? - Can Civic Education Improve Youth Participation in Society? - Real Life Curriculum. - Who Is Responsible for Teaching Civic Duty to Youth?	<u>Speaking:</u> - Expressing opinion, providing counter-argument and giving recommendations; - Debate in pairs; - 2-minute speech / video pitch <u>Writing:</u> - Plan for a student-led civic engagement campaign; - Poster or hashtag campaign.	- Communication and organizational skills developed through creating a civic-engagement campaign; - Effective language use for persuasive speech; - Openness to diverse opinions, respect, civic-mindedness,
4. Us and Them (on stereotypes, identity, and inclusion)	Learners will understand concepts of inclusivity, equality, and bias in academic contexts; develop skills to analyze institutional	<u>Grammar:</u> - Cleft sentences and emphatic structures; - Relative clauses.	<u>Reading:</u> - Challenging Stereotypes and bias in the Workplace: A Path Toward Inclusion. - The role of DEI in higher education	<u>Speaking:</u> - Introducing, adding, continuing a point; comparing and contracting;	- Role of stereotypes and bias in defining DEI policy; - Valuing human rights, openness to diversity,



	documents and create inclusive communication in English; demonstrate responsibility, civic-mindedness, and evidence-based thinking; and uphold values of equality, human dignity, transparency, and fairness in academic and social settings.	<u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to diversity, equality and equity, inclusion, discrimination, stereotypes, bias.	<u>Listening:</u> - The Differences Between Stereotypes, Prejudice, Discrimination and Oppression; - Testimonies of five students that explain why they feel victims of discrimination at university; - Discrimination cases at university; - Misconduct complaint procedures.	emphasizing; giving examples; summarizing. <u>Writing:</u> - Proposal for enhancing inclusivity on campus (of max. 250 words)	respect and civic mindedness.
5. Power and Protest (on democracy, activism, and dissent)	Learners will understand language and communication related to power, protest, and democracy, alongside key political and social concepts; develop analytical, communicative, cooperative, and adaptive skills; demonstrate respect, civic-mindedness, and self-efficacy; and uphold values of human dignity, rights, democracy, justice, equality, and the rule of law.	<u>Grammar:</u> - Modal verbs of permission, prohibition and obligation. <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to power, protest, democracy, activism and dissent.	<u>Reading:</u> - Power, protest and democracy: Dissent as the lifeblood of change. - The interplay of power, protest, democracy, activism and dissent; <u>Listening:</u> - Climate change strikes across New Zealand (climate protests); - A democratic right; - Thousands of university staff go on strike over pay negotiations; - Democracy in action.	<u>Speaking:</u> - Asking for clarification, agreeing and disagreeing; expressing concern or worry; giving examples; making a suggestion; expressing uncertainty; using rhetorical questions; challenging an argument. - Role play <u>Writing:</u> - Message (200-250 words)	- Democratic freedom and civil rights in democracy; - Protests as a way of instigating political or social change; - Digital activism; - A line between legitimate protest and extremist action; - Protests and stability of a democracy.
6. Digital You (on online identity and privacy)	Learners will understand key concepts of digital safety and shared online responsibilities; develop skills to analyze risks and	<u>Grammar:</u> - Modal verbs expressing various degrees of certainty;	<u>Reading:</u> - Case Study: The Fake Account on Novaland Connect.	<u>Speaking:</u> - Expressing opinion; turn-taking/building on another's point; making a suggestion; using	- Recognizing online risks; - Digital literacy as a skill supporting



	communicate effectively about online security; demonstrate responsibility and critical awareness in digital interactions; and uphold values of privacy, transparency, accountability, dignity, and fairness in digital environments.	<p>- Modal verbs for cautious and tentative language.</p> <p><u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to digital safety and online security.</p>	<p>- Digital Responsibility in the Age of Social Media.</p> <p><u>Listening:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Varga's Testimony on Digital Ethics. - A report on the results of a Youth Digital Ethics Summit. - A student's testimony on an online scam. - Expert Panel Debate on Digital Safety. 	<p>idioms; inviting another's opinion; expressing disagreement; encouraging elaboration.</p> <p><u>Writing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short Essay (250 words): Reflecting on how student's personal information is visible online. 	<p>responsible democratic citizenship;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on students' own digital footprint and privacy; - Analytical and critical thinking, responsibility, respect for others.
7. Green Talks (on environmental citizenship)	Learners will understand global and local climate change issues and related language; develop skills to analyze information, communicate persuasive environmental messages, and co-design and present research in English; demonstrate responsibility toward environmental impact; and uphold values of human rights, freedom of expression, and civic engagement.	<p><u>Grammar:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct & Indirect questions. <p><u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to climate change impacts and adaptation and mitigation measures.</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate Change Impacts on Health and the Environment in Europe. - Climate change mitigation and adaptation. <p><u>Listening:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BBC documentary "Climate Change: The Facts". - BBC Climate Questions. - BBC's People Fixing the World episodes: a) ASRI project in Borneo, Indonesia, and b) Floatavoltaics. 	<p><u>Speaking:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Storytelling: describing a picture of a creative solutions to global climate problems (introduction, advantages, challenges/limitations, conclusion). <p><u>Writing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A social media post (120-150 words) "#ActLocal at Novaland". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link between local actions and global climate challenges; - Role of communication in promoting climate-related agency and action; - Appreciation of diverse viewpoints, experiences and values; - Critical thinking, environmental citizenship, and collaboration.
8. Justice in our hands (on law,	Learners will understand the functions of law and civic responsibility in promoting	<u>Grammar:</u>	<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we move beyond teaching kindness and responsibility to 	<u>Speaking:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding "fairness";

justice, and responsibility)	justice and democracy; develop skills to analyze legal and ethical issues and communicate reasoned arguments in English; demonstrate openness, fairness, and respect in discussion; and uphold values of active citizenship, equality, and the rule of law.	- Connectors, prepositions & conjunctions. <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to justice, law and civic engagement.	encouraging students to stand up for fairness and equality in society? - How is Law Different from Justice? <u>Listening:</u> - How Do We Achieve Justice? - Understanding Equality and Justice in Everyday Life. - Unique's Story. - What is Social Justice?	- Using idiomatic language and structured examples; - Recording a speech "My Motto is: Acting Fairly in Everyday Life". <u>Writing:</u> - An action plan based on a case study analysis.	- Using voice or behavior to promote fairness and responsibility in everyday situations; - Respecting different viewpoints and experiences, demonstrating values of democracy, justice and fairness.
9. Worlds Collide (on intercultural communication and conflict)	Learners will understand key concepts of intercultural communication and the pragmatic use of grammar for politeness and clarity; develop skills to identify and overcome language and cultural barriers using appropriate linguistic strategies; demonstrate empathy, openness, and patience; and uphold values of inclusivity, respect, and ethical intercultural communication.	<u>Grammar:</u> - Modal verbs for politeness; - Hedging & softeners. <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to intercultural communication, politeness and conflict resolution.	<u>Reading:</u> - Elena's Market Encounter: A Story of Language and Politeness Challenges. - Daryna's Intercultural Journey in University. <u>Listening:</u> - When Cultures Collide: Managing Conflict in Intercultural Communication. - Intercultural Communication Importance. - An International Fair on Campus. - Avoiding Misunderstandings at an International Conference.	<u>Speaking:</u> - Using phrases for politeness, hedging, modal verbs, and turn-taking. - Role-playing involving problem analysis. <u>Writing:</u> - A reflective essay on intercultural communication and conflict resolution (300-500 words).	- Reflection on intercultural misunderstandings; - Effective use of modal verbs, hedging, or indirect requests for polite communication; - Cultural expectations about politeness and directness; - Applying knowledge of the language to enhance communication in multicultural setting.
10. Your Voice, Your Power (on public speaking,	Learners will understand principles of civic debate, fair argumentation, and	<u>Grammar:</u> - Adding and contrasting	<u>Reading:</u> - Speaking as Civic Engagement.	<u>Speaking:</u> - Using idioms appropriately	- Language that makes a public speech

argumentation, and civic debate)	critical distinction between facts and opinions; develop skills to deliver persuasive speeches and engage respectfully in debates; demonstrate empathy, openness, and tolerance in dialogue; and uphold values of public voice, fairness, and democratic civic engagement.	connectors, result and time connectors; - Discourse markers. <u>Vocabulary:</u> Related to civic debate and public speaking.	- Civil discourse. <u>Listening:</u> - Be a More Confident Public Speaker. - Presenting and Public Speaking Tips. - BEST Ways to Improve Your Speaking Skills as a Leader. - Speaking for Beginners.	- Recording an argument “The Power of Youth Voice in Today’s World”. <u>Writing:</u> - Speech writing (approx. 300 words) that evaluates a case study on AI-detection in higher education. - Short response “Who is affected and how? Which democratic principles are at stake.”	convincing and respectful; - Language that helps to avoid conflict or include more perspectives; - Feelings and emotions when your opinion is challenged; - What issues encouraged you to speak up.
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Description of Breakout Challenges

Unit/Challenge	Scenario	Main assignment
1. Speak Freely? (on freedom of speech and its limits)	Students are involved in a pan-European youth media initiative called FreeVoice, where students produce podcasts about democratic values. A viral video has surfaced from Novaland, where a student was suspended for posting controversial opinions online. The school claims it was hate speech; the student insists it was just ‘free speech’.	Prepare a student narrative in podcast form that features the following elements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Episode name, logo, and slogan Goals of the episode – two clear objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for a specific improvement or clearer standard in free-speech policy. Propose ways to increase awareness and responsible dialogue on campus or online. Three real or research-based stories illustrating the boundaries of free expression. Actions and recommendations – practical steps such as organising peer-to-peer forums, collaborating with student clubs, or creating guidelines for respectful online debate.



2. Truth Check (on fake news and media literacy)	<p>Students are representatives of the Academic Integrity Committee and are called into an emergency session by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs to investigate a situation caused by the spread of rumours about exam leak and to propose possible solutions to the problem.</p>	<p>Develop an Emergency Student Communication Package: Create a multi-platform message to address student concerns before exam time and respond appropriately to rumours about exam leaks. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A campus-wide email announcement (250-300 words); 2. Social media posts for official student accounts (3 posts, 50-75 words each); 3. FAQ document (7-10 questions, 300-400 words total) addressing common student questions about the alleged leak.
3. Join In (on civic engagement and youth participation)	<p>Students are members of CivicSpark, an international student network amplifying youth voices across Europe. Novaland has launched a consultation to fund one major civic project proposed by students. However, youth participation is strikingly low and student apathy is growing. The administration warns that the initiative will be cancelled unless engagement improves.</p>	<p>Design and present a student-led civic engagement campaign that tackles a local issue and convinces your fellow students to “join in”. The campaign package includes: Campaign identity (name, logo, and slogan/hashtag); Goals and objectives; Action plan. Required outputs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-page written proposal (≈300 words) outlining the local issue, objectives, main actions, and expected results 2. Infographic titled “5 Ways to Get Involved” using short imperatives and obligation phrases 3. 2-minute speech or video pitch that combines an engaging opening, at least one conditional argument, and a strong call to action. 4. Poster or mock social-media post/hashtag with a punchy slogan.
4. Us and Them (on stereotypes, identity, and inclusion)	<p>Students are asked to contribute to the implementation of key initiatives regarding the university’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy such as the development of a comprehensive DEI strategy, increasing support services for students with disabilities and incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum.</p>	<p>Prepare a narrative (1,000-word length), including three cases that illustrate disparities or unfair treatment at university. For each case, identify the discriminatory practices involved and suggest possible actions/events to address them. The narrative should have the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrative name, logo, and slogan; 2. Clear objectives to advocate for specific improvements and increase engagement and visibility for underrepresented voices at university; 3. Three student stories illustrating disparities and identifying discrimination practices at university; 4. Possible actions/ activities/ events such as facilitating peer-to-peer learning sessions, and collaborating with student clubs and academic departments.
5. Power and Protest (on	<p>A government is concerned about the increasing influence of a specific social</p>	<p>The management of Novaland University has informed its students of the new law and has demanded that it is carefully observed. Students belonging to a group of activists should develop</p>

democracy, activism, and dissent)	movement on social media platforms. In response, it has passed a new law that places restrictions on the type of content that can be posted online, specifically targeting activist groups. Students belong to a group of activists, who find ways to mobilize support both online and offline, using creative strategies to resist censorship and continue their advocacy efforts.	<p>an online campaign strategy (a catchy slogan and a list of steps/measures) to resist the government's new restrictions on social media. The goal is to keep the momentum of your movement alive while outsmarting the censorship attempts.</p> <p>The proposed catchy slogan should consist of up to ten words. The suggested steps/measures should be up to seven, each of which consisting of a short title of up to seven words and a brief description of up to seventy words.</p>
6. Digital You (on online identity and privacy)	Students take on the role of members of an EU student advisory board on digital citizenship and online rights. Faced with a case of online identity misuse, they are expected to investigate the situation, reflect on issues of digital identity, privacy and misinformation, and prepare a group report to present their findings.	<p>Write a formal proposal (1000 words) addressed to <i>the Novaland University Digital Safety Committee</i>. (Students work in small group of 3-4 individuals). The proposal should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the issue: Summarize the risks of fake accounts, phishing, and oversharing. 2. Explain why the issue matters: Show the impact on students' safety, reputation, and trust in the university. 3. Suggest at least three concrete measures: e.g., awareness workshops, quicker reporting systems, clearer privacy settings, or peer-to-peer digital safety ambassadors. 4. Argue why the suggestions would be effective: Link them to principles of digital literacy, responsibility, and democratic participation.
7. Green Talks (on environmental citizenship)	Students are part of a Youth Climate Action Lab tracing impacts of climate change in local environment and suggesting simple mitigation and adaptation measures that could implemented at university level.	<p>Create a "Green Talk": investigate how people at Novaland perceive climate change, what impacts they observe locally, and what actions they take (or would like to take) to make a difference. Follow these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a short, clear, and engaging questionnaire in Google Forms (8-10 questions) to survey members of university community (students, teachers, and staff) and conduct survey (min. 20 respondents); 2. Analyze response data and create a digital infographic titled "Climate Voices at Novaland University" (include: title, introduction, key findings, interpretations, recommendations, visuals).
8. Justice in our hands (on law,	Students are members of the Civic Speakers Team at Novaland investigating a	Design a public awareness campaign (poster or social media post), based on real-life examples and concerns, that:



justice, and responsibility)	controversial issue, from school rules to youth policies. Students are expected to “speak up” – deliver a persuasive speech grounded in facts, examples, and democratic values at the Novaland Civic Debate Forum.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shows why following fair rules matters in everyday life (at university, in the local community and online). Explains the difference between rules and laws, and why justice needs both. Encourages responsible behavior in the local context using inclusive, empowering language. <p>The campaign should be presented in a university-wide “Rule of Law Day” event or shared on the university’s communication platforms.</p>
9. Worlds Collide (on intercultural communication and conflict)	A diverse group of international students has just arrived in Novaland. As they settle into university life, they navigate a vibrant but complex environment where multiple languages, accents, and cultural norms intersect, leading to moments of misunderstanding, frustration and sometimes exclusion.	Write a strategy proposal (400-600 words) on how to make communication at the university more inclusive and respectful. In the proposal, identify key communication challenges that arise in a multicultural and multilingual environment, and suggest practical ways to promote understanding, empathy, and equality in everyday academic life. Show how your ideas support democratic values such as openness, respect for diversity, and responsibility in interaction. Use a clear, formal, and persuasive tone — your proposal should sound ready to present to university decision-makers.
10. Your Voice, Your Power (on public speaking, argumentation, and civic debate)	Students are part of the Novaland Civic Speaker Team working with a local youth debate forum. Their mission is to explore real-life issue and prepare a persuasive speech or public statement arguing for a peaceful solution. Their speech will be delivered in a simulated civic debate forum at the university and must include evidence, examples and a strong message rooted in democratic values.	<p>Prepare and deliver a 2–3-minute persuasive speech on a real-life issue related to civic responsibility. Respond to a fictional case or local example provided by the instructor.</p> <p>The speech should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Define the issue and explain why it matters to your community or generation. Present a clear, structured argument supported by facts, civic values, and democratic principles. Acknowledge counterarguments and respond with thoughtful, respectful rebuttals. Use appropriate rhetorical strategies to engage your audience and communicate your message with clarity and conviction.
Joint challenge “Survival Kit for International Students in Novaland”	In Novaland, students from Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Cyprus come together to live, study, and collaborate, bringing with them different languages, habits, and ways of thinking. While diversity makes the campus vibrant and	<p>In cross-national teams (Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Cyprus), co-create a digital survival toolkit to help new international students integrate smoothly into the multicultural campus of Novaland University. The toolkit should be clear, practical, visually engaging, and culturally inclusive.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions for formats: Interactive PDF or Google Slides; Collaborative website (e.g., via Canva, Google Sites, Wix); Digital Flipbook; Folders in shared platforms.



	<p>exciting, it also leads to everyday challenges: misunderstandings in group work, unintentional cultural faux pas, or uncertainty in how to approach unfamiliar situations.</p>	<p>2. Suggestions for content of the digital survival toolkit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language essentials (Everyday phrases in 4+1 languages (local + English); polite expressions and hedging);• Intercultural Awareness (Common challenges + practical advice; how to avoid conflict, do and don't lists, breaking myths and stereotypes about each nationality);• Wellbeing seen by each nationality (Tips on how to adjust in Ro/BG/Ukr/Cy surroundings, culture shock and how to avoid it, specific ways to relax. May include student stories, tip box, etc.);• The practical kit: ten indispensable objects when you are a Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Cypriot. Explanations (both serious and funny);• "My first week in Novaland" – podcasts / interviews / essays in which students describe their first encounters with international environments, either in their home countries of abroad. What was interesting? What did you learn? What was unexpected? What was tough? (language, cultural differences, etc).
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Course Workload

Unit / Challenge	Workload
1. Speak Freely? (on freedom of speech and its limits)	6.5 hours
2. Truth Check (on fake news and media literacy)	6.5 hours
3. Join In (on civic engagement and youth participation)	6.5 hours
4. Us and Them (on stereotypes, identity, and inclusion)	6.5 hours
5. Power and Protest (on democracy, activism, and dissent)	6.5 hours
6. Digital You (on online identity and privacy)	6.5 hours
7. Green Talks (on environmental citizenship)	6.5 hours
8. Justice in our hands (on law, justice, and responsibility)	6.5 hours
9. Worlds Collide (on intercultural communication and conflict)	6.5 hours
10. Your Voice, Your Power (on public speaking, argumentation, and civic debate)	6.5 hours
Joint challenge “Survival Kit for International Students in Novaland”	10 hours
Total:	75 hours 3 ECTS

Teaching Methods

Interactive web app-based units

In the ENLACED course, a bespoke web app designed for both desktop and mobile use CALL forms the backbone of instruction. The app hosts all ten interactive units, each structured as a digital breakout challenge that integrates English language learning with the development of democratic competences. Learners create personal profiles, access resources anytime, and receive immediate automated feedback on their performance, enabling self-paced, autonomous learning. Teachers can link students’ profiles to their own, monitor progress, and provide formative feedback within the platform. The system supports integrative language learning principles, combining reading, listening, speaking and writing skills in communicative tasks, making technology not only a delivery tool but an essential medium for meaningful language learning and civic engagement.

Digital breakout challenges

A digital breakout is a web-based, gamified learning activity in which students solve puzzles, unlock digital “locks,” and complete tasks to resolve a central challenge. Drawing inspiration from physical escape rooms, digital breakouts transfer this concept into an educational environment where participants engage in inquiry-based, collaborative problem-solving. They promote active learning through exploration, reasoning, and communication, transforming the learning process into an immersive experience.

Digital breakouts in the ENLACED course are grounded in the principles of Challenge-Based Learning (CBL). CBL emphasizes authentic, real-world challenges that require learners to apply linguistic, cognitive, and social competences to generate meaningful solutions. In the context of English as a Foreign Language, this approach integrates all four language skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking – within purposeful communication, while simultaneously nurturing competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue. Students use English to explore democratic issues, negotiate meaning, and co-create solutions, linking linguistic progress to active citizenship.

Each digital breakout in the ENLACED course follows a consistent instructional structure:

- Intended learning outcomes integrate linguistic and democratic competences framed around knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.
- A backstory or narrative set in the fictional Novaland University introduces the challenge, characters, and problem to solve.
- A sequence of language tasks (including “locks”) develops grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, speaking and writing skills while providing clues to progress to the main challenge.
- The main challenge represents the main assignment that helps students to resolve the problem set in the backstory. It requires creating tangible outputs, such as campaign proposals, speeches, infographics, or media posts that demonstrate applied language use and civic reflection.
- Reflection questions guide learners to connect language practice with democratic and intercultural competences.
- Assessment and self-evaluation foster metacognition, learner autonomy, and awareness of civic engagement.

Instructionally, the implementation of the digital breakout challenges goes through the following steps:

- **Step 1 “Introduction of the challenge”:** The teacher begins by playing a short narrative video that introduces the scenario, characters, and central issue of the challenge.
- **Step 2 “Initial discussion”:** A brief whole-class discussion follows, allowing students to express initial reactions, share prior knowledge, and identify the key problem or dilemma presented in the narrative.
- **Step 3 “Explanation of the main assignment”:** The teacher outlines the main assignment – the task or project students must complete to resolve the issue.
- **Step 4 “Guided work on the challenge tasks”:** Students work through a sequence of interactive tasks on the ENLACED web app. These tasks develop specific language skills and provide clues for solving the overall challenge. The teacher monitors progress, explains difficult language points, and ensures understanding of task instructions.



- **Step 5 “Collaborative project work”:** The teacher divides students into small groups to work on the main assignment. Teams brainstorm, research, and design their final product, such as an infographic, video speech, report, proposal, or strategy document, using English for authentic communication. Throughout the process, the teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding inquiry, encouraging equitable participation, mediating discussions, and providing formative linguistic and conceptual support.
- **Step 6 “Presentation, reflection and evaluation”:** Student teams present their outputs to the class. The session concludes with peer and self-assessment, guided reflection questions, and formative feedback from the teacher to consolidate learning outcomes in both language and democratic competences.

Peer learning

Peer learning lies at the core of the ENLACED course, as students collaborate in small groups to complete the main assignments within each digital breakout challenge. Working together promotes active knowledge construction, negotiation of meaning, and interpersonal understanding. Teachers facilitate peer learning by forming balanced groups, clearly defining roles, and setting shared goals. During group work, instructors guide interaction by monitoring communication, providing linguistic and conceptual support, and ensuring equitable participation. Reflection and peer feedback are integrated to help students evaluate both the process and outcomes of collaboration, reinforcing autonomy, accountability, and mutual respect in learning.

Collaborative Online International Learning & Intercultural Citizenship Education

The pedagogies of Collaborative Online International Learning and Intercultural Citizenship Education are used for planning, implementation and facilitation of the transnational joint challenge described in the previous section. These pedagogies provide insights into instructional design that fosters the development of students’ democratic competences. Based on these pedagogies the joint challenge will be implemented in the following four steps:

- **Step 1: “Familiarization”.** At this stage, students get acquainted with the challenge and engage with the materials available in the Teams channel. Students are divided into groups each comprised of representatives of all partner universities. Each group has its own “breakout room” and is assigned a mentor – a teacher from one of the partner universities. Each student prepares a short introduction of him-/herself that is shared with his/her group members (e.g. self-introduction slides).
- **Step 2: “Interaction”.** Within each group, students present themselves to their peers (e.g. by co-creating a shared ppt with one slide per group member and making posts in the group’s channel on Teams). Mentors ask students to comment on the posts, ask and answer questions, in order to foster team building. Asynchronous exchange of self-introductions should finish with a group online meeting.
- **Step 3: “Collaboration”.** Under the mentor’s guidance, students engage in collaborative work on the joint challenge. Within each group, students are further



divided into smaller teams. Project tasks are distributed among teams. Roles, responsibilities, group and team work ethics, and schedule of activities are agreed among all participants. The mentor scaffolds students' joint work both at the level of small teams (separate tasks) and at the level of the whole group (challenge level). Students use various digital tools for asynchronous and/or synchronous online collaboration. This stage results in a certain output – a digital representation of the collaborative work result.

- **Step 4: “Reflection”.** Students engage in self- and peer-evaluation, and reflect on the learning outcomes attained as a result of the joint challenge. All students who participate in the challenge gather for an online conference to present their project results to each other.

Assessment Methods

Continuous in-app progress tracking

The ENLACED web app integrates continuous progress tracking as a core assessment feature, enabling teachers to monitor each student's learning journey in real time. The app records detailed data on student performance for every task, such as the number of correct responses and specific areas where mistakes occur. This allows teachers to identify individual learning needs, provide timely support, and gain an overall picture of class progress and achievement. At the same time, the system promotes self-assessment by displaying correct and incorrect answers with automated explanations and feedback, helping learners understand their errors, reflect on progress, and take responsibility for their own learning.

Peer assessment

Peer assessment of writing assignments is an integral component of the ENLACED web app, fostering collaboration, reflection, and critical evaluation skills. When students submit their written tasks through the app, each piece is automatically assigned to two peers for review and feedback. Reviewers assess the work using predefined evaluation criteria, such as coherence, accuracy, vocabulary use, and task achievement, and provide a short narrative comment highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. The feedback is then returned to the author through the app, allowing for revision and self-reflection. This process promotes learner autonomy, empathy, and constructive communication, reinforcing both linguistic competence and democratic values of fairness and mutual respect.

Course portfolio

Throughout the ENLACED course, students produce tangible outputs for each digital breakout challenge that collectively form their course portfolio. Each project is assessed within the challenge during the “Presentation, reflection and evaluation” stage, where students present their work and receive feedback from peers and the teacher. The

portfolio thus represents a cumulative record of the student's linguistic progress, creativity, and civic engagement across all ten challenges. At the end of the course, the complete portfolio serves as a summative assessment tool, providing evidence of both language proficiency development and the acquisition of competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue.

Reflection journals

Reflection is embedded in each challenge, where students are asked to consider how language use contributes to addressing democratic and citizenship issues. Learners are encouraged to record their thoughts, insights, and observations after each challenge, gradually building a reflection journal that documents their perceptions of the learning process. These reflective entries help students connect linguistic learning with civic awareness and intercultural understanding. At the end of the course, students compile their reflections into a short reflective essay summarizing their main takeaways regarding both language acquisition and the development of competences for democratic culture, reinforcing self-awareness and autonomous learning habits.

Grading

The final grade for the ENLACED course is based on a continuous performance-based assessment model that reflects both linguistic achievement and civic engagement. It comprises three main components:

- completion of tasks in the web app, which evaluates consistent participation and progress in interactive exercises
- the course portfolio, which includes all tangible outputs produced across the ten digital breakout challenges and demonstrates language proficiency, creativity, and application of democratic competences; and
- participation in the joint challenge and delivery of a collaborative online international learning project, which assesses teamwork, intercultural communication, and the ability to collaboratively address real-world issues in English.

The contribution of each component in the final grade is indicated in the table below.

Component	Contribution to the final grade
Completion of tasks in the web app	20%
Course portfolio	50%
COIL project within the joint challenge	30%



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