

COMM 205 – Communication Practicum – Fall 2014

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Section 1: Tuesdays 800 am – 920 am ASC G34
Section 2: Tuesdays 11:00 – 12:20 pm ASC G301F
Office: ASC 301F Office Hours: T 330-500 pm, Th 11am - 12pm, by appointment and
through gchat stables@gmail.com

Course Summary

This course is designed to provide insights and tools to help you evaluate your career field of interest by bridging your classroom learning with professional experiences. This will be an applied setting for students to examine the theories and practices of professional workplace environments from a communication perspective. Students will utilize a range of research methods to examine an ongoing internship. Both an internship supervisor and professor will review students

Course Objectives

- To provide students an opportunity to receive credit through a series of independent academic and practical activities and on-line discussions concurrently with a pre-professional internship experience.
- To understand and evaluate the role of effective communication on the job market.
- Deliver internship information, advice and recommendations to other students

GRADING: This course is graded CR/NR. The passing grade for CR is a C-.

Assignments

Course Assignment Point Rubric:

Blogging:	50% total	(10% per post)
Informational Interview:	15%	
Career Action Plan:	30%	
Attendance:	5%	

An evaluation will be given to your supervisor at the end of the semester. This will not affect your grade.

Blogging

Utilizing the Blackboard Blog each student will author five posts. The schedule of posting is posted on the course schedule. Each post is due no later than Saturday of that week listed on the syllabus. Each post should be at least 750 words. It should be an opportunity for you to reflect on what is happening during your internship and consider the implications of those developments. Some possible topics for blog posts include:

- What communication practices e happening (or not happening) in the workplace?

- How is that industry experiencing change?
- What crises or tensions do you notice in the workplace?
- What might you do to improve the communication environment if you could?
- How do your classroom experiences compare with what you are learning in the workplace?

All students will be posting on the Blackboard blog, so you are writing to your classmates and instructor but the blog is not being posted as a fully public blog. If you have any posts of a sensitive or confidential nature, please email that content directly to the instructor.

Informational interview

A great deal of attention is rightly focused on job interviews, but the opportunity to learn from an experienced colleague is also a valuable interview format. For this assignment, select one individual at your organization who is an experienced employee and conduct an informational interview. This should be your direct supervisor. Try to identify someone whose career experience you find interesting.

You need to select the individual, ask them to meet for a 15-30 minute session, and then conduct the interview. Your objective should be to learn about their career path and how they got where they are today, as well as to learn what further steps you should take in developing your own career or what other people you might want to talk to as well.

After the interview, reflect on what you learned and write a 3-4 page summary of the most important aspects of the interview. Some resources for the interview follow.

Mastering the Informational Interview

<http://shiftingcareers.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/29/mastering-the-informational-interview/>

“Informational Interviews”

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/infointerviews/a/infointerview.htm>

“How Does an informational Interview Work”

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-481-Getting-Ahead-How-Does-an-Informational-Interview-Work/>

“Informational Interview Sample Questions” <http://www.ynpntwincities.org/storage/ELN618.pdf>

Career Action Plan

This paper is an opportunity for you to outline a path between your current internship experience and your future opportunities. Drawing upon everything you have learned this semester and everything you have experienced, please write a (5-6 page) summary of how you will approach your future career exploration. Address what skills you have learned and how this has helped to develop your career path. Students will address what skills and experience they need to develop to meet their career objectives. What future experiences (internships, skill building, networking,

courses, etc.) do you realize you need to tackle in order to be an attractive candidate for your post graduation work experience? Please indicate how experiences in this course or at an internship have helped you redefine your course of action for deciding on a career path. This can also include identifying one or more websites from professional organizations or job search sites that would be useful for you in your career planning.

Daily Schedule:

Date	Week	Meeting	Topic	Assignment
26-Aug	1	#1	Course introduction	Introductions
2-Sep	2	#2	Getting the most of your internship	
9-Sep	3			Blog Post 1 Due
16-Sep	4			
23-Sep	5			Blog Post 2 Due
30-Sep	6	#3	Recognizing & embracing change	
7-Oct	7			Blog Post 3 Due
14-Oct	8			
21-Oct	9			Blog Post 4 Due
28-Oct	10	#4	Navigating workplace politics	
4-Nov	11			Blog Post 5 Due
11-Nov	12			
18-Nov	13			Informational Interview Report
25-Nov	14			
2-Dec	15	#5	Internship summaries	Career Action Plan Due

Meeting #1 – Introductions: The Course, Internships and the Cohort (August 2)

During this session I will introduce the course and how it will enhance your internship experience. Students will introduce themselves and discuss their professional aspirations.

Meeting #2 – Getting The Most Out of Your Internship (September 2)

For this session we will focus on how to appreciate an internship as part of your professional opportunities. We will explore what you should seek to get out of the experience, how to interact with permanent employees, and your supervisor.

Readings (please review before class)

Job and Internship Resources <http://annenbergl.usc.edu/CurrentStudents/Careers/Internships.aspx>

15 Ways To Stand Out As An Intern

<http://www.businessinsider.com/15-things-interns-do-to-stand-out-2014-5>

How Can I Get the Most Out of My Internship

<http://lifehacker.com/how-can-i-get-the-most-out-of-my-internship-1168904419>

Meeting #3: Recognizing and Embracing Change (September 30)

In this session we will discuss how the profound transformations influencing our lives are also influencing our professional environments. These changes can include shifting business models, geographic relocations, and fluid notions of specific roles. Please review the following readings and identify how you observe change in your professional environment.

Readings

Pew Center on State of The News Media in 2014. Change is a constant.
<http://www.journalism.org/packages/state-of-the-news-media-2014/>

Navigating change in the work place <http://www.workplaceconfidence.com/>

Emotional Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman, bestselling author of Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ <http://www.danielgoleman.info/topics/emotional-intelligence/> and <http://www.danielgoleman.info/developing-emotional-intelligence/>

Meeting 4: Navigating Workplace Politics (October 10)

By this point in the semester you will have likely experienced some of the organizational challenges commonly known as “workplace politics.” In this session we will discuss how personalities, structures and cultures influence the workplace experience.

Readings:

How to Handle Office Politics, by The Wall Street Journal <http://guides.wsj.com/careers/how-to-overcome-career-obstacles/how-to-handle-office-politics/>

Tips on Having Difficult Conversations, Harvard Business Review
<http://hbr.org/web/management-tip/tips-on-having-difficult-conversations>

Video: Lynda.com course on Difficult Conversations. <http://www.lynda.com/Business-Business-Skills-tutorials/Having-Difficult-Conversations/124085-2.html> [As USC students, you have free access to Lynda.com courses, available through the USC library system.]

Meeting 5: Internship Summaries (December 2)

Our final session will draw the academic component of your internship experience to a close. We will review the semester and discuss settings goals that extend into your future.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report

all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse. You should be familiar with the following resources:

- * "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tig.pdf>

- * "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tio.pdf>

- * The "2014-2015 SCampus" (the student handbook) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies. <http://www.usc.edu/scampus>

Late & Unfinished Work – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late. Each speaking assignment must be given on the day assigned. No makeup sessions will be available.

Grievance Procedure - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

Special Assistance - Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.