

# COMM 375 SYLLABUS

## Section 20577R

Business and Professional Communication  
Monday & Wednesday, 10:00 am to 11:50 am

**Spring Semester 2017**

**Classroom: ASC 228**

**Instructor: Michael Wissot**

Office: ASC 333

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Office E-Mail: mwissot@usc.edu

Office Hours: *Only by Appointment*, M & W, 9a-10am, 2-3pm

**Course Description:** This class will require an intensive examination and application of effective communication in the workforce. Students will be exposed to a wide range of professional communication strategies and tactics, and they will be expected to apply these approaches to their preferred industries. The class will cover a variety of contemporary business topics, allowing students to discover unique opportunities affecting organizations/industries of interest and to learn how to harness such knowledge.

**Course Goals:**

- To achieve excellence in constructing and delivering business presentations
- To acquire skills in managing the pace, content and outcome of professional interviews
- To strengthen skills in developing concise and substantive résumés and cover letters
- To refine your own personal brand and sell your value proposition to an organization
- To understand the strategic challenges facing an organization or industry of interest

**Course Meaning:** We will demonstrate the highest attainable work ethic and discover within us that which is superior to circumstance. We will persevere toward the most rewarding pursuit in higher education – the stimulation of thought, emotion, and soul. It is my duty to prepare you, as future leaders of the Free World, for the challenges and opportunities that await you. We will dare to be great, individually and collectively.

**Required Textbook:** Young, K.S. & Travis, H.P. *Business and Professional Communication: A Practical Guide to Workplace Effectiveness*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2012.

**Additionally Required Materials:** *Available via e-mail or the university's Blackboard course site*

**Preparedness:** Class will meet each Monday and Wednesday throughout the semester. You must complete ALL course requirements in order to earn a grade in this course. You are responsible for all reading assignments as pop quizzes may be given to determine your preparedness for class. You are responsible for giving presentations on the dates when you are scheduled. Since your attendance in this course – both as a speaker and listener – is vital, any absences from class will affect your final grade. You are, therefore, required to notify me BEFORE missing class and provide corresponding documentation AFTERWARD. In the event that both of these criteria are satisfied, you will receive “make up” assignments/projects to suffice for time missed from the classroom. Please note that I will record an unexcused absence if you miss any considerable portion of class (arriving late, leaving early) without my authorization. Late submissions on assignments will result in a 10% grade deduction for every day late. Classroom behavior will be predicated on an environment of mutual respect. We are here to learn from each other in a non-threatening environment. You are encouraged to formulate and share opinions with due discretion, as well as be comfortable in practicing communication techniques and delivering formal presentations in a safe environment. Any behavior that is deemed disrespectful by the instructor will affect your grade.

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Syllabus (cont.)

**Academic Integrity:** The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the SCampus guide. 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. If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please check with me immediately. 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: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf>

Guide to Avoiding Academic Dishonesty: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf>

**Use of Technology:** Students may only use technology-based products with the expressed written consent of the professor. The use of laptops, mobile phones and all other computer devices during class time is not permitted. Accessing the Internet in any capacity during class time is not permitted. **Any violation of this class policy may result in the loss of ALL participation points for the entire semester, as well as other ramifications under university policy.**

**Disability Services:** 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 have the letter delivered to me 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. DSP's phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**Grading Procedures:**

Introductory Presentation	25 points
Informative "Discovery" Presentation	50 points
Persuasive "Business Strategy" Presentation	100 points
Goals Essay	25 points
Job Package (Résumé, Cover Letters, Web Page, Blog Entries)	75 points
Op-Ed	75 points
Informational Interview Project (Formal I-view Extra Credit)	50 points
Participation: In-Class Activities / Attendance	25 points
Midterm Exam	75 points
Final Report (Exam)	100 points

**TOTAL: 600 POINTS**

*I expect you to complete all assignments on time. Late work, if accepted, may be penalized substantially.*

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

94 - 100 percent = A	74 - 76.9 percent = C
90 - 93.9 percent = A-	70 - 73.9 percent = C-
87 - 89.9 percent = B+	67 - 69.9 percent = D+
84 - 86.9 percent = B	64 - 66.9 percent = D
80 - 83.9 percent = B-	60 - 63.9 percent = D-
77 - 79.9 percent = C+	BELOW 60 percent = F

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week / Date	Topic / Activity	Assignment (Y&T, 2012)
<b>#1</b> 1/9 & 1/11	Overview of Course  Professional Communication Boot Camp I <b>Presentation</b> , Presence, Message	   Chapter 1 Chapter 9
<b>#2</b> 1/18 only	Professional Communication Boot Camp II Presentation, <b>Presence</b> , Message  Assign Introductory Presentation on an organization/industry of interest, focusing on the specific attributes that provide value to its targeted stakeholders (and to you).  Assign Goals Essay – due January 30	
<b>#3</b> 1/23 & 1/25	<b>Deliver Introductory Presentations</b> – January 23 <b>(Outlines DUE)</b>  Informative Presentations Visual Aids	
<b>#4</b> 1/30 & 2/1	Working in Teams  Goals Essay Due – Jan 30  Writing Résumés Writing Business Reports & Presentations	   Chapter 7   Chapter 3 Chapter 6
	Assign Informative “Discovery” Presentation on a business trend, challenge or opportunity facing a company or industry of interest, focusing on why you consider it important.  Assign Job Package – due March 29	
<b>#5</b> 2/6 & 2/8	Problematic Personalities in the Workplace Communication Solutions in the Workplace Intrapersonal Skills  Listening in the Workplace Impression Management	   “10 People” excerpts Chapters 8 & 10 Chapter 2  Chapter 5

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Course Schedule (cont.)

Week / Date	Topic / Activity	Assignment (Y&T, 2012)
<b>#6</b> 2/13 & 2/15	<b>Deliver Informative “Discovery” Presentations (Outlines DUE)</b>  Review for Midterm Exam	
<b>#7</b> 2/22 only	Midterm Exam on Wednesday, February 22 Covers Chapters 1-3 & 5-11 in Y&T, plus all lectures and handouts BLUE BOOK REQUIRED (Loss of 10 points without Blue Book)  Assign Draft of Résumé & Cover Letter DUE February 27 (Bring 2 Copies of Each)	
<b>#8</b> 2/27 & 3/1	Résumé & Cover Letter Workshop – Feb 27  Interviewing Workshop – Guest Speaker	Chapter 4
	Assign Persuasive “Business Strategy” Presentation for Weeks #13 & 14 on a strategic value proposition for a specific company, association or nonprofit organization to integrate into its business model.	
<b>#9</b> 3/6 & 3/8	Interviewing Workshop II – Guest Speaker  Networking	Chapter 11, Handouts
	Assign Informational Interview where you will interview a business professional (with five years of experience or less) or formally interview for a job/internship, as well as answer a series of post-interview questions. Due April 26	
<b>#10 – NO CLASSES on March 13 and March 15</b>		
<b>#11</b> 3/20 & 3/22	Consultative Selling Techniques Persuasive Business Presentations  Professional Communication Boot Camp III Presentation, Presence, <b>Message</b>  Review Requirements for Persuasive Presentations	Lecture, Handouts
	Assign Op-Ed where you will write an opinion piece on an emerging business trend. Due April 17	

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Course Schedule (cont.)

<b>Week / Date</b>	<b>Topic / Activity</b>	<b>Assignment (Y&amp;T, 2012)</b>
<b>#12</b> 3/27 & 3/29	Identifying Business Industry Trends  Communicating Business Industry Trends Review Sample Op-Eds  Job Package DUE – March 29	
<b>#13</b> 4/3 & 4/5	<b>Deliver Persuasive “Business Strategy” Presentations (Outlines DUE)</b>	
<b>#14</b> 4/10 & 4/12	Developing Your Personal Brand  Assign Final Report – due May 5	Lecture, Handouts
<b>#15</b> 4/17 & 4/19	TBD  Op-Ed DUE – April 17  Guest Speaker	
<b>#16</b> 4/24 & 4/26	Crisis Communication Activity  Informational Interview DUE – April 26  <i>April 26 is the last day to submit any late assignments/projects for “excused” absences or deliver “make-up” excused absence presentations.</i>	
<b>#17</b> 5/5 (no class)	<b>Final Report: Friday, May 5 by 5pm DUE</b>	