



**COMM 375: Business & Professional Communication**

**SPRING 2017**

**Instructor:** Paula D. (Patnoe) Woodley  
**Office:** ASC 333  
**Office Hours:** Monday & Wednesday only  
Directly after class or by appointment

**Section:** MW, 3:30 - 4:50 p.m., ANN 409ABC  
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**COURSE GOALS**

The overall goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and knowledge. While we will cover some theory to enhance your understanding of the business world, the bulk of our time will be spent focused on your applied skills in the communication field. I would like you to walk out of this class confident that you can deliver excellent presentations; be comfortable and successful in interviews; write first-rate cover letters and resumes; and have a basic understanding of important communication and business-related issues that you will encounter in the work force.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

- **Adler, R. B., Elmhorst, J. M. & Lucas, K. (2013). *Communicating at work (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*, McGraw-Hill.**
- Additional readings assigned throughout the semester will be posted on Blackboard (BB) or provided in class.

**COURSE STANDARDS**

1. Consistent attendance, punctuality and active class participation are essential to your success and will affect your grade. I expect contributions to the class discussion to be courteous and clearly demonstrate the student has read the course materials.
2. Missing class is no more acceptable than it would be to miss work. Excessive absences and tardiness will adversely affect your grade.
3. Check our class Blackboard site every day for class announcements. I post announcements frequently throughout the semester. You are responsible for keeping up to date.
4. Many topics are addressed in a single class session. It is **your** responsibility to obtain materials from a missed class from Blackboard and a classmate. If you still have question, I will be happy to assist.
5. Presentations and papers must be the original work of the student and not used for any other course. Violation of this policy is an Academic Integrity Violation.
6. Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner, within two weeks of receiving the grade.
7. Student's attire should be appropriate for a business setting on speech days.
8. Typos, grammatical and punctuation errors, page layout inconsistencies, etc. count. *Proofread your work!*

**COURSE POLICIES**

1. The deadline for any assignment, reading, or presentation is at the very beginning of the class that it is due. *These deadlines will come up often: don't allow yourself to fall behind!*
2. **Electronic Devices:** In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to please turn off your cell phones and put away your laptops/tablets when you enter our classroom. There may be specific class sessions in which laptops will be allowed.

3. **Late Assignment Consideration:** Extensions are never guaranteed nor should they be expected for any reason (even good ones). I will consider an extension only under the following conditions: the student requests an extension *before* the assignment is due, and the student has a *verifiable* emergency.
4. **Missed Presentations or Exams:** The extension policy is the same as it is with late assignments. We will not have time for make-up presentations during class time. The student must arrange out of class time to present individually to me or to take your exam during my office hour. Please note if you fail to attend class on the day you are scheduled to present (and have not made prior arrangements with me), you will receive an irrevocable failing grade on the presentation.
5. Participation points given for class activities cannot be made up if the student misses class.
6. Any student who misses more than *four class sessions* may fail the course.
7. You must complete **all** assignments to pass the course.

### **SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & JOURNALISM ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

The Annenberg School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words is plagiarism; it is a serious academic offense met with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>. The policies, procedures, and guidelines protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, consult with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

### **STUDENT SAFETY & SUPPORT**

- If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide all updates. You may also register with <https://trojansalert.usc.edu/>.
- Discrimination, sexual assault, bullying and harassment are not tolerated by the University.
  - You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <https://dps.usc.edu/contact/>.
  - Another member of the University community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.
- For students who need help with scholarly writing, USC Dornsife offers services for all students:
  - The Writing Center (at USC Dornsife), <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>
  - Students whose primary language is not English, the *American Language Institute* can help, <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>
- *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange accommodations.

**ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

Any student requesting academic accommodation 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 the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) 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. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

**ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING**

To achieve a “C” or better on written assignments, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. I believe a “B” represents really good work. An “A” represents excellent work. If you are disappointed by a grade, I would be happy to discuss your work with you and help you improve for the next assignment. Remember, university professors grade based on achievement, not for effort.

|                                | <b>Point Value</b> | <b>% of Final Grade</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Formal Presentations</b>    |                    |                         |
| Introductory                   | 10                 | 2%                      |
| Group Project                  | 50                 | 9%                      |
| Informative Presentation       | 70                 | 13%                     |
| Persuasive Presentation        | 95                 | 17%                     |
|                                |                    |                         |
| <b>Written Assignments</b>     |                    |                         |
| Job Package                    | 55                 | 10%                     |
| Informational Interview        | 55                 | 10%                     |
|                                |                    |                         |
| <b>Exams &amp; Pop Quizzes</b> | 165                | 30%                     |
|                                |                    |                         |
| <b>Participation Points</b>    | 50                 | 9%                      |
|                                |                    |                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | 550                | 100%                    |
|                                |                    |                         |
|                                |                    |                         |

**SYLLABUS**

*Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled. BB=find readings on Blackboard.*

*This schedule is subject to change, check BB for current version.*

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Session Topic</b>                                     | <b>Assignment Due</b> | <b>Readings</b>                  |
|-------------|-------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>    | <b>1/9</b>  | Course Introduction                                      |                       | 1) Handouts in class             |
|             | <b>1/11</b> | Presentation Boot Camp I<br>Organizing your presentation |                       | 1) Ch. 9<br>2) Handouts in class |

|   |      |   |   |   |
|---|------|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1/16 | MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY<br><i>No class</i>   |   |   |
|   | 1/18 | <u>Introductory Presentations</u>   | <b>Presentations</b>  |   |
| 3 | 1/23 | Presentation Boot Camp II<br>Delivery with confidence   |   | 1) Ch. 10 & 11<br>2) Take Learning Style Quiz (BB/assignments)            |
|   | 1/25 | <i>Resumes</i><br>Special Guest:<br><b>ASCJ Career Development</b>                            | <b>Topic Proposal for Informative Presentation</b>  | 1) Adler Appendix III<br>2) Readings posted on BB<br>2) Handouts in class |
| 4 | 1/30 | Presentation Boot Camp III<br>Informative presentations/review                                |   | 1) Ch. 12, plus Ch. 9 and 10 (review)                                     |
|   | 2/1  | Resume & Cover Letter Clinic  | <b>Resume</b><br><i>Bring 2 printed copies of your resume and a pen with other than black ink</i> | 1) Hand outs in class   |
| 5 | 2/6  | <u>Informative Presentations (1)</u>  | <b>Presentations</b><br><i>Business casual attire</i>   |   |
|   | 2/8  | <u>Informative Presentations (2)</u>  | <b>Presentations</b><br><i>Business casual attire</i>   |   |
| 6 | 2/13 | <b>Job Talk</b><br>Guest Speaker: TBD   |   | 1) See speaker bio on BB  |
|   | 2/15 | <i>Using LinkedIn for Business</i><br>Guest Speaker:<br><b>Freddy Nager,<br/>Atomic Tango</b> | Set up or update your LinkedIn profile  | 1) See speaker bio and readings on BB                                     |
| 7 | 2/20 | PRESIDENTS' DAY<br><i>No class</i>  |   |   |

|           |                |  |   |  |
|-----------|----------------|--|---|--|
|           | <b>2/22</b>    | Interviewing Skills<br>( <i>Special guest in the works...</i> )                  |   | 1) Ch. 6<br>2) Adler Appendix I, pgs. 378-390<br>3) Interview tips and articles (BB)<br>4) Interviewing worksheet (BB) |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>2/27</b>    | <b>MIDTERM</b>   | <b>Exam</b> will cover chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, plus all other assigned readings and handouts |  |
|           | <b>3/1</b>     | Interpersonal Skills   |   | 1) Ch. 5   |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>3/6</b>     | Working in Groups & Teams  |   | 1) Ch. 7   |
|           | <b>3/8</b>     | <b>Mock Interviews</b><br>Guest Interviewers from <b>ASCJ Career Development</b> | <b>Job Package</b><br><i>Bring a separate resume. Business attire required!</i>                 | 1) Practice with the Interviewing worksheet  |
|           | <b>3/13-15</b> | <b>SPRING BREAK</b>  | <b>Enjoy!</b>   |  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>3/20</b>    | Writing for Business   | <b>Online writing exercises</b>   | 1) Adler Appendix III, pgs. 402-409<br>2) OWL Business Writing handouts (BB)   |
|           | <b>3/22</b>    | Diverse Cultures at Work   | <b>TEAM 1 Presentation</b>  | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 2  |
| <b>11</b> | <b>3/27</b>    | <i>Job Talk or Catch-up day</i>  | <b>Informational Interview</b>  |  |
|           | <b>3/29</b>    | Workplace Communication I: Listening   | <b>TEAM 2 Presentation</b>  | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 3  |
| <b>12</b> | <b>4/3</b>     | Workplace Communication II: Verbal & Nonverbal Messages                          | <b>TEAM 3 Presentation</b>  | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 4  |

|           |             |  |   |   |
|-----------|-------------|--|---|---|
|           | <b>4/5</b>  | Strategies for Effective Persuasive Presentations  |   | 1) Revisit Adler, et al., Ch. 9 and 12 (persuasive presentations) |
| <b>13</b> | <b>4/10</b> | 1-on-1 w/ Paula (all day)  |   |   |
|           | <b>4/12</b> | Networking   |   | 1) Articles on BB   |
| <b>14</b> | <b>4/17</b> | <u>Persuasive Presentations (1)</u>  | <b>Presentations</b><br><i>Business attire required</i> |   |
|           | <b>4/19</b> | <u>Persuasive Presentations (2)</u>  | <b>Presentations</b><br><i>Business attire required</i> |   |
| <b>15</b> | <b>4/24</b> | <i>Your Individual Brand</i><br>Special Guest:<br><b>Michele Lando,</b><br><b>Skilset Communications</b> |   |   |
|           | <b>4/26</b> | Roundtable/Semester wrap-up  |   |   |
|           | <b>5/5</b>  | <b>Final Exam</b><br><b>Friday, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.</b>   | <b>Exam</b><br>will be cumulative                       |   |

I look forward to getting to know and working with all of you. I hope you will give this class your best, and I will do the same. Together we'll make this a very productive and meaningful semester.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS**

*(See Blackboard for the complete assignments)*

### **Introductory Presentation**

This short presentation allows me to see your current public speaking skills. Topic and format announced in class.

### **Informative Presentation**

This is a presentation (with visual aids) on noteworthy current events, "hot topics," or new trends that will require extensive research, analysis of the situation and more. Only one presentation per topic is allowed, so get your topic proposal in early!

### **Group Assignment**

The class will be broken into three groups. Each group will be provided with a different course topic (from a text book chapter) from which they will present required key issues. All members of the team will participate in a presentation consisting of PowerPoint slides (or similar), a class-participation activity, and possibly a handout you prepare for your classmates. Unless there is an unusual circumstance, all members in each group will receive the same grade.

### **Informational Interview**

For this project, you will interview an individual that currently holds a job that you are considering. The interviewee must hold a position that you would be qualified for within three years after graduation (i.e. no management positions). You will write a 2 page executive summary and may be asked to give a brief oral presentation on your experience. This assignment is more time-consuming than it looks. Start early!

### **Job Package**

Your completed job package is the key to a successful job search. For this assignment, you will locate a job you are interested in, develop a cover letter, resume and obtain references. Hint: an effective resume requires numerous revisions. Plan your time accordingly.

### **Persuasive Presentation**

You will individually prepare and deliver a presentation with PowerPoint (or similar) to a mock foundation with the intent of persuading them to fund the charity of your choice. You will choose any cause that matters deeply to you, select a non-profit organization that supports it and then locate a foundation to fund the activities of that organization. This presentation will draw on a multitude of skills acquired during the semester and should show your growth and proficiency in public speaking.

### **Exams & Quizzes**

There will be a midterm and a cumulative final exam. Expect surprise quizzes if I feel the readings are not being completed or there is lackluster participation during class.

