

ALI 270

Oral Skills for International Teaching Assistants

Instructor: Tessy Tzoytzoyrakos

Email: tzoytzoy@usc.edu

Office Phone: 213-740-0079

Office Hours: By Appointment 4-5 T/TH

Location : **THH 117**

OBJECTIVES

IN THIS COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Improve overall oral fluency in English
- Learn the appropriate language choices and develop the communication skills needed for effective interaction with students in the classroom, lab, or office
- Strengthen ability to present information clearly through presentations and participation in discussions
- Develop awareness of language and pronunciation problems and develop strategies to improve comprehensibility
- Increase awareness of American culture in and outside the classroom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to help international teaching assistants (ITAs) develop the specific language skills needed to carry out teaching duties smoothly and effectively. We will study the skills necessary to make presentations, lead discussions, hold office hours, and most importantly, interact effectively with students.

We will also practice certain aspects of American English pronunciation and engage in other speaking activities to develop oral fluency. A further purpose of this course is to provide a supportive environment for you to learn and share with each other as you grow as a teacher.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Presentation 1 (10%)
- Midterm Mini-lesson (25%)
- Term Presentation (25%)
- Observations (15%)
 - Video-recorded sessions for ITAs w/ labs/discussions/office hours duties
 - Peer observations and evaluation
- uSC Program, Homework, Class Participation (25%)

MATERIALS

- ALI 270 Course Reader (with publishing date of current semester)
- Handouts/ Blackboard & online resources

IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

An essential part of this course is self-evaluation and peer-evaluation. Please note that **ALL** presentations (see below) and observations will be video-recorded and uploaded to BLACKBOARD at <http://blackboard.usc.edu/>. First, you will observe your video on your computer and consider your strengths and weaknesses. Second, you will evaluate your presentations (and a peer's) by completing an evaluation form and submitting it to your teacher by email. Finally, you will have an individualized consultation with your instructor to discuss evaluation feedback.

➤ **Presentation Diagnostic (Week 1)**

A two- to three- minute presentation introducing yourself and a classmate. This presentation will be videotaped and used as a diagnostic sample of your oral communication.

➤ **Presentation 1 (Week 2)**

A four- to five- minute presentation on why the class (for which you are a TA) is important and what makes you qualified to teach it. The presentation needs to show good preparation and an awareness of your audience. (No PPT- only white/blackboard.)

➤ **Midterm Mini-lesson (Week 7)**

A 15-minute lesson, during which you will try to employ effective teaching strategies. Your topic must be related to your field of study and engage a general (non-specialist) audience. (PPT slides required.)

➤ **Final Term Presentation (Week 13)**

A six-to seven-minute presentation on a term from your department's ITA Exam Terms List. This is an opportunity to show your improvement over the course of the semester, applying the acquired language/pronunciation components and effective teaching techniques. (No PPT.)

OTHER MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

➤ **"uSC" Program**

The "uSC" (Undergraduate Student Consultant) Program offers ITAs a great opportunity to practice English with a native speaker outside the classroom. You will be assigned a uSC with whom you will meet outside of class (two hours per week, starting week 4) for a total of 24 hours. This is a chance for you to work on teaching skills, fluency, slang,

pronunciation, conversation, or any other oral skills areas you wish to improve. More information on the program will be provided prior to the start of the program.

➤ **Observations**

If you have contact with students this semester (in a lab, discussion session or office hours), you will be observed and evaluated twice during the semester while teaching or holding office hours. Each observation will be video-recorded for approx. 20-25 minutes. You will watch the observation video, complete a self-evaluation form, and engage in a consultation with your instructor to discuss feedback at the midterm/final consultations.

Peer Observation - ITAs not teaching or holding office hours: You will be required to observe an experienced TA leading a lab or discussion in your department (or closely-related dept., should your dept. not have teaching TAs). Contact your TA coordinator or department secretary for names of experienced ITAs whom you can contact for the observation. The *Alternative Peer Observation Evaluation Form* (available on Blackboard) must be printed out and completed during the observation and emailed to your instructor by the due date specified by your instructor:

➤ **Recorded “Mock” Office Hour**

This assignment will be completed with your uSC, following the midterm consultation. You will be recorded for approximately 10 minutes while interacting with your uSC, explaining a concept related to your field. Additional details to be provided.

➤ **Consultations**

During the semester, you will meet with your instructor for three face-to-face consultations, to discuss goals, progress, presentation/observation feedback, as well as uSC/ITA program activities. Please note that you are responsible for submitting all required forms and documents to your instructor PRIOR to the consultation and by the specified due dates; failure to submit forms in a timely manner may result in a canceled consultation and class absence (two hours). It is your responsibility to contact your instructor should you have trouble accessing files necessary for completing and submitting evaluation forms.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

You are expected to **arrive punctually** and attend every class and **actively participate** in class discussions and activities. **Class participation also means that you are fully present in class, not texting, looking at your cell phone, or using your laptop. The instructor reserves the right to mark you absent for 1 hour of class time,** if you use cell phones or other electronics without prior instructor's permission.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate or your instructor to find out what you missed. You are responsible for any material covered in the class you missed, and you must prepare any assigned homework for the following class. If you are more than a 5-10 minutes late to class, you may be marked absent for one full hour of the class. More than EIGHT hours of absence will result in a grade of No Credit for the course. Please notify your instructor of any departmental duties which will prevent you from attending class (proctoring exams, attending conferences, etc.). If changes in your teaching responsibilities occur at any point during the semester, please be sure to inform your instructor as soon as the changes take place.

CLASS POLICY ON USE OF ELECTRONICS

Out of respect for your fellow students and your instructor, and to foster an environment conducive to effective learning and communication, ALL electronic devices (smart phones, ipads, laptops, etc.) must be powered down and put away, during class. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on vibrate mode, please step outside of class should you need to answer the phone or reply to a text. **Students may be marked absent for one hour each time this policy is disregarded and/or when electronics are used inappropriately during class.** Exceptions will be at the discretion of the instructor for class tasks requiring use of online material.

ITA EXAM & FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

At the end of the semester, all ALI 270 students will take the ITA Oral Interview Exam again. After successfully completing this course, most students are released from any further ALI oral skills course requirements. However, some students do fulfill the course requirements, yet still require further work on skills covered in this class. In such cases, these students are required to take an additional ALI course to help them make the necessary improvements.

IMPORTANT: To qualify for the ITA exam at the end of the semester, students must complete ALL course-related assignments, attend all meetings with their uSC, and not exceed the maximum number of allowable absences for the course (absences include hours missed with uSC). Students who exceed the hours of absences and/or are at risk of receiving a NC, will have their department notified. Failure to attend the scheduled ITA exam may result in a NC for the course.

USC's GRADUATE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

The American Language Institute adheres to the following USC Graduate Admissions English Language Requirements:

The ability to communicate effectively in English—to read, write and speak the language fluently—is vital to your success as a university student. USC graduate applicants are therefore expected to demonstrate English-language proficiency as part of the application process.
<http://gradadm.usc.edu/lightboxes/international-students-english-proficiency/>

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct – Plagiarism—presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards*, https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/11/SCampus-Final-112015_v8.pdf. 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/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, 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, <http://dps.usc.edu/contact>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. 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://engemannshc.usc.edu/cwm/>, provides 24/7 confidential support, and the Sexual Assault Resource Center webpage, <https://sarc.usc.edu/>, describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems- A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not



English should check with the *American Language Institute*, <http://ali.usc.edu/> , which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*, <http://dsp.usc.edu/> , provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information*, <http://emergency.usc.edu/> , will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.