



USC | **ANNENBERG**  
School for Communication & Journalism

## COMM 375: Business & Professional Communication

FALL 2013

**Instructor:** Paula D. (Patnoe) Woodley  
**Office:** ASC 333  
**Office Hours:** Monday & Wednesday only  
2:00 - 3:00 p.m., or by appointment

**Section:** MW, 3:30 - 4:50 p.m., #G34  
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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., Elmhurst, 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. This course will be as action-packed as you should expect your professional life to be.
2. The requirements of consistent attendance, punctuality and active participation are essential to your success and will affect your grade.
3. Missing class is no more acceptable than it would be to miss important workdays at any company. Excessive absences and tardiness can adversely affect your grade up to 1/3 of your total grade.
4. The deadline for any assignment, reading, or presentation is at the very beginning of class that it is due. *These deadlines will come up often: don't allow yourself to fall behind!*
5. Missing a presentation, assignment or exam will result in a failing grade on that assignment unless you have physical proof of some serious emergency that prohibited your presence (e.g., a bill from the paramedics).
6. All assignments missed due to an excused absence must be made up within one week of returning to class.
7. Students who are instant messaging, web surfing, or involved in other similar activities during class will be marked as absent. Cell phones are to be turned OFF, *not* on "vibrate."
8. 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.
9. Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner. There is a 24-hour "wait period" after receiving a grade, but then you should address questions within the next 10 days.
10. You must complete **all** assignments to pass the course.

*Note: While it is not a prerequisite, it is strongly recommended that you take COMM 204 or an equivalent public speaking class before enrolling in this class.*

**Here's the fine print. Read it.**

- Any student who misses more than four classes may fail the course.
- If you turn in an assignment late, it will be downgraded by a full letter grade for every day it is late.
- Should you miss a class and not receive reading materials or an assignment; it is **your** responsibility to obtain it either from your classmates or instructor. Be sure to check Blackboard first.
- All elements required of every assignment must be turned in on the due date.
- Student's attire should be appropriate for a business setting on speech days. Unprofessional dress can negatively affect perceptions of credibility as well as your grade.
- Typos, grammatical and punctuation errors, page layout inconsistencies, etc. count. *Proofread your work!*
- Your computer must be used for note-taking only. No social media, etc. Turn your phones off. You will lose your computer privileges for the semester if you do not comply. Sorry, but it is what it is.

**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.

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

The Annenberg School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the policies and procedures detailed in the *SCampus* guide section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They 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, confer with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

**ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING (percentages are approximate)****Formal Presentations**

Group Project	50 points
Informative Presentation	65 points
Persuasive Presentation	85 points

**Written Assignments**

Job Package	60 points
Informational Interview Project	60 points

**Exam**

Midterm I	75 points
Midterm II	100 points

**Misc. Points**

55 points

*Earned with class preparation and participation, writing exercises, pop quizzes, etc.*

**TOTAL****550 points**

**SYLLABUS**

Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled. CAW=Communicating at Work textbook.  
BB=find readings on Blackboard. **This schedule is subject to change...and likely will!**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Session Topic(s)</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>1</b>	Aug. 26	Course Introduction		1) Handouts in class
	Aug. 28	Presentation Boot Camp I Organizing your presentation		1) CAW, Ch. 9 2) Handouts in class and BB
<b>2</b>	Sept. 2	LABOR DAY – <i>No class</i>		
	Sept. 4	Presentation Boot Camp II Delivery with confidence		1) CAW, Ch. 11
<b>3</b>	Sept. 9	Presentation Boot Camp III Informative presentations Visual aids		1) CAW, Ch. 12 2) CAW, Ch. 10
	Sept. 11	Resumes! Special Guest: <b><i>Suzanne Alcantara,</i></b> <b><i>ASCJ Career Development</i></b>		1) CAW, Appendix II, pgs. 409-416 2) Check BB for other readings 2) Handouts in class
<b>4</b>	Sept. 16	<u>Informative Presentations (1)</u>	<b>Presentations, business casual attire</b>	
	Sept. 18	<u>Informative Presentations (2)</u>	<b>Presentations, business casual attire</b>	
<b>5</b>	Sept. 23	Working in Teams I		1) CAW, Ch. 7 2) CAW, Ch. 12, pgs. 366- 368
	Sept. 25	Interviewing Skills Special Guest: <b><i>Megan Hutaff,</i></b> <b><i>ASCJ Career Development</i></b>	<b>Topic Proposal for Informative Presentation</b>	1) CAW, Ch. 6, pgs. 152-177 2) CAW, Appendix I, pgs. 378-390 3) Handouts in class 4) Interview tips and articles (BB) 5) Interviewing worksheet (BB)
<b>6</b>	Sept. 30	Diverse Cultures at Work	<b>TEAM 1 Presentation</b>	1) CAW, Ch. 2

	Oct. 2	Resume & Cover Letter Clinic <i>Bring 2 copies of your resume</i>	<b>Resume draft</b>	
<b>7</b>	Oct. 7	<b>MIDTERM</b>	<b>Exam</b>	
	Oct. 9	Writing for Business		1) 1) CAW, Appendix III, pgs. 402-409 2) <i>OWL Business Writing handouts</i> (BB) 3) Online writing exercises
<b>8</b>	Oct. 14	Interpersonal Skills		1) CAW, Ch. 5
	Oct. 16	Mock Interviews Guest Interviewers: <b>Megan and Suzanne</b> <b>ASCJ Career Development</b>	<b>Job Package</b> <i>Business attire required!</i> <i>Location TBA</i>	
<b>9</b>	Oct. 21	Job Talk Special Guest: <b>Dayala Ghazal</b> <b>Customer Development Manager</b> <b>Johnson &amp; Johnson/Neutrogena</b>		
	Oct. 23	Workplace Communication I: Listening	<b>TEAM 2 Presentation</b>	1) CAW, Ch. 3
<b>10</b>	Oct. 28	Workplace Communication II: Verbal & Nonverbal Messages	<b>TEAM 3 Presentation</b>	1) CAW, Ch. 4
	Oct. 30	Networking		1) Articles on BB
<b>11</b>	Nov. 4	<u>Informational Interview Reports</u>	<b>Project Due; Oral Reports</b>	
	Nov. 6	Current Trends in Communication Careers		1) TBA
<b>12</b>	Nov. 11	Strategies for Effective Persuasive Presentations		1) CAW, Ch. 12, pgs. 350-357 2) CAW, Ch. 9 (revisit)
	Nov. 13	Working in Teams II	In-class group activity	
<b>13</b>	Nov. 18	<u>Persuasive Presentations (1)</u>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
	Nov. 20	<u>Persuasive Presentations (2)</u>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	

<b>14</b>	Nov. 25	Persuasive Presentations (3) <i>If needed. If not, I'll surprise you!</i>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
	Nov. 27	<i>Thanksgiving extra day off!</i>		
<b>15</b>	Dec. 2	Consultative Selling Final exam review	In-class activity	1) Handouts in class
	Dec. 4	<i>Your Personal Brand</i> Special Guest: <b>Michele Lando,</b> <b>president, Skilset Communications</b>		
	Dec. 16	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> (Monday) 2:00-4:00 p.m.		

**BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS (see Blackboard for the full assignment prompts)**

**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. The instructor must approve each topic, as only one person per topic is allowed.

**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, a class-participation activity, and possibly a handout you prepare for your classmates.

**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 1-2 page executive summary as well as give a brief oral presentation on your experience. Scheduling an appointment with the right individual can take a long time – so 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 to a foundation with the intent of persuading them to fund your charity. As with any business-related presentation – particularly those requesting donated funds in support of a cause – careful research, preparation and practice are critical to make this a successful presentation.

**Midterm and Final Exam**

There will be two exams this semester consisting of a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions taken from your readings, class lectures, discussions, and activities.

