

## ALI 234 - Intermediate Oral Skills

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Office hours: 4-5 Tuesday and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The University believes that English proficiency is an integral part of a student's degree: "The ability to communicate effectively in English-to read, write and speak the language fluently-is vital to your success as a university student, and may also serve as a vital tool in your future academic and professional success. USC graduate students are therefore expected to demonstrate proficiency in English at all levels of graduate study."<sup>1</sup>

This is a 2-unit course in which students work on listening and speaking skills needed to succeed in the academic environment at USC. Activities and objectives include:

- Excerpts of lectures to develop listening & note-taking skills.
- Pronunciation activities to improve individual sounds, rhythm, and phrasal intonation.
- Assignments that help students participate in discussions, ask questions, and give presentations.
- Units and lessons that cover specific language issues (grammar, vocabulary, register) which are often problematic for non-native speakers of English.
- Homework assignments that will help students improve their vocabulary, increase their awareness of the amount of time they speak English, and motivate them to become more responsible for their own learning.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** All students must purchase the following textbook and bring it to each class:

*Academic Connections 4*. Williams, J. Pearson Longman. 2010  
ISBN-10:0-13-233841

**ALI ATTENDANCE POLICY:** More than **3** hours of absence will be reported to the ALI student advisor. More than **6** hours of absence will result in a course grade of **NC** (no credit). Absence is counted for *any* reason, including illness, emergencies, and conference attendance. Athletes must file a written excuse for absences due to competitions with the ALI Student Advisor.

**TARDINESS POLICY:** Arriving on time is important since tardiness disrupts the class; therefore, arriving late will also count towards the number of hours missed.

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<sup>1</sup> Proficiency in English. University of Southern California Graduate Admissions: International Students. Retrieved on August 23, 2012, from <http://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/international/english.html>

**ASSESSMENT:** Because this is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, it will not affect one's GPA.

Assignments are given to prepare for and/or practice material that is covered in the textbook and in class. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve students' academic listening and speaking skills, one's proficiency in these skills at the end of the course determines whether or not a student will need an additional class.

Upon completion of ALI 234, some students will move on to ALI 244 (High Intermediate Oral Skills). However, students who show minimal improvement in their listening and speaking skills may be required to retake ALI 234. In other words, even if a student receives credit for ALI 234 for doing all the assignments, he or she may be required to retake ALI 234 or take an additional oral skills class if his/her speaking level does not meet ALI's standard for release. Therefore, it is in a student's own interest to do his/her best on each assignment and to take every opportunity to speak English every day. Simply attending class and putting minimal effort into assignments is rarely enough to improve significantly; it will take diligent effort. **Very few students make significant progress if they spend most of their time speaking their native language.**

#### **GRADING CRITERIA:**

- Projects and Presentations (60%)
- Group Discussions (20%)
- Participation & Homework (20%)

Note that, for graduate students to receive credit for the course, they must have the equivalent of at least a B (80%), and undergraduates must have the equivalent of at least a C+ (77%). Students who have a documented illness that prevents them from completing assignments after Week 12 will receive an Incomplete (for more detail, see <http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/gradinghandbook/gradingpolicies.html#Definitions of Grades and Marks> ).

#### **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](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.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Any student requiring accommodation based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services and Programs office (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved recommendations can be obtained through DSP and should be delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. For more information, see [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html).

**CLASS POLICY ON ELECTRONICS USE:** Out of respect for your fellow students, your instructor, and to foster an environment conducive to effective learning and communication, all electronic devices (cell / smart phones, i-pads, laptops) must be powered down and put away, during class. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on vibrate, please step outside of class should you need to answer a call or reply to a text. **Students will be marked absent for one hour each time this policy is disregarded.** Exceptions will be at the discretion of the instructor for class tasks/ assignments requiring use of online material.