



USC University of Southern California

ALI 256 High Intermediate Oral Communication for International Teaching Assistants

Instructor: TESSY TZOYTZOYRAKOS
Section: 10151D
Day/Time: T/Th, 12:00-1:50 p.m.
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Course Overview:

This high-intermediate oral skills course is designed for International Teaching Assistants who need to improve their oral communication skills. The course is needs-based with a primary emphasis on pronunciation as well as linguistic accuracy and pragmatic competence. Participants will also work on honing their knowledge and use of oral grammar and vocabulary as they are both components of oral discourse fluency. Class projects and assignments will assess students' ability to communicate with linguistic competence in a dynamic academic environment.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to successfully carry out their duties as International Teaching Assistants in a rigorous and dynamic academic environment. Very often communication breakdowns between students and their TAs occur due to lack of linguistic and pragmatic competence. This course is designed to strengthen students' linguistic competence by placing primary focus on the supra-segmental aspects of pronunciation such as discourse intonation, pitch movement and tone choice. Secondary focus will be on fluency, particularly on oral grammar and vocabulary use. In addition, students will hone their pragmatic discourse skills as this is an essential component of effective communication for ITAs who are currently scheduled to teach or may potentially teach and/or assist students in the classroom. The

assignments and activities in this course are designed to help ITAs communicate with greater linguistic accuracy and fluency as well as cultural appropriacy.

Upon the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate ability to introduce themselves and their course with fluency and accuracy, engaging the audience, and generating excitement for the course
- successfully incorporate oral speech techniques such as interactive elements and anecdotes to build rapport with audience
- teach an introductory lesson related to their field and demonstrate ability to explain technical terms using vivid examples and interactive techniques
- lead and effectively participate in academic group discussions
- discuss a variety of topics with adequate accuracy and fluency
- demonstrate improvement in pronunciation skills (individual sounds, rhythm, word stress, and discourse intonation)
- demonstrate competency and pragmatic knowledge in a variety of communication functions (i.e. interacting with native speakers in the classroom and/or during lab and office hours, offering advice to students, handling student questions, etc.)

Course Requirements

Textbook

Focus on Pronunciation 3, 3rd edition. Lane, Linda. Pearson. 2013
ISBN: 978-0-13-231500-5 (Book and CD)

Oral Communication Project: Students will prepare a formal introduction of themselves and a course for which they will be TAing. Focus will be on building rapport with the audience and delivering the presentation with linguistic accuracy and fluency. Students will also be evaluated on the use of effective oral speech techniques such as storytelling. Presentations will be videotaped for self-, peer-, and teacher feedback.

Midterm Project: Students will design and present a 7 minute introductory lesson related to their field which demonstrates their ability to construct and deliver a speech with fluency and linguistic accuracy, integrating effective storytelling techniques and interactive elements that build rapport with the audience. Focus will be on the ability to simplify complex content and present ideas clearly and succinctly. Presentation will be followed by a Q & A session. Presenters will be evaluated on presentation style, delivery, and oral discourse. Presentations will be videotaped for self-, peer-, and teacher feedback.

Final Project: This project combines a field experience assignment with an in-class presentation. Field experience assignments in this course aim to educate our students in

effective and culturally responsive teaching practices, as well as offer them opportunities to take part in the overall teaching experience. Students will observe an experienced teacher and reflect on best teaching practices. Students in teams will also present a well-constructed lesson demonstrating best teaching and oral communication practices. Based on scheduling availability, the final project may be performed in collaboration with the Joint Educational Project (JEP) and/or other USC programs. Students will also make a presentation in class sharing about their field experience, what they learned and how they accomplished the requirements of the assignment while demonstrating their ability to deliver a speech with fluency and linguistic accuracy. Further guidelines will be given to students as placements and procedures are determined by the instructor and JEP.

The "uSC" Program: The "uSC" (Undergraduate Student Consultant) Program offers our ITA's 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 20 hours. This is a requirement and a chance for you to work on teaching skills, fluency, slang, pronunciation, conversation, or any other areas you wish to improve.

Class Participation: Each session will be customized to fit specific class needs and will build on what was covered in previous sessions. Similarly to how graduate students are expected to contribute to class discussions and TA's are expected to be effective and interactive speakers, you will be required to contribute to all classroom activities, including critiquing classmates' presentations on pronunciation and language use. Students learn from analyzing each other's oral performance and exchanging of ideas. Therefore, come ready to interact and engage in class discussions every session.

Attendance: 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). If you are late to class, that will also count towards the number of hours missed. In the event you cannot make a class, be sure to check with a classmate for the assignment missed. If you have an unavoidable conflict, please contact me via email as far in advance as possible.

Classmate:	Classmate:
Tel/Email:	Tel/Email:

Assignments: You are TAs. Deadlines count. All assignments must be turned in ON THE DUE DATE. Due to the format of our projects, there will be no makeup midterm or final presentations.

Class Policy on Use of Electronics: 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.

Grading Criteria: Upon completion of this course, students will receive a grade of Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC). The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- **Classroom and uSC participation:** The amount of interaction in the classroom and with uSCs – 40%
- **Project work:**
 - Oral Communication Project – 15%
 - Midterm Presentation with Questions – 20%
 - Final Project – 25%

Your projects will be videotaped which will require you to critique the accuracy and fluency of your English.

ITA Test: Students must complete ALL course-related assignments 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 No Credit (NC), will have their department notified. Failure to attend the scheduled ITA exam may result in a NC for the course.

Observations: ALL ITAs with teaching duties - leading a lab or discussion and holding office hours - will be observed at least once during the semester. The observation will be video-recorded for evaluation and follow-up consultation with instructor.

Recommendations for success: Being a TA is a privilege. As TA's, you need to demonstrate a professional, positive attitude in all your interactions with your students, professors, advisors, and classmates. Research also shows that a positive attitude is the driving force behind true learning and improvement. I expect you to improve greatly in this class and a positive attitude is all we need to get started!

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.

Statement for Students with Disabilities:

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 be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301. The phone number is 213 740-0776.

USC Policy on International Graduate Applicants

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://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/international/english.html>

