**COMM 375: Business and Professional Communication**

**Units: 4**

**Fall 2016—Tuesday/Thursday—9:30-11:50 am**

**ANN 211**

**Instructor:** Laurel Felt, PhD; [www.laurelfelt.org](http://www.laurelfelt.org)

**Office:** ASC 333

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 2:30-4:30pm

**Contact Info:** [felt@usc.edu](mailto:felt@usc.edu)

**Annenberg Virtual Commons:** <http://vc.uscannenberg.org/annenberg-it>

**Annenberg IT Help Desk:** ASC 234 | [asctech@usc.edu](mailto:asctech@usc.edu) | (213) 740-3901

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**Course Description**

This student-driven, experiential learning-oriented course will serve the participants’ own learning objectives and respect the USC Course Catalog, which describes COMM 375 accordingly:

Oral and written communication skills demanded in the workplace including informative and persuasive speeches; interviewing; team communication; personal branding; networking; and negotiation.

**Learning Objectives**

This course aims to enhance participants’ communicative competence in business and professional settings by offering opportunities to study theory and best practices as well as apply this knowledge within the context of developing a team presentation for DIRECTV.

**Course Notes**

1. **Grading**

a. This course is graded Numeric and/or In Progress.

b. Here is the grading scale:

A 92.5-100 B+ 86.5-89.4 C+ 76.5-79.4 D+ 66.5-69.4

A- 89.5-92.4 B 82.5-86.4 C 72.5-76.4 D 62.5-66.4

B- 79.5-82.4 C- 69.5-72.4 D- 59.5-62.4

F 59.4 or below

c. Guidelines for each particular assignment will be provided, and rubrics also will be available in most cases.

d. **Feedback is extremely important for learning and growth.**

I annotate written work quite extensively because your ideas are worth considering, and because your writing technique should be as excellent as possible by the time you graduate. Please invest in your own learning by reflecting on this feedback.

1. **Blackboard**

a. You can get at Blackboard via blackboard.usc.edu, link from my.usc.edu, and/or download Blackboard Mobile Learn from the App Store.

b. All readings and guidelines are posted to Blackboard (Bb).

c. Throughout the semester, I will email you updates and reminders. I send every email through Bb’s Announcement function; that means that every email is ALSO an Announcement. This way, you can never miss a message from me.

d. Turnitin is my favorite way to receive written work. It’s not because I’m highly

suspicious of plagiarism; it’s because GradeMark allows me to write comments with great ease, syncs up with Grade Center, tracks when assignments are submitted (flagging late work), and “bundles” all of the submissions in one place – I don’t have to keep track of emails and attachments with non-descript file names.

e. **How to submit written work to Blackboard:**

1) Open the Assignment folder in COMM 204’s Blackboard page.

2) Click “View/Complete” underneath the specific assignment you want to submit.

3) In the dialog boxes, type in your Submission Title and select from your files the

document you want to submit. Click “Upload.”

4) Once your file is uploaded, click “Confirm.”

5) If your file is submitted successfully, you will see the following message appear

on your screen and ALSO receive an email confirmation:

“Congratulations- your submission is complete! This is your digital receipt. You can print a copy of this receipt from within the Document Viewer.”

NOTE: If you do not receive the message above and/or an emailed digital receipt, then you did not submit your file successfully. Do it again.

f. **How to read my VERY USEFUL comments:**

1) To view a marked paper, the student user will need to click on the blue “View” button next to the assignment.

2) The student GradeMark paper view will open in a separate window in which the student may view or print the grade and comment information.

NOTE: Not all browsers will be able to display the complete features of the GradeMark product. If a browser that is not fully supported is being used, a notification will inform the user. <http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/student-training/grademark-overview>

**If you don’t read my comments, you are shortchanging your education.** I am helping you. I spend a lot of time flagging grammar and other issues, challenging you to think through your argument and evidence, complimenting you on well-turned phrases and quality cases. This is what college is for. You cannot afford to graduate with poor writing skills and/or messy logic. Help me help you. Seriously.

g. Should you experience difficulties with Blackboard or any other technological

aspects of the course, you may consult with the following resources:

Annenberg Virtual Commons: <http://vc.uscannenberg.org/annenberg-it>

Annenberg IT Help Desk:ASC 234 | [asctech@usc.edu](mailto:asctech@usc.edu) | (213) 740-3901

USC Information & Technology Services: <http://itservices.usc.edu/>

USC Libraries: <http://www.usc.edu/libraries/>

Lynda.com

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Requirements**

This class requires a moderate level of technological proficiency.

**Required Readings**

I expect you to read, annotate, critically think, and show up prepared.

* Weekly Readings on Blackboard
* McChesney, C., Covey, S., & Huling, J. (2012). *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals.* NY: Free Press.
* Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2007). *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. NY: Random House.
* Garner, B. A. (2013). *HBR Guide to Better Business Writing*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

1. **Written work (e.g., essays, outlines, bibliographies, slide presentations, etc)**
   1. I never collect paper from you. Save the paper, ink, and time, mes amis.
   2. Post to Blackboard via Turnitin by CLASS TIME (not midnight). I want you to complete assignments by class so that we can talk about them during class.
   3. If the file is too large for Turnitin, then email it to me. If the file is too large for email, please upload the file to Google Drive and share it with [laurelfelt@gmail.com](mailto:laurelfelt@gmail.com).
   4. *If you experience Bb difficulties, then email the assignment to me by class time.*
2. **Spoken work** 
   1. Share in class on the date that you speak.

**Additional Policies**

1. **Late and unfinished assignments**
   1. Make-up work will be allowed without penalty for excused absences only, and are due by the beginning of the next class session.
   2. For unexcused absences, there will be a full letter grade loss on the evaluation of that assignment for each day that it is late.
   3. Students must complete all assignments in order to receive credit in the course.
2. **Late arrival to and early departure from class**
   1. Class meetings are precious! Don’t miss class. DON’T.MISS.CLASS.
   2. Arriving late and/or leaving early means that you miss participation opportunities. Your participation grade will suffer accordingly.
   3. You are responsible for the material that you miss. Find out what happened by conferring with peers. It isn’t fair for me to “reward” you for skipping out on us by taking my own time to deliver a one-on-one recap.
3. **Absent from class**
   1. Class meetings are precious! Don’t miss class. DON’T.MISS.CLASS.
   2. Your participation grade will suffer if/when you don’t participate due to absence.
   3. You are responsible for the material that you miss. Find out what happened by conferring with peers. In the case of an excused absence, you may come see me during office hours so we can walk through any finer points. In general, the biggest secret is practice. We use class time to do a lot of applied work via games, exercises, discussions, and speeches.
4. **Use of technology in the classroom**
   1. You may use your phone as a timer and to photograph the white board.
   2. If you’re not doing any of those things, then put your phone away. Period.
   3. When I’m spouting pearls of wisdom aloud and/or scribbling gems on the white board, you may take notes on paper or computer/tablet. It is VERY OBVIOUS to me when you’re taking notes and when you’re doing other stuff. Please listen and participate; please be present in the room with us and get the most out of this opportunity. It’s worth it.
   4. When your peers are speaking, your laptop and/or tablet should be closed. Period. I vehemently expect all students to practice respectful, active listening. This type of listening helps speakers to feel safe, and safety is non-negotiable.
5. **Grading questions** 
   1. After receiving a grade, students must wait for 24 hours before addressing the instructor. Please use this time to think through the strength of your case.
   2. If you have determined that your grade merits further review, then submit your complaint/rationale in writing within the next week (7 days). Again, complaints or requests for reconsideration of a grade will not be considered unless they are submitted in written form and delivered after 1 day but before 8 days have elapsed.
   3. A complaint constitutes an argument, and will be evaluated by the standards of acceptable argumentation as presented in class readings and lectures.

**Grading Breakdown, Description and Assessment of Assignments**

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| **ASSIGNMENT** | **POINTS** | **% of GRADE** | **CRITERIA** |
| Resume |  | **10%** |  |
| Co-teaching |  | **15%** |  |
| Documentation of Team Brainstorm |  | **5%** | (minutes, mind map, timeline, etc) |
| DIRECTV or competitor case study |  | **10%** |  |
| DIRECTV presentation – First Draft |  | **10%** |  |
| DIRECTV presentation – Final Draft |  | **20%** |  |
| Professional Profile OR Capstone Project |  | **15%** | brand, dragon-slaying story, elevator speech, resume, career plan |
| **Participation** | **200** | **15%** | **1. Respectful, active listening** (e.g., making eye contact, leaning forward, nodding, etc)  **2. Proper use of technology** (e.g., stowing cell phone, writing/typing solely to note-take)  **3. Sensitive, generous sharing** (e.g., offering feedback to peers, asking & answering questions, giving 100% to in-class activities, working productively with peers, etc)  **4. Logistical requirements**  ATTENDANCE: (see policies) |
| ***Extra credit*** | *Up to 50* | *Up to 10%* | JEP (Joint Educational Project) = 5% |
| **TOTAL** | 1000 | 100% |  |

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|  | **Topic** | **Bb Weekly Readings & Videos** | **Assignment** |
| **Week 1: Foundations** | | | |
| 8/23 | **Team-building & Intro to COMM 375** |  |  |
| 8/25 | **21st century entertainment & tech** | GUEST SPEAKER: Erin Reilly, USC Annenberg Innovation Lab [CONFIRMED] |  |
| **Week 2: Go Team Go** | | | |
| 8/30 | **Week 10 voting, Guest speaker etiquette & Marketing** | GUEST SPEAKER: Gary Wexler, USC Annenberg [CONFIRMED] |  |
| 9/1 | **Public speaking & Presentation design** | “Basics of public speaking”  “Sensory aids” |  |
| **Week 3: Selling Yourself** | | | |
| 9/6 | **Resume & Cover letter workshop** | “Resume exemplars” | Resume & cover letter (print, bring to class) |
| 9/8 | **Personal branding & Elevator speeches** | “Elevator speeches”  GUEST SPEAKER: Maggy Sterner, Brand & Business Coach [unconfirmed] |  |
| **Week 4: “Singing For Your Supper”** | | | |
| 9/13 | **Project management**  **CO-TEACH: Alexa C., Leah** | *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*  GUEST SPEAKER: Cory Day, Pacific Sunwear [CONFIRMED] |  |
| 9/15 10am-2pm | **APPLIED COMMUNICATION:**  **USC Career Fair** | <https://careers.usc.edu/students/info/careerfair> | Resume  (Elevator speech, Prof. attire) |
| **Week 5: Taking Care of Business** | | | |
| 9/20 | **Business development & Strategy**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Kat, Bryan** | *Made to Stick*  GUEST SPEAKER: TBD |  |
| 9/22 | **Market research**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Joel, Rojo** | GUEST SPEAKER: Chimene Tucker, USC Libraries [CONFIRMED] |  |
| **Week 6: User Experience** | | | |
| 9/27 | **Marketing & PR**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Isabel, Sammy** | GUEST SPEAKER: USC Marketing/Public Affairs [unconfirmed] |  |
| 9/29 | **UX research+design**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Marissa, Kendall** | GUEST SPEAKER: Geetha Pai, Favorite Medium [unconfirmed] | DIRECTV or competitor case study |
| Week 7: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work | | | |
| 10/4 | **Team communication & Collaboration**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Alexa G., Sean** | *Form teams* |  |
| 10/6 | **YOU SCHEDULE: Team get-togethers** |  |  |
| Week 8: Recruiting & DirecTV | | | |
| 10/11 | **Job Interviewing—Group, 1-on-1; Phone, Video, In-person**  **CO-TEACH:**  **Andrew, Steven** | *Assess expertise for role, desirability for team*  ROLES: Product Director, Strategist,  Project Manager, UX Researcher, UX Designer | Documentation of team brainstorm |

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| 10/13 | **DIRECTV VISITS** | | OBJECTVES: Explore problem space; review parameters of project (e.g., What is the deliverable? Which industry benchmarks should students use as standards?); ask/answer Qs | |  |
| **Week 9: Networking, Part 2** | | | | | |
| 10/18 | **LinkedIn** | | *HBR Guide to Better Business Writing*  GUEST SPEAKER: S. Joacin Gurrola, USC grad [unconfirmed] | |  |
| 10/20 | **Informational interviewing & Practice session** | | “Informational interviewing”  “Advice from Liz Ryan of Forbes” | |  |
| Week 10: TBD BY CLASS | | | | | |
| 10/25 | | **TBD** | |  |  |
| 10/27 | | **TBD** | |  |  |
| Week 11: Work It | | | | | |
| 11/1 | | **Starting and ending: Conversations and jobs** | | “Networking” |  |
| 11/3 | | **VISIT DIRECTV**  **[early am]** | | OBJECTIVES: Tour DirecTV; take an even deeper dive into project; meet project team "counterparts" and better understand their roles/foci; conduct Q&A |  |
| Week 12: Looking Like a Champ | | | | | |
| 11/8 | | **Executive presence** | | “Executive presence” |  |
| 11/10 | | **Growing as a professional: Goals, Feedback, Awareness** | |  |  |
| **Week 13: Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk** | | | | | |
| 11/15 | | **Negotiation &**  **Mock negotiation** | | GUEST SPEAKER: Tiffany Madden, USC Annenberg Works [CONFIRMED] |  |
| 11/17 | | **Pitch practice & feedback** | |  | Presentation – First draft |
| Week 14: Go Team & Gobble | | | | | |
| 11/22 | | **YOU SCHEDULE: Team get-togethers** | |  |  |
| 11/24 | | **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING** | |  | Enjoy food |
| Week 15: Wrap Up | | | | | |
| 11/29 | | **Polish pitches &**  **375 Reflection** | |  |  |
| 12/1 | | **Pitch DirecTV** | | OBJECTIVES: Teams pitch slide presentations to DirecTV professionals; individual team members speak from their areas of expertise; presentations articulate college students' interests -- how they find, watch, and share content -- and present an idea (e.g., an ecosystem of TV & entertainment, a product, etc), providing reasons why this idea is sound; DirecTV offers feedback, critique | Presentation – Final draft |
| FINAL 12/8  11am-1pm | | **Submit final paper** | |  | Professional profile OR Capstone |

**NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to adjust this schedule at any time as she sees fit.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://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/>.

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://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>.  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://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

## **Support Systems**

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [*http://emergency.usc.edu/*](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.

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.

NOTE: USC Dornsife Writing Center, <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>, Taper Hall of the Humanities Room 216, is an excellent resource.

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. NOTE: Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if English is not your primary language and you believe you may require special accommodations.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.  NOTE: Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with The Office of 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.