

**USC** Annenberg

**School of Communication**

## **COMM 375: Business & Professional Communication**

(4 units)

Spring 2020 – Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 – 1:50

Section: 20577R

Location: ASC 328

**Instructor: Dr. Colleen M. Keough**

**Office:** ASC 121B, 213-740-3944

**Office Hours:** 11:30 – 12: 20 T; 4:00 – 5:50 W; and by appointment

**Email:** [keough@usc.edu](mailto:keough@usc.edu)

### **I. Course Description**

The overall goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and knowledge of workplace scenarios. While we will cover communication theory to improve your understanding business communication, the bulk of our time will be spent focused on gaining applied communication written and verbal skills. This course is designed for juniors and seniors, but is open to all students.

### **II. Student Learning Outcomes**

- Develop oral presentation skills for delivery of informative, instructional, and persuasive information for diverse audiences.
- Create visual aids to enhance messages effectiveness for diverse audiences
- Develop team effectiveness skills to design, produce, present and critique instructional materials for diverse audiences.
- Use academic communication research as a foundation for creating informational interviewing questions and for training material.

### **III. Recommended Preparation**

COMM 204, or other presentation skills course, is strongly recommended.

### **IV. Required Course Text**

Adler, R. B., Maresh-Fuehrer, M., Elmhorst, J. M. & Lucas, K. (2019). *Communicating at Work (12<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*, McGraw-Hill.

Additional required readings may be posted on Blackboard.

### **V. Assignments**

*All assignment prompts and grading rubrics are posted on Blackboard; assignment summaries are listed below.*

**Introductory Presentation:** This short presentation allows me to see your current public speaking skills.

**Dynamic Duo - Informative Presentation:** This presentation, given in teams of two, will consist of noteworthy current events or new trends. I will approve each topic, as only one team per topic is allowed. You may pick your own partner or I can select one for you.

**Communication in My Career - Informational Interview Project:** This multiple step project integrates writing, interviewing and public speaking skills. For this project, you will interview someone holding a position in the occupational area of your interest about *how a specific communication theory/concept functions in that occupation*. For example, how supportive communication facilitated the interviewee's professional development? This is NOT an interview about the person does at the organization.

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 2- 3 page (double-spaced) report of your experience and orally share key points with your classmates. The interview MUST be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. NO email interviews allowed. This assignment is more time-consuming then it looks. *Start early!*

**Job Package:** Your completed job package is the key to a successful job search. For this assignment, you will locate a job listing, develop a cover letter, resume and obtain references. Be prepared to edit multiple times!

**Team Training Project:** The class will be broken into groups. Each group will be assigned a topic on which to create an interactive training session and supporting instructional materials. Also, each team member will deliver (individually) a sales speech to sell the training materials to a potential client.

**Exams:** Midterm and Final Examinations. Please note the final examination is during the last examination period, Wednesday, May 13, from 2 – 4 pm. NO EARLY EXAMINATIONS ALLOWED PER USC POLICY.

**In-class and Discussion Board Participation:** This is a very interactive class. You will be expected to provide presentation feedback to fellow students. Throughout the semester there will be discussion posts assigned on Blackboard.

	Point Value	% of Final Grade
<b>Formal Oral Presentations (175 points)</b>		
Introductory Speech	5	1%
Dynamic Duo Presentation	20	4%
Sales Pitch for Training Program	25	5%
Team Training Presentation	100	20%
Communication in My Future Occupation – Roundtable Presentation	25	5%
<b>Written Assignments (155 points)</b>		
Job Package	30	6%
Training Module (per Team)	100	20%
Communication in My Future Occupation – Written Paper	25	5%

<b>Exams</b>		
Midterm and Final Examinations (75 points each)	150 points	30%
<b>In-class and Discussion Board Participation</b>	20	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	500	100%

**Grading Scale -- Please note grades are NOT rounded.**

94% to 100%: A	80% to 83.9%: B-	67% to 69.9%: D+
90% to 93.9%: A-	77% to 79.9%: C+	64% to 66.9%: D
87% to 89.9%: B+	74% to 76.9%: C	60% to 63.9%: D-
84% to 86.9%: B	70% to 73.9%: C-	0% to 59.9%: F

### Grading Standards and Rubrics

Are provided for each assignment – see Blackboard.

### Grading Timeline

I make every effort to return exams within one week (after the last student has taken the exam) and most assignments within two weeks. Grading presentations and job packages is very detailed oriented and may require additional time.

### VI. Administrative Information, Policies, and Procedures

- The University of Southern California **prohibits** the awarding of points solely on a student's physical presence in a class. However, they allow the use of unexcused absences and excessive tardiness to count against a grade. This includes leaving class early. **Unexcused absences will lower your final course grade. Your final course grade will be reduced beginning with the 3<sup>rd</sup> unexcused absence.** The amount of the reduction is calculated on the total number of unexcused absences accrued during the semester. Students with 6 or more unexcused absences may receive a failing course grade.
- Emailing me that you will not be in class does not mean it is an excused absence – that is just professional courtesy.
- Arriving late, leaving early, or spending excessive amount of time outside the classroom counts as 1/3 unexcused absence *per incident*.
- **Turn off cell phones/other mobile devices not being used for class activities.** Students who are instant messaging, web surfing, or involved in other similar activities during class will be marked **absent even if physically present in the classroom.**
- In order to make up an assignment (test or paper) without incurring a grade penalty, you must be able to document your absence (e.g., a doctor's note). You must make up any missed assignments within one week of returning to school.
- Your participation in class activities will earn you points toward your final course grade. If you are not in class during these activities (even if you have an excused absence), you will receive no points – and these activities and points *cannot* be made up.
- Reading assignments and discussion posts are to be done prior to class. Chapters are given for each week and should be read before Tuesday's class. Class discussion will affect grades.
- Failure to complete all assignments is grounds for course failure.

- You must pass at least one of the exams (60% or better) in order to pass the course.
- All assignments must be the original work of the student and cannot have been used or currently submitted for any other academic course.

#### VII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

- **Friday, January 31:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001
- **Friday, January 31:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001
- **Tuesday, February 4:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001
- **Friday, February 28:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]
- **Friday, February 28:** Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]
- **Friday, April 3:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

#### VIII. Annenberg Academic Integrity Statement Policy

"The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor."

### University of Southern California's Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

#### a. Academic Conduct

##### *Plagiarism*

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### b. Support Systems

*Counseling and Mental Health* - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)*- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color,

national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

## **About Your Instructor .....**

Colleen M. Keough, Ph.D., teaches courses in conflict management, communication evaluation, management-employee communication, group and team communication, and presentational skills. Her academic research interests include communication in alternative dispute resolution and negotiation, organizational culture, and organizational development. Dr. Keough is interested in engaged scholarship that integrates theoretical research and practical application and draws on her past industry experience as she works with academics to identify practitioner-oriented research projects. She is a past winner of the W. Charles Redding Dissertation Award from the International Communication Association's Organizational Communication Division. (W. Charles Redding is also a USC alumnus.)

Dr. Keough has extensive organizational development and training experience in a variety of for-profit and non-profit organizations. She has spent many years working with managers and senior executives in the areas of

conflict management skills, presentation effectiveness, relationship management, and all aspects of management training. Internationally, she has conducted strategic planning and financial management workshops in Central and Eastern Europe and negotiation workshops for Chinese and Japanese clients.

Dr. Keough recently served on the Board of Directors of the American Spaniel Club and is now on the Strategic Planning Committee. Dr. Keough competes in various dog sports with her cocker spaniels and have earned AKC titles/championships in conformation, agility, obedience, rally, and tracking. Not limited to athletic competitions, her cockers have appeared in a Ralph Lauren ad and on the reality show *America's Next Top Model*.

## Course Schedule

Complete readings prior to the scheduled class. Schedule subject to change.  
Check Blackboard (BB) for updates.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session Topic(s)</u>	<u>Assignment Due/Notes</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Jan. 14	Course Introduction		
	Jan. 16	Communicating At Work		Adler, et al., Ch. 1
2	Jan. 21	Presentation Boot Camp I Organizing your presentation		Adler, et al., Ch. 9 and 10
	Jan. 23	Presentation Boot Camp II Delivery with confidence		Adler, et al., Ch. 11
3	Jan. 28	<u>Introductory Presentations</u>	<b>Presentations</b>	
	Jan. 30	Presentation Boot Camp III Informative presentations/review	<b>Assign Dynamic Duo Presentation</b>	
4	Feb. 4	Culture – Individuals, Organizations, Nations		Adler, et al., Ch. 2
	Feb. 6	Case Analysis	<b>Partner selection and topic proposal due</b>	“The Case of the Aggrieved Expatriate” (BB)

5	Feb. 11	Listening & Feedback		Adler, et al., Ch. 3
	Feb. 13	<i>Work Day for Dynamic Duo Presentations</i>		
6	Feb. 18	<i>Dynamic Duo Presentations</i>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Business casual attire</i>	Meet in ANN 409 A and B
	Feb. 20	Presentation Playback		
7	Feb. 25	Finish Playback Discussion Review for Midterm		
	Feb. 27	Midterm	75 point examination	
8	Mar. 3	Interviewing		Adler, et al., Ch. 6
	Mar. 5	Resumes and Cover Letters		
9	Mar. 10	Resume and Cover Letter Clinic	<i>Bring 2 printed copies of resume and cover letter, as well as a pen with colored ink (not black.)</i>	
	Mar. 12	Mock Interviews		
	Mar. 16 & 18	<b>Spring Break!</b>	<b>Have fun and stay safe!</b>	
10	Mar. 24	Editing Business Writing	Bring final draft of paper for Communication in My Future Occupation	
	Mar. 26	Communication in My Future Occupation – Roundtable Presentation	<b>Roundtable Presentation and Written Paper Due</b>	
11	Mar. 31	Meetings		Adler, et al., Ch. 8
	Apr. 2	Strategies for Effective Persuasive Presentations		1) Revisit Adler, et al., Ch. 9 and 12
12	Apr. 7	TBD	Possible guest speaker	
	Apr. 9	Sales Pitch for Team's Training Program	<b><u>Persuasive Presentations</u></b> <i>Business attire required</i>	Meet in ANN 409 (A, B, C)



13	Apr. 14	<i>Final run through/meet with professor for team training programs</i>		
	Apr. 16		<b>TEAM 1 Presentation</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
14	Apr. 21		<b>TEAM 2 Presentation</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
	Apr. 23		<b>TEAM 3 Presentation</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
15	Apr. 28		<b>TEAM 4 Presentation</b> <i>Business attire required</i>	
	Apr. 30	Review for Final Exam	<b>Training Manuals Due</b>	
	May 13	FINAL EXAM 2 – 4 PM		