



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

COMM 375: Business & Professional Communication SPRING 2020

Instructor: Paula D. (Patnoe) Woodley
Section: MW, 3:30 - 4:50 p.m., ANN 409ABC
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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday
Directly after class or by appointment.
We can also meet over the phone or online
on other days, just get on my schedule.
I look forward to meeting with all of you!

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. While not a prerequisite, it is advised that students entering this course have taken a public speaking class.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, you will have gained the confidence and skill to deliver excellent informative and persuasive presentations, be comfortable and successful in interviews, and write clear and concise business communications (including first-rate cover letters and resumes). Additionally, the course activities, readings and guest speakers will include brainstorming and negotiation skills, dealing with difficult individuals, communicating with empathy and power, and understanding individual and workplace cultures. Combined, and with dedication from the student, these lessons will enhance each student's ability to communicate effectively, act professionally, and thrive in his or her future career. Your assignment prompts will be specific and often complex; I require strict adherence to the specific details of each assignment. For major assignments, a rubric will be provided that details the point allocation and expectations.

III. COURSE NOTES

1. Consistent attendance, punctuality and active class participation are essential to your success and will affect your grade. I expect contributions to the class discussion to be courteous and clearly demonstrate the student has *read the course materials*.
2. Missing class is no more acceptable than it would be to miss work. Excessive absences and tardiness will adversely affect your grade.
3. Many topics are addressed in a single class session. It is **your** responsibility to obtain materials from a missed class from Blackboard and a classmate. If you still have question, I will be happy to assist.
4. Participation points given for class activities cannot be made up if the student misses class.
5. Any student who misses more than *four class sessions* may fail the course.
6. You must **complete all assignments** to pass the course.
7. **Important note:** *Do not rely on class lectures to present the content found in the assigned readings, as I seldom lecture. You are expected to come to class prepared so that the discussions, activities and guest speakers will prove valuable and enrich your learning experience.*

IV. COURSE COMMUNICATION & LAPTOP POLICY

1. **Electronic Devices: *Bring paper and a pen to class.*** In order to create the best possible learning environment, I ask you to please turn off your cell phones and put away your laptops/tablets when you enter our classroom. There may be specific class sessions in which electronic devices will be allowed, and students will be notified in advance.
2. **Blackboard:** All assignments, handouts, slide decks and additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard. Check our class Blackboard site every day for class announcements. I post announcements frequently throughout the semester. The announcements are also sent to your USC email address. You are responsible for keeping up-to-date and aware of all course emails and announcements.
3. **Communication with your instructor:** The best way to communicate with me is through email and text. My cell phone number is on the first page of this document. You may also call me, but it is wise to text me so I know who is calling. I will return all messages and emails within 24 hours, and a normally sooner.
4. Please note that all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

V. REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

- Adler, R. B., Maresh-Fuehrer, M., Elmhorst, J. M. & Lucas, K. (2019). *Communicating at Work (12th Ed.)*, McGraw-Hill.
- Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard or provided in class.

Optional Reading Materials

- Toogood, G. N. (revised 2017). *The New Articulate Executive*, McGraw-Hill.
- Lenciono, P. (2012). *The Advantage*, Jossey-Bass (Wiley).

VI. ASSIGNMENTS

All assignment prompts will be posted on Blackboard; assignment summaries are listed below. While I will discuss each assignment in class, I will not pass out a printed document. It is your responsibility to locate the assignment prompt. As there are several assignments in this course, please look ahead and make note of the due dates.

Introductory Presentation: This short presentation allows me to see your current public speaking skills. Topic and format will be announced in class.

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.

Group Assignment: The class will be broken into three groups (that I select); each group will be provided with a different course topic. All members of the team will develop and prepare an engaging and informative presentation.

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 report of your experience and orally share key points with your classmates. This assignment is more time-consuming than 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!

Persuasive Presentation: You will individually prepare and deliver a presentation with PowerPoint (or similar) to a foundation with the intent of persuading them to fund your charity. As with any persuasive presentation – particularly those requesting donated funds in support of a cause – knowledge of the issue, the environment and the non-profit organization is key.

Exams & Quizzes: There will be two quizzes and final exam that will consist of any combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions taken from your readings, class lectures, discussions, and activities. Additionally, if I determine that students are not completing the assigned readings, you can expect unannounced quizzes.

Discussion Board: The purpose of this discussion is to share relevant experiences with your classmates that we may not have time to discuss in class. For example, you can share what you experienced in an interview, important knowledge or advice you gained from an employer (potential employer), an article you read, or anything else that ties to our course. You can earn participation points for this activity.

VII. GRADING

Constructive feedback is critical to learn and grow. Therefore, I annotate written work quite extensively because your ideas are worth considering, and because your writing technique should be as polished as possible by the time you graduate. Please invest in your own learning and growth by taking the time to reflect on this feedback and incorporating the comments into future work.

a. Grading Standards

1. 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.
2. *Proofread your work!* I mark down for typos of all types.
3. To achieve a “C” or better on written assignments, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with strong concepts, correct grammar, and attention to the smallest details of the prompt. “C” grades are given when the work shows a minimal understanding of the material and a marginal fulfillment of the requirements.
4. A “B” represents above average work that demonstrates adequate insight and effort, very few errors, and close attention to the requirements.
5. An “A” represents excellent work, free of typos, each required elements completed, and thoughtful, meaningful content.
6. Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner, within two weeks of receiving the grade.
 - If you are disappointed by a grade, I would be happy to discuss your work with you and help you improve for the next assignment. Remember, university professors grade based on achievement, not for effort.

b. Grading Timeline

I will make every effort to return exams within one week and most assignments within two weeks. Grading presentations and job packages is very detail-oriented and may require additional time.

c. Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics for all presentations will be posted on Blackboard with the assignment prompt.

d. Assignment Submissions Policy

1. **The deadline for any assignment**, reading, or presentation is at the beginning of the class that it is due. *These deadlines will come up often: do not fall behind or you will have difficulty catching up.*
2. **Late Assignment Consideration:** Extensions are never guaranteed nor should they be expected for any reason (even good ones). I will consider an extension only under the following conditions: the student requests an extension *before* the assignment is due, and the student has a *verifiable* emergency. Please do not rely on my good nature. I insist on fairness for all students, so exceptions and extensions are rare. Should I offer you an extension, please take the new due date seriously.
3. **Missed Presentations or Exams:** The extension policy is the same as it is with late assignments. In most cases, we will not have time for make-up presentations during class time. The student must arrange out of class time to present individually to me or to take your exam during my office hour. Please note if you fail to attend class on the day you are scheduled to present (and have not made prior arrangements with me), you will receive an irrevocable failing grade on the presentation or exam.

e. Grading Scale

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 94% to 100%: A | 80% to 82.5%: B- | 67% to 69.5%: D+ |
| 90% to 93.5%: A- | 77% to 79.5%: C+ | 64% to 66.5%: D |
| 86% to 89.5%: B+ | 73% to 76.5%: C | 60% to 63.5%: D- |
| 83% to 85.5%: B | 70% to 72.5%: C- | 0% to 59%: F |

f. Assignment Point/Percentage Breakdown

| | Point Value | % of Final Grade |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Formal Presentations | | |
| Introductory | 10 | 2% |
| Group Project | 50 | 10% |
| Informative Presentation | 60 | 12% |
| Persuasive Presentation | 80 | 16% |
| | | |
| Written Assignments | | |
| Job Package | 50 | 10% |
| Informational Interview | 50 | 10% |
| | | |
| Exam & Quizzes | 150 | 30% |
| | | |
| Participation Points | 50 | 10% |
| | | |
| TOTAL | 500 | 100% |
| | | |

VIII. SYLLABUS

Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled.

Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability. Check Blackboard (BB) frequently for newly assigned readings, recorded lectures, PowerPoint decks, and announcements.

| Week | Date | Session Topic(s) | Assignment Due/Notes | Readings |
|-------------|----------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Jan. 13 | Course Introduction | | |
| | Jan. 15 | Presentation Boot Camp I Organizing your presentation | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 1, 9 2) Check BB for readings and class handouts |
| 2 | Jan. 20 | <i>Martin Luther King Day</i> | NO CLASS | |
| | Jan. 22 | <u>Introductory Presentations</u> | Presentations | |
| 3 | Jan. 27 | Presentation Boot Camp II Delivery with confidence | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 10, 11 |
| | Jan. 29 | Resumes | Partner selection and topic proposal for informative presentation due | 1) Adler, et al., pgs. 408-421 2) Check BB for readings and class handouts |
| 4 | Feb. 3 | Presentation Boot Camp III Informative presentations/review | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 12, plus 9, 10, 11 (review) |
| | Feb. 5 | Writing for Business + Cover Letters | Online writing exercises <i>After you complete the exercises, notify PW in an email (before the start of class) with the subject line:</i> Completed Writing Exercises | 1) Adler, et al., Appendix II, pgs. 400-423 2) OWL Business Writing handouts (BB) |
| 5 | Feb. 10 | <u>Resume & Cover Letter Clinic</u> | <i>Bring 2 <u>printed</u> copies of your resume and a pen with colored ink (not black). Cover letters are not required.</i> | |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Feb. 12 | <i>Job Talk or Activity TBD</i> | Quiz #1 | |
| 6 | Feb. 17 | Presidents' Day | NO CLASS | |
| | Feb. 19 | <u>Informative Presentations (1)</u> | Presentations <i>Business casual attire</i> | |
| 7 | Feb. 24 | <u>Informative Presentations (2)</u> | Presentations <i>Business casual attire</i> | |
| | Feb. 26 | Interviewing | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 5, 6, Appendix I, pgs. 390-399 2) See all articles in the Interviewing folder on BB |
| 8 | Mar. 2 | Working in Groups & Teams | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 7 |
| | Mar. 4 | Interpersonal Skills | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 5 |
| 9 | Mar. 9 | <i>Job Talk or Activity TBD</i> | Quiz #2 | |
| | Mar. 11 | <u>Mock Interviews</u> with Special Guest Interviewers | Job Package <i>Post to Blackboard</i> <i>Bring your resume.</i> <i>Business attire required!</i> | 1) Practice with the Interviewing worksheet and review materials from lecture and readings |
| | Mar. 16 & 18 | <i>Spring Break!</i> | Have fun and stay safe! | |
| 10 | Mar. 23 | Networking | | 1) Articles on BB in Networking folder |
| | Mar. 25 | Communication, Cultures and Work | TEAM 1 Presentation | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 2 |
| 11 | Mar. 30 | Workplace Communication I: Listening | TEAM 2 Presentation | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 3 |

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Apr. 1 | Workplace Communication II: Verbal & Nonverbal Messages | TEAM 3 Presentation | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 4 |
| 12 | Apr. 6 | Meetings | | 1) Adler, et al., Ch. 8 |
| | Apr. 8 | Strategies for Effective Persuasive Presentations | | 1) Revisit Adler, et al., Ch. 9 and 12 (persuasive presentations) |
| 13 | Apr. 13 | <i>1-on-1 meetings w/ PW all day</i> | Schedule/Location TBA | |
| | Apr. 15 | Problem-solving, brainstorming, and creativity techniques | | |
| 14 | Apr. 20 | <u>Persuasive Presentations</u> | Presentations <i>Business attire required</i> | |
| | Apr. 22 | <u>Persuasive Presentations</u> | Presentations <i>Business attire required</i> | |
| 15 | Apr. 27 | <i>Your Personal Brand</i> Special Guest: Michele Lando CEO/Skilset Communications | | |
| | Apr. 29 | <u>Informational Interview</u> | Informational Interview <i>Post to Blackboard</i> <i>Brief oral and written report</i> | |
| | Friday, May 8 | FINAL EXAM 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. | | |

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The Annenberg School of Communication & Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words is plagiarism; it is a serious academic offense met 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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct. The policies, procedures, and guidelines 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, consult with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

X. ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Any student 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.

XI. 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

XII. STUDENT SAFETY & SUPPORT

The University cares about your mental and physical health and well being. The list below provides contact information for services should you need them.

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
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

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

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, 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

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

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

uscса.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

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, 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

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

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.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XII. ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Paula Woodley is a 16-year adjunct professor at the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism and the Keck School of Medicine. Her academic focus is entertainment-education, social marketing and health communication. Additionally, Woodley is an award-winning marketing communications consultant that provides nonprofit and for profit organizations with consumer research, marketing strategy, creative production and entertainment-education outreach. Paula is also a communications coach and workshop leader helping individuals and organizations communicate with empathy and clarity.