

CMGT 503: Strategic Communication Consulting

4 Units

Spring 2020 – Wednesday – 6:30PM—9:20PM

Section: 21706

Location: ASC 204

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Weintraub

Office: ASC 321D

Office Hours: Wednesdays 5:00—6:00 and by appointment

Contact Info: weintrau@usc.edu

I. Course Description

This course focuses on the specific skills needed for strategic and organizational communication consulting.

Communication consulting is different from strategic or management consulting although communication consultants often work to support the implementation of the strategies of management consultants. Communication consulting often involves the actual writing of communication media, but it also includes such diverse elements as meeting design and facilitation, organizational communication, executive coaching, strategic communication analysis and messaging, large-scale communication event planning and execution, and training.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand the consulting processes and skills for successful communication consulting.
- Understand and be able to use the basic communication consulting methodologies.
- Be able to use both academic and original research to create recommendations for a consulting engagement.
- Design and conduct a strategic facilitation intervention.
- Understand and be able to determine the consulting approaches and requirements for a specific engagement.

III. Course Notes

This class is designed to facilitate learning-by-doing. It is as much a workshop as it is a graduate class. While the professor will present material throughout the semester, much of your learning in this class will come from your consulting engagement. You will find at times that the work you are doing for your client will require you to read ahead in the text, do outside research, or meet with the professor. You will learn as much or more from your individual and group work as you do from your instructor.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Participation 5%

Each student must contribute to the learning in this class. In most class sessions, you must speak, ask questions, and perhaps, argue respectfully. To do so, you must prepare well: read the assigned materials before class; read, view or listen to other relevant and interesting content; think. Staying silent in class is poor performance for a graduate level course.

Judgment of participation is based on the instructors' aggregate impressions gained throughout the semester. If you participate frequently and enthusiastically, you will earn an "A" grade. You will not earn the full score by merely attending classes. Simply attending classes and only occasionally participating will result in a mediocre grade. If you are frequently absent, disengaged or disrespectful, you will earn zero.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

There are six components of the final grade:

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| • Final team consulting project | 30% | 300points |
| • Final project peer review evaluations | 10% | 100 points |
| • Four 500-word reading reaction papers | 20% | 200 points (5% / 50 points each including one rewrite) |
| • Applied research mid-term paper | 20% | 200 points |
| • Short facilitation or training project | 15% | 150 points |
| • Class participation | 5% | 50points |

Total 100% 1000 points

b. Grading Scale

94% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 92%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Excellent writing is a requirement for this class and for consulting in general. Following the writing prompts exactly is a requirement. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. The Literature Application paper must be in APA format. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. Reaction papers do not have to be in APA style but must use citations. Incorrect citations will result in a lower grade. Written work will be evaluated on both substance and style. The latter covers organization, structure, and grammar.

d. Grading Timeline

Assignments will be returned with feedback via blackboard and/or email typically within 10-14 days. If you would like clarification on the feedback, please wait 24 hours (to cool off) before contacting the instructor, but please do make contact within one week.

e. Assignments

GROUP PROJECTS:

The Group Project will be a complete consulting project providing consulting services to an organization. You will pick your own teams. Teams will be made up of no fewer than five and no more than six people. The client can be a for-profit or a non-profit entity. The professor will invite potential clients to pitch to the class on the second night of the semester. The consulting engagement will encompass all of the steps of a consulting engagement: problem identification, proposal, statement of work, budgeting (although no fees will be collected), assessment and engagement, research (including original research as well as academic literature), implementation plan, and final report binder. **Groups will turn in the proposal, statement of work and budget the 5th week of class, September 22. A 15-minute status presentation will be due November 3. The final report is due at the end of the semester. There will be both an oral presentation and a binder. All members** of the project team must participate in every element of the consulting project. Between the status report and the final oral presentation, every member of the group must have participated in presenting. Each of these segments will be included in the grading of the final project deliverable.

Group Project **presentations** will be due during the last two weeks of the semester.

Each group will produce a **project binder** and a **20-minute presentation**. The binder will include the following sections:

1. A 10-page engagement summary that describes the engagement from beginning to end. How did it evolve? What did you learn? What was difficult? How did you engage with the clients? What were your insights? What do you think of your ability to assist the client?
2. The initial proposal and any subsequent amendments
3. Statement of work including all changes over time
4. Estimated and actual final budget (this part is not given to the client)
5. An assessment /research plan
6. Time sheets
7. Meeting notes (including teleconferences)
8. Research materials and results (this will include summaries of the academic literature results from the individual mid-terms as well as the original research conducted by the team). You do not need to include the mid-term papers.
9. All client communications, including emails
10. Collateral materials produced for the client
11. Any other material you deem necessary

Presentation dates will be assigned randomly the night of the status reports. All students are expected to be in class for both presentation nights. Absence will be reflected in the participation grade.

Group Projects will be graded upon the proposal, problem analysis, engagement management, research, consulting skill application, final oral presentation, and presentation materials. Creativity is always a plus. Each member is expected to participate fully in all aspects of the project, including the final presentation.

Note: If a group is having difficulty with a member who is not participating fully, you are expected first to attempt to work the problem yourselves. If this is not successful, you are expected to bring the issue to professor immediately. Waiting to bring this to the instructor's attention until the end of the semester will impact the grades of the entire team.

LITERATURE APPLICATION PAPER—MIDTERM:

This is an individual assignment based on your consulting team project. You will write a 5-7 page paper drawing from two (no more) **peer-reviewed academic articles** to address one of the research questions that need to be answered for your client engagement. Each team member will have a different research question. The team's research questions must be approved at the same time by the professor. Basically, you are looking for theory, research, and evidence to inform your client recommendations.

The paper will utilize research from **peer reviewed academic journals only**. *The paper will be written in APA format and failure to follow APA style guidelines will result in a lowered grade.*

REACTION PAPERS:

Each reaction paper should be 500 words, Ariel 12-point type, and 1-inch margins, double-spaced. The paper must be submitted via **Blackboard Turnitin by 6:30PM** the night it is due. You do not need to use full APA formatting (i.e., no title page required, no running head) but you must use APA style for in-text citations. If you need a quick reference guide for APA style citations, please use this website:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

It is important that you do your in-text citations correctly as this may affect your reaction paper grade.

Do remember to put your name on the first page.

One reaction paper will be required to be re-written after you have received graded feedback from the professor. **You will submit to Turnitin both the original paper and the revised paper as one file.**

Following the prompt for each reaction paper is required.

Reaction paper 1 Due Feb 5

Using chapters 5 & 6 from DeWine, chapter 5 from Stroh, and chapter 5 in Waldeck and Seibold, how would you explain to a client the importance and the value of research for identifying communication issues and problems and for determining causes and potential solutions? **This is not to be written for your client.** It is a description of the arguments and approaches you would take. You must cite from at least two of the authors.

Reaction paper 2):

Using the Block Flawless Consulting Fieldbook & Companion, compare and contrast two approaches that could be used in the work you do for your client (NOTE: there must be variety among your team members). This means taking two different approaches from two different chapters and analyzing how this **might** be used (not that you will necessarily use it) to address your client's engagement issue.

Reaction paper 3

Using the readings to date, what do you think have been the biggest challenges with your client engagement and how does this inform your perspective on consulting in general? Cite from at least two of the texts.

Reaction paper 4 Revision

Good writing requires the ability to revise based upon feedback. Choose one of your reaction papers and rewrite it taking into account the comments from the professor. You may choose any of your reaction papers. **You must include the original paper with the revision as one file.**

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

All written assignments must be turned in electronically via Blackboard TurnItIn according to due dates specified on the syllabus. Late delivery of assignments is unprofessional and will incur stiff penalties (e.g., 10% if delivered after time due, but on the same day, 20% penalty if delivered the following day, etc.). All papers must be in MS Word. All slides must be in PPT.

VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

ALL BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE ON AMAZON
You may be able to find a number of them used.

Author: Sue DeWine

Title: The Consultant's Craft: Improving Organizational Communication, any edition

ISBN: 0312248245

This book is out of print but is still available on Amazon used for under \$3.00. Additionally, the instructor has a number of copies available for loan.

Author: Ingrid Bens
Title: Facilitation at a Glance
ISBN: 1576811379

Author: Frank J. Barrett and Ronald E. Fry
Title: Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity
ISBN: 078802163X

Author: William E. Arnold and Lynne McClure
Title: Communication Training and Development 2nd Edition
ISBN 088133877X

Author: Peter Block
Title: Flawless Consulting
ISBN 0470620749

Author: Peter Block
Title: The Flawless Consulting Field Book & Companion
ISBN: 0787948047

Editors: Jennifer H. Waldeck, David R. Seibold
Title: Consulting That Matters
ISBN: 9781433127694

Author: Linda K. Stroh, PhD
Title: The Basic Principles of Effective Consulting
ISBN: 978113854287

IX. Laptop Policy

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.

X. 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

XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *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.*

Week 1, January 15—Client Pitches and Class Overview

Consulting Client Pitches

Potential clients will be present in class to pitch their projects to you. After the pitches, you will have a chance to speak with the clients and ask them questions. Please e-mail the professor the names of your group members along with your first choice for consulting projects **as soon as possible** so that assignments of groups and clients can be confirmed, and you can schedule meetings for the following week. Each group should have **no fewer than 4 and no more than 5 students**. As there is a limit to the size of each consulting team, please be aware that you may not be assigned to your first choice.

Required Readings:

DeWine, Sue, *The Consultant's Craft: Improving Organizational Communication 2nd edition*, Part 1: Chapters 1 and 2, pp.2-35, Chapter 20, pp. 434-459

Block, Peter, *Flawless Consulting*, Preface to 3rd Edition, Chapters 1-2 (p. 2-35), 7 (p. 121-123—focus on the table)

Waldeck and Seibold, *Consulting That Matters*, Part 1 p. 1-47)

NOTE: You should read these chapters *before* the first class.

◆ Week 2, January 22— Getting the Work

Required Readings:

Proposals and Problem Identification

DeWine, Chapters 3, 4 and 5, pp.36 - 82.

Arnold, William E., and McClure, Lynne, *Communication Training and Development 2nd Edition*, Chapter 5 pp. 65-80 and Appendix, pp. 167-186.

Block, Flawless Consulting Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14

Waldeck and Seibold, Part 2 p. 47 –127)

Stroh, Chapter 3 and 4

Begin reading Block's Field Book

◆ **Week 3, Jan 29 — Problem Identification**

First Draft of proposal due. Instructor will meet with each team to give feedback.

Required Reading

De Wine, Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 83-141, and Chapter 9, pp. 187-205, Chapter 17, pp. 384-401, Chapter 19, pp. 418-433.

Arnold and McClure, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, pp.1-107 and 10, 11, 12, pp. 135-166

Block, Chapter 19 pp. 327-342

Stroh, Chapter 11 pp. 166-170

Block, Field Book

◆ **Week 4, February 5 — Creating A Research Plan**

◆ **Guest Lecturer Dr. Allie Noyes, Asst Professor LMU**

Required Reading

DeWine, chapters 5 & 6

Stroh, chapter 5, Waldeck

Seibold, chapter 5.

◆ **Week 5, February 12 — Writing and Editing as a Consulting Competency**

◆ **Guest Lecturer: Francesca Gacho, Annenberg Graduate Writing Coach**

Draft of Reaction Paper 1 in hard copy to be brought to class

Bring 2 copies

The assignment will be due on February 19. This is an opportunity to learn how to effectively self-edit.

- ◆ **Week 6, February 19 — Strategic Communication**
- ◆ **Final Proposals Due 6:30 PM in hard copy (Not via Turnitin). Each team will meet with the professor to receive feedback on the proposal.**
- ◆ **Reaction Paper 1 due 6:30 PM via Turnitin**

Required Readings:

De Wine, Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 83-141, and Chapter 9, pp. 187-205, Chapter 17, pp. 384-401, Chapter 19, pp. 418-433.

Arnold and McClure, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, pp.1-107 and 10, 11, 12, pp. 135-166

Block, Chapter 19 pp. 327-342

Stroh, Chapters 7 and 8

- ◆ **Week 7, February 26 — Change Management Communication**

Required Readings will be posted on Blackboard

- ◆ **Week 8, March 4 — Presenting the Results**
- ◆ **Reaction Paper 2 due 6:30 PM via Turnitin**

Required Readings will be posted on Blackboard

- ◆ **Week 9, March 11 — Training, Development and Facilitation: Critical Consulting Competencies**

Assigned: Training and facilitation projects

Dr. Weintraub will lecture on critical consulting competencies, including training and facilitation. The lecture as well as the required readings will help you with your training and facilitation projects, which will be assigned in class tonight.

Required Readings:

Bens, Ingrid, *Facilitation at a Glance (Reference Text)*

Frank J. Barrett and Ronald E. Fry, *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity*

Block, chapters 12 and 19

Waldeck and Seibold, chapters 11 and 12

DeWine, Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 83-141, and Chapter 9, pp. 187-205, Chapter 17, pp. 384-401, Chapter 19, pp. 418-433.

Arnold and McClure, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, pp.1-107 and 10, 11, 12, pp. 135-166

- ◆ **March 17 — Spring Break**
- ◆ **Week 10, March 25 — Training Teams Present**
- ◆ **Week 11, April 1 — Facilitation Teams Present**
- ◆ **Week 12, April 8 — Crisis Management**
- ◆ **Reaction Paper 3 Due at 6:30 PM via Turnitin**

Note: This is the first night of Passover and for those observing is an excused absence. The paper, however, is still due.

- ◆ **Week 13, April 15 — Consulting Project Workshop**
- ◆ **Week 14, April 22 — Consulting Team Status Reports**

Each team will present a 12—15-minute summary of their consulting engagement. This must include:

- Client problem statement
- Summary of literature application results—all team members
- Research plan and status (if completed, present results and implications)
- Successes
- Problems, Issues or Concerns

- ◆ **Week 15, April 29 — Consulting Project Workshop**
- ◆ **Finals Night May 6— Group Project Presentations**
- ◆ All Students Must Attend
- ◆ All clients will attend
- ◆ Class will begin an hour early on this night. You have fifteen weeks to make whatever arrangements are required to be in class at 5:30 this one night.
- ◆ Binder due via Blackboard by 11:59PM.

XII. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

All communication will be to your USC email account. I will endeavor to reply to all emails within 24 hours.

You are likely to have issues with your consulting engagements. As soon as these become noticeable, you and your team are encouraged meet with the instructor. Sometimes the issue will be around a topic not yet covered in class, sometimes it will be a client specific problem. These are usually too complex to discuss after class, so do make an appointment or come to office hours,

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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. Support Systems

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/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.

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.

XIII. About Your Instructor

Dr. Weintraub is currently a Clinical Professor of Communication at USC in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. She directs both the on-campus and on-line Master of Communication Management program. She teaches courses on organizational and strategic communication, consulting and change management.

Dr. Weintraub is a recognized expert in the fields of strategic communication, leadership and organizational communication and presentation coaching. She provides consulting and executive seminar services to organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Her clients have included the Los Angeles Times, MGM, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, Fox, AECOM, American Cancer Society, DC Public Schools, the US Navy, US European, African and Pacific Commands, the Keck Medical School, the Viterbi School of Engineering, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and representatives from both state and provincial governments of China.

She has spent more than 45 years in the field of strategic communication, facilitation, change management, presentation development, executive coaching and organizational behavior. Prior to coming to the University of Southern California, she was on the communication faculty at Cal Poly Pomona, Director of Corporate Communication at Hughes Electronics and a senior consultant at Towers Perrin.

Dr. Weintraub received her bachelor's degree from UCLA and her master's and Ph.D. degrees from USC. She roots for whomever is winning at half time.

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