

Spring 2021 – Mondays – 6:30-9 p.m.

Section: 21530D

Location: Online

Instructor: Ashley Owen

Office: Zoom

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 6-8 pm PT, or by appointment

Contact Info: ashleyow@usc.edu

I. Course Description

PR 598 is an improvisational leadership workshop designed to inspire students to become successful leaders. It is focused on developing four key competencies necessary for future leaders in the PR/Communications field – **Confidence, Creativity, Curiosity and Courage.**

Much of the course will be experiential, encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and explore new challenges. Based upon the landmark book, *Make Your Bed*, excerpts from Admiral William H. McRaven's landmark commencement speech that went viral with 10 million views, students will be guided through the basic but challenging steps of what it means to be a leader. Along the way, they will examine the latest leadership research conducted by sociologist Brené Brown; view leaderships issues from around the world; and hear tips from successful alums, all while exploring their own potential to lead. By the end of the class, they will gain important skills to further their careers and enrich their lives.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

In this class you will learn how to:

- Make decisions when you don't have all the information you need
- Be more creative in your approach to solving problems
- Enlist an entourage of people who will support your ambitions
- Engage with senior executives to advance your ideas and careers
- Actively listen and understand key stakeholders
- Deliver excellent customer service
- Negotiate for yourself and for your company
- Manage and motivate diverse teams through complex projects and difficult crises
- Muster the courage you need to be successful in work and in life

This course is divided into three key modules: Anatomy of a Leader, Building Your Leadership Profile and Behold The Leader: You! Here's how we will approach them:

III. Description of Assignments

The class will include weekly lectures and readings from several sources and several written assignments; however, much of this course will be taught through experiential learning. These experiences will incorporate different themes and challenges. In addition, there will be seven major assignments to help you practice your newfound skills. A key element of the course will be your own internal reflection/vulnerability on various aspects of the course, which will culminate in your final project.

Here is a list of the assignments that will be required in this course.

Vulnerability Moments – Every other week you will craft a description of an experience that you’ve tried for the first time. Then explain what you learned from that experience that might be applicable to your future career and life. One to three of these will be discussed each week but you’ll never know when you’ll be called upon to reveal your latest vulnerability. These should be crafted in the form of blog posts.

You Can’t Go It Alone – Create a diagram or infographic of all of the people you know who might possibly be able to help you advance your career. They can be friends, acquaintances, teachers, co-workers, and family members. Then show how they are connected with other individuals that you don’t know but who might be in a position to also advance your career. Expand your diagram as far as you can and explain how you would go about making these connections.

Having Tough Conversations – We will explore how you learn to trust others, gain your colleagues’ and clients’ trust as well as how to hold difficult conversations and disagree without being disagreeable. Through various prompts, you will examine issues like having a conversation with your boss, dealing with a teammate who isn’t performing, or simply disagreeing with someone’s idea. You will determine how to navigate each situation in a manner that both builds trust and provides clarity.

Taking Values from BS to Behavior – We will do an in class exercise to determine your two core values – the beliefs that are most important to you and guide you in work and life. But determining what your core values are is just the first part of the challenge. With this assignment, you’ll be tasked with outlining what behaviors support your values and how you know when you’re showing up in a way that’s out of line with your values.

How Failure Makes You Stronger - PR and advertising practitioners continually face failure: losing a prized client; missing out on a new account (sometimes by a thread!); the client or boss shuts down your idea; not getting the job or promotion; not getting to work on the account or project you really, really wanted to be a part of. Hold onto your hats as we delve into real-life scenarios and you have to find your way back.

Thinking and Making on the Spot - Wait for it!

Final Project - Each member of the class will use the experiences and information they have gained throughout the semester to create a presentation profiling their own leadership style and abilities. The presentation should be no longer than five minutes and should contain personal insights about your talents and passions. Imagine it as an audition to be a CEO, not an entry-level employee. It should be creative, courageous and engaging. These will be shown in class and evaluated by the other students. Think of it as a TedTalk that showcases YOU! Your “presentation” may take the form of a podcast or video or live presentation or you may pick the medium that best demonstrates your leadership style and capabilities!

IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
In class activities and participation	15%
Leadership Building assignments (6)	40%
Midterm Exercise	15%
Final multimedia project – Personal Leadership assessment	30%
TOTAL	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: 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

Improvisational Leadership

“A” projects will demonstrate creativity, courage and the willingness to experiment. Assignments should be well written with no grammatical errors, compelling visuals and deep personal insights.

“B” projects will demonstrate thoughtfulness and creativity. Assignments should be well written with strong design elements.

“C” projects will demonstrate less creativity and an average level of passion and experimentation. Assignments will demonstrate average writing and design.

“D” projects will demonstrate a lack of interest in the topic and poor execution of the written and visual aspects.

“F” projects will be based on lack of participation in the assignments and/or the weekly discussions.

Writing Assignments

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

“D” projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in.

V. Assignment Submission Policy

Weekly assignments will be uploaded to a shared site prior to each class meeting and will be presented in class. Written assignments will be submitted online. Students should be prepared to present every assignment to the rest of the class visually and verbally. Plus, there will be a series of quizzes based on the weekly subject matter.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The primary “text” for the class will be “Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life and Maybe the World,” by Admiral William H. McRaven, (U.S. Navy Retired) derived from his riveting commencement speech to University of Texas grads which went viral with 10 million views. Also sprinkled throughout the syllabus are posted required readings from the landmark “Dare to Lead” by Brené Brown. Lastly, additional relevant TedTalks, leadership articles and case studies will be assigned throughout the class.

VII. 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 Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](#) website.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

Friday, January 24: Last day to register and add classes for Session 00S1

Friday, January 24: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, January 28: last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 21: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

IX. 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. It is common for this course to stray in different directions depending upon breaking news, the pace at which students learn various methodologies and/or the availability of focus group facilities/guest speakers. You will be given ample notice of any changes.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 1/18	MLK Day - No class or assignments today!		
Week 2 Date: 1/25	<p>Explain class structure and assignments</p> <p>What leadership <i>Isn't</i> An overview of leadership perceptions and how they do (and don't) define what it means to be a leader today.</p> <p>Conduct initial personal leadership assessment</p>	<p>Read: McRaven Chapter 1: “Start your day with a task completed” and Chapter 2: “You Can’t Go it Alone”</p> <p>Watch Brené Brown’s TED Talk: “The power of vulnerability”</p>	<p>To help determine your leadership style, you may take the following characteristics test: https://www.crystalknows.com/</p> <p>Begin documenting your new experiences/vulnerability moments</p>

Week 3 Date: 2/1	Establishing Your Leadership Style Class discussion: what were your takeaways from McRaven and Brene Brown? How might they shape your own leadership style? Breakout session: You'll unite in groups of <i>like</i> leadership styles then craft responses to questions posed by your professor. Each team will be expected to "chart" their discussion using any visual tool they choose. Vulnerability moment	Read McRaven Chapter 3 "Only the Size of Your Heart Matters" and Chapter 4 "Life's Not Fair—Drive On!"	
Week 4 Date: 2/8	Leadership Panel A distinguished panel of alums who are leaders in their field/organization will discuss leadership characteristics AND what challenges they've overcome (they have been given "Life's Not Fair – Drive On!" as their prompt.) Vulnerability moment	Read McRaven Chapter 6 "You Must Dare Greatly" and Chapter 8 "Rise to the Occasion"	
Week 5 Date: 2/15	President's Day - No class or assignments today!		
Week 6 Date: 2/22	Thinking and making on the spot Every leader must be ready to improvise and they often have very little time to	Read McRaven Chapter 7 "Stand Up to the Bullies"	Create your "Don't Go It Alone" diagram - Due 3/1

	<p>think about decisions or assignments. Tonight, we'll be testing your ability to think on the spot: Wait for it!</p> <p>Vulnerability moment</p>		
<p>Week 7 Date: 3/1</p>	<p>Teamwork We talk about it all the time; but what about your network beyond the business place?</p> <p>Each student will present her/his "Don't Go It Alone" diagram</p> <p>Vulnerability moment</p>	<p>Review Brené's "Living in Accordance with your Values (even if it's difficult)" posted on BB</p>	
<p>Week 8 Date: 3/8</p>	<p>Determining Your Core Values We can all rattle off a list of beliefs and attributes that are important to us, but what happens when you try to narrow it down to two? What do values matter anyway? How do we use them to help guide the decisions we make?</p> <p>We'll workshop these in class and then apply them to real life scenarios.</p> <p>Vulnerability moment</p>	<p>Read McRaven Chapter 9 "Give People Hope" and Chapter 10 "Never, Ever Quit!"</p>	
<p>Week 9 Date: 3/15</p>	<p>Midterm Exercise</p>		<p>In preparation for Week 8, Read McRaven Chapter 5 "Failure Can Make You Stronger"</p> <p>Also, review Brené's "Learning to Bounce Back from Failure" posted on BB</p>

Week 10 Date: 3/22	How Failure Makes You Stronger As a leader you will fail more often than you will win. We will delve into real life scenarios of failures, talk about the importance of failure, and determine the ways in which we bounce back from them. Vulnerability moment	Review Brené's "Trust Building" posted on Blackboard Read "Radical Candor" excerpts posted on BB	How failure makes you stronger assignment - due 3/29
Week 11 Date: 3/29	Building Trust with Tough Conversations Failure Exercise Reveals by each student! As a leader, it's essential to build a foundation of trust with the people around you. The hard part is that you'd got to do it while navigating difficult situations and tough conversations. We'll explore the notion of "ruinous empathy" in the workplace and elsewhere. In Class Exercise: Break out into pairs and have tough conversations based on prompts	Read: Reinventing the workplace for greater gender diversity by McKinsey & Company, posted on BB	Tough conversation assignment – due 4/5
Week 12 Date: 4/5	Managing Diverse Teams One of the most important roles of a leader is being able to get the best out of everyone on their	View the following Global Alliance Podcast available at www.globalalliancepr.org and searching the Best of Education tab by title.	

	<p>team. Part of that is being cognizant of diverse backgrounds, personalities, and perspectives</p> <p>Breakout Exercise: We'll break out into groups based on your Enneagram types that were revealed earlier in the semester and determine how you would motivate team members of opposite personality types.</p> <p>Vulnerability moments</p>	<p>Delivering the Right Message <i>Eugene Grey</i>, FPRII FEIC FIIC, Director of Education of European Institute of Communications (Belgium)</p>	
<p>Week 13 Date: 4/12</p>	<p>Look to the Experts Part of bring a leader is continuously looking for ways to improve and grow. One way to do that is to look to mentors and/or experts in the space for inspiration. At the beginning of class, we will examine the careers of famous leaders in their fields who initially failed, including Michael Jordan, J. K. Rowling, Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg!</p> <p>Exercise: We'll break out into groups and you'll be tasked with choosing a leader, researching them, analyzing what makes them a great leader</p>	<p>View Global Alliance podcast:</p> <p>It's Only a Crisis if You Panic <i>Benjamin Thiele-Long</i>, Cognito (USA) PRSA</p>	
<p>Week 14 Date: 4/19</p>	<p>We'll discuss the final presentations and</p>	<p>To inspire you for your final presentations, we've provided you with a solid list of</p>	<p>Begin working on your final assignments – due 5/10</p>

	begin preparation in class 2-3 person to share vulnerability moment	leadership TedTalks: https://www.inspiringleadershipnow.com/best-ted-talks-on-leadership/	
Week 15 Date: 4/26	Improvisation Leadership in the PR and Advertising space involves speaking with authority about a variety of topics, but the very nature of leadership means you don't always have a ton of time to get up to speed. Exercise: Show us your stuff! Each student will be given a topic and 10 minutes to bone up on it, then present it as if he/she were an expert.		Continue working on your final presentation due 5/10
Final Exam Period 5/10, 7-9 p.m.	Final Presentation PR 598 Presents: A series of TedTalks Starring. . .YOU!		

X. Policies and Procedures

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

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.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

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

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

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

dsp.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

dsp.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.

XI. About Your Instructor

Ashley is the VP of Strategy at Ayzenberg, an integrated advertising agency located in Pasadena, where she leads a team of analysts and strategists. Throughout her advertising career, she has worked with a variety of brands ranging from nonprofit to start-up to Fortune 500. She is an alum of Annenberg's Strategic Public Relations M.A. program and is thrilled to be back to share her passion for leadership (and to learn from you too).