

## ALI 270

### Oral Skills for International Teaching Assistants

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Office Hours: By appointment

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

IN THIS COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Improve overall oral fluency in English
- Learn the appropriate language choices and develop the communication skills needed for effective interaction with students in the classroom, lab, or office
- Strengthen ability to present information clearly through presentations and participation in discussions
- Develop awareness of language and pronunciation problems and develop strategies to improve comprehensibility
- Increase awareness of American culture in and outside the classroom

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to help international teaching assistants (ITAs) develop the specific language skills needed to carry out teaching duties smoothly and effectively. We will study the skills necessary to make presentations, lead discussions, hold office hours, and most importantly, interact effectively with students.

We will also practice certain aspects of American English pronunciation and engage in other speaking activities to develop oral fluency. A further purpose of this course is to provide a supportive environment for you to learn and share with each other as you grow as a teacher.

#### MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Presentation 1 (10%)
- Midterm Mini-lesson (25%)
- Term Presentation (25%)
- Observations/Mock Office Hour (10%)
  - Video-recorded sessions for ITAs w/ labs/discussions/office hours duties
  - Mock Office Hour for ITAs with no teaching duties
- Homework, Class Participation, uSC Program Participation (30%)

## MATERIALS

- ALI 270 Course Reader (in Bookstore week 3- Please wait for instructor notice.)
- Blackboard & online resources

## IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

An essential part of this course is self-evaluation and peer-evaluation. Please note that **ALL** major presentations will be recorded on Zoom and accessible to students for self and peer review. You will watch your video and consider your strengths and weaknesses, then evaluate your presentations (and often a peer's) by completing an evaluation form and submitting it to Blackboard. Finally, you will have individualized consultations with your instructor to discuss evaluation feedback following Presentation 1, as well as your midterm and final presentations.

### ➤ **Presentation 1 (Day 2 of class)**

A five-minute presentation on why the course you have been assigned as a TA is important, and how your background and prior education make you qualified to be the course TA. The presentation needs to show good preparation and an awareness of your audience. *Please note:* If you do not have teaching duties (or do not know your TA duties yet), for the purposes of this presentation, you can “assume” you are a TA of a course you are familiar with in your department (additional details to be provided).

### ➤ **Midterm Mini-lesson**

A 10-minute “lesson”, during which you will try to employ effective teaching strategies to teach a concept related to your field to the non-specialist audience (PPT or whiteboard required).

### ➤ **Final Term Presentation**

A six- to seven-minute presentation on a term from your department's ITA Exam Terms list. This is an opportunity to show the improvement in your oral communication skills over the course of the semester, applying the acquired language & pronunciation components as well as effective teaching techniques (PPT or whiteboard required).

## Other Course Requirements & Assignments

### “uSC” Program

The “uSC” (Undergraduate Student Consultant) Program offers ITAs a great opportunity to practice English with a native speaker outside the classroom. You will be assigned a uSC with whom you will meet (two hours per week, starting from **week four of classes, for two hours per week, until the last day of class**). These meetings provide a chance

for you to work on teaching skills, fluency, slang, conversation, and your overall oral communication skills. More information on the program will be provided prior to meeting your uSC.

➤ **Observations (For TAs with teaching duties this semester)**

If you are leading a lab, discussion or holding office hours, you will be observed while teaching or holding office hours for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. You will watch your observation recording and complete a self-evaluation form. Feedback on the observation recording will be discussed during your midterm consultation.

➤ **Recorded “Mock” Office Hour (For TAs with no teaching duties this semester)**

For TAs not assigned teaching duties this semester, this assignment will be completed with your uSC. You will record approximately ten minutes of your interaction with your uSC, as you explain a concept related to your field. Additional details will be provided.

➤ **Consultations**

During the semester, you will meet with your instructor for three individual consultations, to discuss goals, progress, presentation/observation feedback, as well as uSC/ITA program activities. You are responsible for submitting all required forms and documents to your instructor PRIOR to the consultation, by the specified due dates. Failure to submit documents in a timely manner may result in a  *canceled consultation*  and a full class absence (2 hours). It is your responsibility to contact your instructor should you have trouble accessing documents necessary for completing and submitting all homework & evaluation forms.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

You are expected to **arrive to class punctually every day**, attend every class, and **actively participate** in class discussions and activities. Class participation also means that you are **fully “present & attentive” in class**.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor to find out what was missed. You are responsible for all material covered in the class you missed, and you must prepare any assigned homework for the following class. If you join our class late, **you may be marked absent for one full hour of the class should the time you missed equal ten or more minutes**.

**Continued tardiness will also result in absence hours**, so if you have a schedule conflict, which prevents you from punctually joining your class, you must discuss this with your instructor at the beginning of the semester.

More than EIGHT hours of absence will result in a grade of No Credit for the course. Please notify your instructor of any departmental duties which will prevent you from attending class as soon as you become aware of the time conflict. If changes in your teaching duties occur at any point during the semester, please inform your instructor as soon as possible.

## IMPORTANT CLASS POLICY

Out of respect for your fellow students and instructor, and to foster an environment conducive to effective learning and communication, please try to avoid distractions, which take your attention away from the class. If you have an urgent situation that requires your immediate attention, you can inform your instructor to explain your situation.

## ITA EXAM & FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

At the end of the semester, **all ALI 270 students will be required to take the ITA Oral Interview Exam again.** After successfully completing this course, most students are released from any further ALI oral skills course requirements. However, some students do fulfill the course requirements, yet still require further work on skills covered in this class. In such cases, these students are required to take an additional ALI course to help them make the necessary improvements.

**IMPORTANT: To qualify for the ITA exam at the end of the semester,** students must complete ALL course-related assignments, attend ALL meetings with their uSC, and not exceed the maximum number of allowable absences for the course. Students who do not meet these requirements will be at risk of receiving a No Credit and will have their department notified. Failure to attend the scheduled ITA exam may also result in a No Credit for the course.

## ZOOM ETIQUETTE

- **You will keep your microphone ON**, unless there is unexpected background noise. That way, you can easily and actively participate in class discussions and activities.
- **You will need to have your video ON** during class. This is not only important for effective interaction in class, but also particularly helpful in an oral skills class, which includes a pronunciation component. Being visible on the screen also allows your instructor to see your mouth/jaw movements as you speak, an essential component to proper pronunciation of some challenging American English sounds.

**Synchronous session recording notice:** All synchronous Zoom class sessions will be recorded and can be provided asynchronously.

## Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. *SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

## **USC's GRADUATE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

### **The American Language Institute adheres to the following USC Graduate Admissions English Language Requirements:**

*The ability to communicate effectively in English-to read, write and speak the language fluently-is vital to your success as a university student. USC graduate applicants are therefore expected to demonstrate English-language proficiency as part of the application process.*

<https://gradadm.usc.edu/lightboxes/international-students-english-proficiency/>

#### **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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/files/2020/07/SCampus-Part-B-2.pdf>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### **Support Systems:**

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.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](https://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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

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

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

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of 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 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*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

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.