ALI 256 High Intermediate Oral Communication for International Teaching Assistants

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Day/Time: M/W 10:00-11:50 am   Office: ONLINE
Classroom: ONLINE ON ZOOM   Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:
This high-intermediate to advanced oral skills course is designed for International Teaching Assistants who need to improve their oral communication skills. The course is needs-based with a primary emphasis on pronunciation as well as linguistic accuracy and pragmatic competence. Participants will also work on honing their knowledge and use of oral grammar and vocabulary as they are both components of oral discourse fluency. Class projects and assignments will assess students' ability to communicate with linguistic competence in a dynamic academic environment.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:
The purpose of this course is to prepare students to successfully carry out their duties as International Teaching Assistants in a rigorous and dynamic academic environment. Very often communication breakdowns between students and their TAs occur due to lack of linguistic and pragmatic competence. This course is designed to strengthen students' linguistic competence by placing primary focus on the supra-segmental aspects of pronunciation such as discourse intonation, pitch movement and tone choice. Secondary focus will be on fluency, particularly on oral grammar and vocabulary use. In addition, students will hone their pragmatic discourse skills as this is an essential component of effective communication for ITAs who are currently scheduled to teach or may potentially teach and/or assist students in the classroom. The assignments and activities in this course are designed to help ITAs communicate with greater linguistic accuracy and fluency as well as cultural appropriacy.

Upon the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate ability to introduce themselves and their course with fluency and accuracy, engaging the audience, and generating excitement for their course
- successfully incorporate oral speech techniques such as interactive elements and anecdotes to build rapport with audience
- teach an introductory lesson related to their field and demonstrate ability to explain technical terms using vivid examples and interactive techniques
- lead and effectively participate in academic group discussions
- discuss a variety of topics with improved accuracy and fluency
- demonstrate improvement in pronunciation skills (individual sounds, rhythm, word stress, and discourse intonation)
- demonstrate competency and pragmatic knowledge in a variety of communication functions (i.e. interacting with native speakers in the classroom and/or during lab and office hours, offering advice to students, handling student questions, etc.)

Course Requirements and Assignments
Materials will be distributed on Bb; No textbook required for this class

Oral Communication Project: Students will prepare a formal introduction of themselves and a course for which they will be TAing. Focus will be on building rapport with the audience and delivering the presentation with linguistic accuracy and fluency. Students will also be evaluated on the use of effective oral speech techniques. Presentations will be videotaped for self-, peer-, and teacher feedback.

Midterm Project: Students will design and present a 7-10 minute introductory lesson related to their field which demonstrates their ability to construct and deliver a speech with fluency and linguistic accuracy, integrating effective storytelling techniques and interactive elements that build rapport with the audience. Focus will be on the ability to simplify complex content and present ideas clearly and succinctly. Presentation will be followed by a Q & A session. Presenters will be evaluated on presentation style, delivery, and oral discourse. Presentations will be recorded for self-, peer-, and teacher evaluation.

Final Project: Students will observe an experienced teacher and reflect on best teaching practices. This observation will inform their final presentation. Students will select aspects of teaching they want to improve on and design a lesson around these aspects. For example, they may choose to work on being interactive, using humor, or telling stories to teach a term in their field. The final presentation should be well-constructed demonstrating best teaching and oral communication practices.

Field experience assignments:

The "uSC" Program: The "uSC" (Undergraduate Student Consultant) Program offers our 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 outside of class (two hours per week) for a total of 20 hours. This is a chance for you to work on teaching skills, fluency, slang, pronunciation, conversation, or any other areas you wish to improve.

Class Participation: Each session will be customized to fit specific class needs and will build on what was covered in previous sessions. Just as graduate students are expected to contribute to class discussions and TAs are expected to be effective and interactive speakers, you will be required to contribute to all classroom activities, including critiquing classmates' presentations on pronunciation and language use. Students learn from analyzing each other's oral performance and exchanging of ideas. Therefore, come ready to interact and engage in class discussions every session.

Please be **UNMUTED and with your VIDEO ON** for the duration of the class. YOU ARE TO REFRAIN FROM DOING OTHER WORK DURING CLASS. We need your full attention and participation to receive credit in the course and to see improvement in your oral communication skills.

Attendance: More than **4** hours of absence will be reported to the ALI student advisor. More than **8** hours of absence will result in a course grade of **NC** (no credit). If you are late to class, that will also count towards the number of hours missed. In the event you cannot make a class, be sure to check with a classmate for the assignment missed. If you have an unavoidable conflict, please contact me via email as far in advance as possible.

Assignments: You are TAs. Deadlines count. All assignments must be turned in ON OR BEFORE THE DUE DATE. Due to the format of our projects, there will be no makeup midterm or final presentations. Assignments and due dates are posted on Blackboard and are also noted on the course outline.

ITAs ONLY: 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.

Please note: This is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, which means that you will not receive a final letter grade (A/B/C/F) on your USC transcript. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your oral skills, <u>your proficiency in these oral skills at the end of the course or the ITA exam</u> determines whether you will be advised to take an additional class or not.

Grading Criteria: Upon completion of this course, students will receive a grade of Credit (CR) or No Credit (NC). The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- **Classroom Participation:** The amount of interaction in the classroom and your participation– 20%
- **Field Project work-** your participation and performance in the uSC program– 10%
- **Project work:**
    - Oral Communication Project – 20%
    - Midterm Presentation with Questions – 25%
    - Final Project – 25%

Your projects will be recorded which will require you to critique the accuracy and fluency of your English.

ITA Test: Students must complete ALL course-related assignments and <u>not exceed the maximum number of allowable absences</u> for the course (absences <u>include hours missed with uSC).</u> Students who exceed the hours of absences and/or are at risk of receiving a No Credit (NC), will have their department notified. Failure to attend the scheduled ITA exam may result in a NC for the course.

 Observations: ALL ITAs with teaching duties - leading a lab or discussion and holding office hours - will be observed at least once during the semester. The observation will be video-recorded for evaluation and follow-up consultation with instructor.

Recommendations for success: Being a TA is a privilege. As TA's, you need to demonstrate a professional, positive attitude in all your interactions with your students, professors, advisors, and classmates. Research also shows that a positive attitude is the driving force behind true learning and improvement. I expect you to improve greatly in this class and a positive attitude is all we need to get started!

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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" 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.

Support Systems:
A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute*, http://ali.usc.edu/ , which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*,http://dsp.usc.edu/ , provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information*, http://emergency.usc.edu/, will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
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
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
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
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, 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.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation 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
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
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.

USC Policy on International Graduate Applicants
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.