PPDE 505: Professional Workshop in Public Administration
2 Units

Syllabus

Instructor Information

Laura Wittcoff, DSW, LICSW
Adjunct Instructor
Mobile: 617-694-0019
Email: lwittcof@usc.edu
Office Hours by appointment

Course # 505_50909
Thursdays, 6-7:50pm
Location: CPA 160

“Write for the expert, but write so the non-expert can understand”
Bernard Kilgo, Editor, Wall Street Journal

Course Description:

Professional public administration at its core involves engagement and communication with diverse constituencies both inside organizations and in the external environment. This course considers the diverse channels that public administrators use for professional communication, and develops skills in written reporting, professional briefing, and social media use. The goal is to develop excellent skills in writing professional memos and reports, while advancing the core competency to “communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry” (see NASPAA universal competencies at https://naspaaaccreditation.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/standard-5-text-ssi.pdf)

The course focuses in particular on evidence-based argumentation and communication, and in particular, effective practices for writing, reviewing, editing, and revising. Peer review, editorial workshops focusing on work in progress, and use of online tools such as Grammarly will contribute to the skill of producing, critiquing, and revising professional writing and PowerPoint products. There will also be attention to changing expectations regarding written and visual communication in the digital age.
COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The course assumes that students enter with competency in basic writing skills; students identified as needing help with writing mechanics will be connected to resources such as the USC writing center. Specific learning outcomes include:

- Improve skill in producing persuasive short products for internal and external audiences, including memos, communications material, administrative reports and visual media.
- Articulate how cultural differences influence communication and stakeholder engagement, and practice effective engagement with diverse audiences;
- Develop focused research skills, and in particular, comprehensive review of literature that substantiates the issue at hand and informs potential solutions;
- Develop basic skills in design of infographics and PowerPoint presentations;
- Research, analysis, and reporting on current policy or management cases, using a “sheltered workshop” approach.

The course is taught as a workshop, utilizing a “flipped class” workshop approach in which students read and review posted materials, and produce work that will be brought to class to be shared, critiqued, and rewritten. The class is writing intensive, and most reading will be focused on research collected for the reporting project.

TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIALS

- Supplementary readings and web resources are identified in the course schedule and will be available through ARES and on Blackboard.
GRADING AND COURSE EVALUATION

5% Participation (individual)

10% Other class contributions (individual based on peer review, discussion board, in-virtual-class exercises, etc.)

10% Baseline writing assignment (individual)

75% Administrative Reporting Project. Broken out as follows:

Individual components:
- 10% Issue-focused annotated bibliography research
- 5% Issue-focused infographic (display of data)
- 10% Issue-focused literature review memo
- 10% Build out of literature review research to include solutions

Group components
- 5% Mind-map the policy argument
- 10% Draft administrative outlined sections for in-virtual-class activity
- 10% PowerPoint presentation
- 15% Final administrative report (6-8 pp)

Computation of Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>67-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

**USC Emergency Information**
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

**USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.**
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

**Religious Holidays**
If you have a religious holiday that falls during our class time, please notify me of your planned absence at least one week before the religious holiday to be observed.
**Weekly Schedule**

I. **Course Overview: Professionalism and Persuasive Communication in Public Administration**

*Readings and resources:* 08-25-22

Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 1-4.

*Create draft class working agreements together in class*

*In-Class Assignment:* Issue Research in the Digital Age

*Prompt:* what social issue matters to you?

Memo writing worksheet activity – *What is the purpose of a memorandum?*

II. **Written Communication for Internal Audiences: Memos and Emails**

*Readings and resources:* 09-01-22

Musso, Biller, Myrtle, “Tradecraft.”


Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 9, the Memorandum.

*Assignment:* Baseline writing assignment due – write a brief memo to the class why this particular issue is important to you

III. **Approaches to Research: Experts, Documents, and Data**

*Readings and resources:* 09-08-22

Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 10: The Commission Report

*In-Class Assignment:* Team project assignments announced. Team
discussion; individual issue research commences

IV. Cultural Diversity and Communication in Organizations

09-15-22

Pre-Class/In-Class Assignment: Consult the APA (or similar) for guidelines on inclusive language. Rewrite an older document [or excerpt] taking a more modern and inclusive approach, consistent with the guidelines. Write a reflection on the changes and choices you made; share your document and your reflection on the Blackboard forum.

V. Issue-Focused Literature Review: What’s the Problem?

Readings and Resources: 09-22-22

Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 5, The Review.

In-Class Assignment: Bring to class an annotated bibliography (using Zotero) that includes ten sources (from peer reviewed and government sources) that substantiate your understanding of the issue at the heart of the team project.

VI. Visual Argumentation through Infographics

09-29-22

In-Class Assignment: Use the sources in the team research wiki to develop a draft “info-graphic” that conveys the “problem” or “issue” that is a focus of the team project. Class members will work in teams, consulting to other teams to critique and improve the infographics.

VII. Writing for External Audiences: Issue Briefs

10-06-22

Assignment: Build an issue brief around the infographic (and other graphic elements if you wish). Post to discussion board. Class members will work in teams to critique issue briefs, which will then be revised. Resource: https://www.acteonline.org/issue-briefs/
VIII. Solution-Focused Literature Review: “Best?” Practice Research

Readings and resources: 10-13-22


Pre-Class Assignment: Bring to class an annotated literature review that includes five sources (from peer reviewed and government sources) that discuss or justify potential solutions to the issue or problem that your team is addressing. Also post all sources Zotero.
IX. Cultural Diversity, Communication in Organizations Related to Issue

*Pre-Class Assignment*: Individually interview someone with professional work experience in another country or from another culture about how their country/culture addresses the issue you/your team is researching. Summarize in discussion board forum for discussion in class.

X. Writing to Persuade: Finding the Argument

*Readings and resources*: 10-27-22


*Blackboard Assignment*: Individual and Team exercise: mind-mapping the argument
1. Brainstorm ideas on your own
2. Meet with you team and put your ideas together
3. Post on Blackboard and bring in ideas to discuss in class
4. Add interview ideas to Mind Map

XI. Political Writing from Op-Eds to Social Media

*Pre-Class assignment*: find an Op-Ed, Social Media Blog, posting/article/opinion piece related to your team’s issue; write up your thoughts on this – agree/disagree with the piece you found?

*Readings and resources*: Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 6; The Op-Ed; Ch. 11, Blogs.
Musso et. al. Tradecraft (re-read)

XII. Anatomy of a Report

Musso et. al. Tradecraft (reread) 11-10-22

In-Class Assignment: Team exercise: outlining the report.

XIII. Pitching with PowerPoint 11-17-22

XIV. Bring PowerPoint Presentation to class for peer feedback

Pre-Class Assignment: Come to class with team PowerPoint presentation that communicates:
- Brief review of importance of issue
- How it has been addressed (literature review and current solutions)
- Recommendations

Information to inform report

Readings and resources:

Perceptual Edge: Examples of ineffective graphics and how to fix them: http://www.perceptualedge.com/examples.php (review the left column.)

Garfinkle and Brooks, Ch. 7-8.


XV. Class Presentations 12-01-22

XVI. Exam Week:

Musso et. al. Tradecraft (re-read)

Edit, Edit, Edit; Revise, Revise, Revise

Readings and resources:
Two Final Assignments Due 12-8-22

1. Team Report

   *Final Report Due in Turnitin and emailed to Professor Wittcoff: lwittcof@usc.edu*

2. The Future of Professional Communication

   *Brief individual paragraph(s) on reflections and professional goals*