

**CMGT 599:**  
**Communication and Wellbeing at Work**  
**(4 units)**

**Spring 2024**

**Thursdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm (ONLINE)**

**Office hours: after class and by appointment**

Instructor: Professor Andrea Hollingshead

Contact Info: [aholling@usc.edu](mailto:aholling@usc.edu)

**\* DRAFT\***

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the science and practice of wellness and wellbeing at work. Informed by relevant theory and research, it explores the interplay of mindfulness practices, mental health, and communication. It focuses on the practice of nonjudgmental awareness, which can lead to more meaningful and effective communication in our professional and personal lives. The course covers a range of research topics including breathing, presence, deep listening, perspective taking, empathy, compassion and self-compassion, kindness, gratitude, emotional intelligence, psychological safety, creativity, conflict resolution, workplace relationships, diversity and cultural differences, remote collaborations, team wellbeing, work-life balance and many others.

The course is highly interactive and experiential. It is based on the “flipped classroom” model, which means course content is delivered before class via weekly modules on Blackboard. Weekly modules contain readings from academic journals and news media, TED talks and short videos, and short written assignments. The weekly modules prepare students for in-class discussions and activities.

**Learning Objectives:**

The specific objectives of the course are to provide students with:

- Theory and research-based knowledge about workplace wellness
- Concepts and a language for understanding physical and mental health at work
- Analytical tools to assess and respond mindfully to workplace situations
- Insight into their own communication practices in the workplace and in life
- Skills to recognize and navigate through conflict and other difficult workplace and communication situations
- A safe and supportive class environment for learning and experimentation

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement**

My goal is to create a classroom-learning environment that fosters open and honest dialogue. Every student in this class, regardless of background, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, class, political affiliation, physical or mental ability or any identity category, is a valued and equal member of the class. We all bring different knowledge and experiences to the class and the sharing of our different experiences and viewpoints creates the greatest learning. Our classroom should be a safe space to question, challenge, and critique course content. To this end, classroom discussions should always be conducted in a way that honors, respects, and dignifies each individual. This allows a deeper more positive learning experience for all.

It is my intention to present research on a diverse set of topics from a diverse set of researchers and from underrepresented viewpoints. Please let me know if something in course materials, said or done in class by either myself or any other student, causes you discomfort. While the intention may not be to cause any offense, the impact is important and deserves attention and remediation as soon as possible.

## **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

We will use Zoom, Blackboard, MS Office, Adobe, and Slack. You will also need video editing software for your leader profile and final team project assignments. All software necessary for class is available free as a USC Annenberg student. Here is information on how to activate your free Adobe creative cloud account. <https://www.annenbergdl.org/adobe/>

You can also receive free subscriptions to the New York Times, and Los Angeles Times among others. USC Technology Support Links Zoom information for students, Blackboard help for students, Software available to USC Campus. The USC Annenberg Digital Lounge provides free technology training and support to students. Be sure to advantage of these wonderful resources.

## **Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop for use 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.

## **Required Class Materials**

Most readings, TED talk videos and other learning materials are provided in the Weekly Modules (see below). There are two books for purchase on Amazon.

Hanh, T. N. (2013). *The art of communicating*. Random House.

Chapman, S. G. (2012). *The Five Keys to Mindful Communication: Using Deep Listening and Mindful Speech to Strengthen Relationships, Heal Conflicts, and Accomplish Your Goals*. Shambhala Publications.

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Assignments:**

I will provide specific assignment guidelines in class later in the semester.

**Weekly Module Completion.** The course is organized around weekly topics. Most topics has a learning module on Blackboard that is due by **Wednesday at 11:59 p.m.** Each module will consist of one or two academic research articles; TED talks and other videos; news and other popular press articles; scales or surveys; and short assignments where you will apply the module content. Each module should be informative, thought provoking and entertaining. Plan on 3 hours to complete each module. This component is worth 25% of your course grade.

**Midterm Book Review Video.** Instead of a midterm exam, you will read, describe, and critique a academic research-informed book of your choice that relates to mindfulness, communication and workplace wellness (broadly defined) in an 6 min video. We will watch the Midterm videos in class on Mar 7. Creativity is highly encouraged. This component is worth 25% of your course grade.

**Final Class Research Project Video.** You will produce an 8 min video on a research topic that relates to workplace wellness (broadly defined) in the workplace in an 8 min video. You can go into more depth on a class topic or choose one of your own. The topic should be one that interests you, has relevant academic research and goes into some depth. Creativity is highly encouraged. The videos will be shown on the last day of class, Apr 25. This component is worth 30% of your course grade.

**Final Self-Reflection Paper (in place of Final Exam).** Instead of a final exam, you will write a self-reflection paper on your thoughts and discoveries about workplace wellness over the semester. Reflecting on the small assignments in the modules and in-class free writing exercises will be helpful for this assignment. It is due on Friday, May 3 @ 11:59 p.m. This component is worth 10% of your course grade.

**Class Participation.** Class participation is an important component of this class. Contributions to large group discussions, polls, chats and breakout groups all count toward class participation. Most class activities will involve the completion of a work product such as a brief written response or a verbal presentation, which counts toward class participation. This component is worth 10% of your course grade.

**Attendance.** I understand that personal circumstances can arise. If you know you will miss class, please let me know in advance. Most classes will be recorded. It is your responsibility to keep up with modules and other assignments if you miss class.

**Assignment Submission Policy:**

All assignments are due on the date and time specified and must be submitted via Blackboard to receive full credit. Allow plenty of time to upload assignments by the deadline. Please do not email your assignments to me. You should receive a confirmation from Blackboard if the assignment was successfully submitted. Late assignments will receive a penalty: 20% for 1-48 hours late, 50% for more than 48 hours late.

**Course Grading:**

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Weekly Modules	30	30
Midterm Book Review Video	20	20
Final Class Research Project Video	25	25
Final Self-Reflection Paper	10	10
Class Participation	15	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Course Grading Policy:**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A/A- Outstanding, thoughtful and careful work
- B+/B Above average work, good insight, could benefit from more attention to detail
- B-/C+ Needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through
- C and below Incomplete, bare minimum and/or showing little understanding of the material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned. Here are the grade cut-offs for each letter grade.

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| A = 100-94 | C = 76-74  |
| A- = 93-90 | C- = 73-70 |
| B+ = 89-87 | D+ = 69-67 |
| B = 86-84  | D = 66-64  |
| B- = 83-80 | D- = 63-60 |
| C+ = 79-77 | F = 59-0   |

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Important note to students:** Be advised that the topics/daily activities may change based on the progress of the class, guest speaker availability, and unforeseen consequences. Assignment due dates will not change.

Consult the Reading List at the end of the syllabus for specific Module Readings and Assignments.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
<b>Week 1 (Jan 11)</b>	Introduction to Course and Workplace Wellness		
<b>Week 2 (Jan 18)</b>	Breathing and Mindfulness	<b>Hahn (2013) Book (See Class Materials)</b>	<b>Hahn (2013) due in class on Jan 18</b>
<b>Week 3 (Jan 25)</b>	Presence, Attention and Everyday Mindfulness	<b>Module 1:</b> Presence, Attention and Everyday Mindfulness	<b>Module 1 due on Wed, Jan 24 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 4 (Feb 1)</b>	Mindset and Perspective Taking	<b>Module 2:</b> Mindset and Perspective Taking	<b>Module 2 due on Wed, Jan 31 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 5 (Feb 8)</b>	Empathy, Compassion and Self-Compassion	<b>Module 3:</b> Empathy and (Self) Compassion at Work	<b>Module 3 and Midterm Book Topic due: on Wed, Feb 7 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 5 (Feb 15)</b>	Kindness and Gratitude @ Work	<b>Module 4:</b> Emotional Intelligence, Kindness and Gratitude at Work	<b>Module 4 due: on Wed, Feb 14 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 6 (Feb 15)</b>	Mindfulness and Creativity @ Work	<b>Module 5:</b> Mindfulness and Creativity	
<b>Week 7 (Feb 22)</b>	Culture, Identity and Inclusion	<b>Module 6:</b> Inclusion and Belonging at Work	<b>Module 6 due: on Wed, Feb 21 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 8 (Feb 29)</b>	Using Technology Mindfully @ Work		<b>Read and prepare for midterm book review video</b>

<b>Week 9 (Mar 7)</b>	Midterm Book Review Video Viewing & Discussion		<b>Midterm Book Review Video Link is Due: Wed, Mar 6 @ 11:59 p.m.</b>
	SPRING BREAK	No Class	
<b>Week 10 (Mar 21)</b>	Communication Goals and Intentions	<b>Module 7: Speaking up, Silence and Safety</b>	<b>Module 7 due: on Wed, Mar 20 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 11 (Mar 28)</b>	Communicating Mindfully in Work Relationships	<b>Chapman (2012) (See Class Materials)</b>	<b>Chapman (2012) Final Project Topic due: Wed, Mar 27 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 12 (Apr 4)</b>	Giving Feedback	<b>Module 8: Approaching Difficult Conversations</b>	<b>Module 8 due: on Wed, Apr 3 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 13 (Apr 11)</b>	Resolving Workplace Conflict	<b>Module 9: Trust Violations, Apologies and Forgiveness</b>	<b>Module 9 due: on Wed, Apr 10 @ 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Week 14 (Apr 18)</b>	Course Review, Integration and Capstone		<b>Prepare Final Research Project Video</b>
<b>Week 15 (Apr 25)</b>	Final Research Project Videos and Last Day Celebration		<b>Final Research Project Video Link due on Wed, Apr 24 11:59 pm</b>
<b>STUDY DAYS (Apr 27-30)</b>			
<b>FINAL EXAM PERIOD</b>			<b>Final Self-Reflection Paper due: Friday May 3 @ 11:59 pm</b>

## **XII. Policies and Procedures**

### **Blackboard**

I use Blackboard extensively. Check every day for updates and announcements.

## **Communication**

Use USC email for contacting me, and check your USC email every day for time-sensitive information.

## **Zoom Etiquette**

I expect everyone to have their video camera on and microphones muted during class. It is important for developing rapport and relationships that we see each other, just as in an in-person class. However, please let me know if you need to turn your video off due to limited Internet bandwidth, visual and audio distractions in your location, or other reason. If you are not able to find a quiet, distraction free spot where you can use your microphone, use the chat window for questions and comments relevant to the class. A headset will improve audio quality.

## ***Academic Conduct and Support Systems***

**Academic Integrity.** The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university. . Any assignment that includes an instance of plagiarism will receive a 0. Two or more instances of plagiarism in a semester will receive an automatic failing grade (F) in the course.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you 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

**Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies.** USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class is prohibited without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is also prohibited. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. 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. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

**The Use of AI Generators.** Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be completed entirely by you.

That said, I will permit using artificial intelligence (AI)-powered text generation tools on a few specific assignments during the semester. You should be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced on these assignments and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### ***Students and Disability Accommodations***

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can

be found at [osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### ***Support Systems***

**Annenberg Student Success Fund.** 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.

**Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund.** Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

**Counseling and Mental Health** - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call  
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)** - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

**Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)** - (213) 740-5086

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.

**Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment** - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

**The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)** - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

**USC Campus Support and Intervention** - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

**Office of the Ombuds** - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

**Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice** - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

**TrojansAlert** TrojansAlert is an alert system that allows university officials to contact you during an emergency. It is your connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information. Visit the website to sign up.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis.** In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on [Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness](#).

**ITS Customer Support Center** (CSC): (213) 740-5555

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.

**Violence-Free Campus.** Visit the website to read more about prohibited behaviors, reporting responsibilities and where to report.

### ***Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters***

Prior to a university-sponsored away competition, Student-Athletes are responsible for providing their Instructor with a Competition Excuse Letter (provided by their academic counselor) for the classes missed while on the road (i.e., excused absence). It is the responsibility of the Student-Athlete to provide the letter prior to leaving on their trip and to make arrangements for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams. Please refer to the SAAS site where they detail travel and travel excuse letters.

### **Add/Drop Dates for Session 001**

**(15 weeks: 1/8/2024 – 4/26/2024; Final Exam Period: 5/1-8/2024)**

**Link:**

**<https://classes.usc.edu/term20241/calendar/>**

**Last day to add:** Friday, January 26, 2024

**Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund:** Friday, January 26, 2024

**Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit:** Friday, January 26, 2024 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

**Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Audit:**

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

**Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade:** Friday, February 23, 2024 [Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

\*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Last day to drop with a mark of "W":** Friday, April 5, 2024

### **About Your Instructor**

Andrea Hollingshead is a Professor of Communication, and an expert on interpersonal and group communication. She also studies connections between mindfulness, communication, and wellness. She has published three books and her research articles appear in top-tier social science journals. Professor Hollingshead teaches courses on group communication at the undergraduate, masters and PhD levels. She also teaches Comm 305 “Understanding social science research” and Comm 400 “Mindful communication.” Professor Hollingshead earned her B.A. in Psychology from Yale University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Before returning to graduate school, she worked in advertising and marketing research. She is an avid scuba diver and enjoys plants, LA farmers markets, cooking, and running. She is married and has a dog (German Shepherd-Husky mix) named Pancho.

<https://annenbergl.usc.edu/faculty/andrea-b-hollingshead>