USCAnnenberg

PR 427: Structured Inquiry in Public Relations and Advertising
4 units

Fall 2024 – Wednesdays – 6-9:20 p.m.
Section: 21311R
Location: ASC 328

Instructor: Dave Quast
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m., and by appointment
Contact Info: quast@usc.edu

Course Description

This course offers an applied understanding about how to formulate and answer questions regarding the strategic planning and evaluation of business communication messages. The course will use the principles of structured inquiry and cover research techniques, designs, methods, analysis and presentation that will ultimately teach students how to extract and communicate insights from data gathered through the students' own primary and secondary research activities using online and offline sources. The class project involves students working with an identified client organization and exploring the client's needs for public relations and advertising focused on the information students have gained from the various assignments. Analysis and interpretation of results will be focused on applications in contemporary public relations and advertising, and will be translated into actionable information, known as insights. In the final stage of this class, student teams will summarize their insights and present a Creative Brief appropriate to public relations and advertising development. Principles of high-level Creative Brief development will be discussed and skills developed so students can capture their insights into an actionable brief.

Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate techniques for asking questions, collecting data, analysis, and interpretation in the context of contemporary public relations and advertising communication problem solving
- Collect, analyze, and synthesize secondary information from relevant online databases and print sources
- Collect, analyze, interpret, and synthesize relevant qualitative and quantitative primary data
- Process data into insights in the context of advertising planning and public relations campaign development
- Demonstrate high levels of strategic and critical thinking and persistence in solving information problems
- Develop a high-level Creative brief from research garnered from the structured inquiry process

Course Notes

The grading option for this course is the letter grade. Course materials and mandatory and voluntary supplemental content will be posted on Brightspace.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

There are two required textbooks in this course.

- **PR Technology, Data and Insights**. Mark Weiner. Published 2021. New York: Kogan Page. [In the syllabus, the readings assigned from this textbook will be listed as "Weiner"]
- **Influencers & Creators – Business, Culture and Practice**. Robert V. Kozinets, Ulrike Gretzel and Rossella Gambetti. Published 2023. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc. [In the syllabus, the readings assigned from this textbook will be listed as "Kozinets"]

In addition, other weekly reading materials will be posted on Brightspace. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to the class period in order to be prepared for class discussion and exercises.

- **Recommended Industry Resources:**
  - Advertising Age: http://www.adage.com
  - Advertising Week: http://www.adweek.com
  - Comscore Rankings: www.comscore.com
  - PR Tactics (PRSA): http://www.prsa
  - PR Week: http://www.prweek.com
  - Communicator's Guide to Research, Analysis and Evaluation e-book (CIPR 2021) – posted on Brightspace

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1. **Class participation:**

   It is important to consistently attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, which helps enhance your learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read/viewed the materials and be prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments. At the end of the semester, points will be allocated to students based upon:
   - Consistent demonstration that they have read the material for scheduled class discussions
   - Contribution to class discussions; answering questions, asking relevant questions
   - Consistent attendance in class in order to participate in and contribute to class discussions
   - Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructor (including appropriate use of personal technologies during classroom time)

2. **Group Project:**

   The group project is divided into five sections, as follows:
   a. **Part 1** is an introduction to the topic and project, concentrating on the development of the project as a solution to an organization's communications challenges that can be developed through the structured inquiry process. This requires identifying and thoroughly researching the client organization and developing a detailed assessment of their specific informational needs and the path to answer them. The output is a deliverable Client Overview/Situation Analysis, which describes the client and defines the proposed Scope of Work, identifying key communications challenges the group project intends to explore. Detailed parameters for this and subsequent parts of the

project will be provided and discussed in class, and posted on the Brightspace site for this course.

b. **Part 2** involves the team engaging in focused Secondary Research to contextualize the client's operating and competitive environment. It includes both the use of AI-enabled research as well as direct explorations of source materials. Teams will be asked to identify key demographic characteristics of customers and potential customers, including attitudinal and behavioral research where available. The deliverables for this part are: a copy of the evolving prompts that were written to conduct the research using a Generative AI platform, a summary of key industry findings drawn from both AI-enabled and conventional research, and descriptive profile(s) of potential target customers (also referred to as "customer personas").

c. **Part 3** requires teams to engage in original primary research, including student-led qualitative focus groups or in-depth interviews, and the creation and administration of an online quantitative survey. The deliverables are the qualitative Discussion Guide and online survey instruments.

d. In **Part 4**, teams will engage in three types of primary research data analysis: (a) review and summarization of key findings from the qualitative research activities; (b) data reporting from the quantitative survey, and (c) social media assessment, including content analysis from social media listening tools and identification of potential online influencers. The deliverable will be a brief in-class presentation of each team's most pertinent findings in all three areas.

e. Finally, in **Part 5**, teams will draw upon their insights based on the semester's accumulated data and information, to develop and present a Creative Brief that addresses the client's primary communications needs/challenges. A template for the Creative Brief will be reviewed in class and provided for use.

Note: Completion of all five parts of the group project is mandatory in this class. On designated presentation dates, all team members must be present and participate in the presentation. Please see Course Outline for the deadline of each part of the group projects.

3. **Group Project Final Presentation**

Details of the group project final presentation will be handed out in advance, allowing ample time for successful preparation. Attendance is mandatory on presentation days for grade points.

* **Notes on group work**: Teamwork is essential in this class, as it will be later in your professional life. Therefore, the project must be completed by students working in groups. Grouping will be arranged by the instructor. While working on the group project, your behavior should reflect the principles of collaboration, collegiality and professionalism. If you encounter problems related to working in groups, first try to resolve the problems among yourselves. However, if the problems persist, please inform the instructor immediately. All group members are expected to contribute equally to the project and will be assigned the same score for the overall project, with the exception of the Peer/Self-Evaluation points.

4. **Peer/Self-Evaluation**

Each student will evaluate the contributions of other group members and him/herself for each of the group project sections according to specific criteria that will be provided in class. These points will be factored into your final grade for the course. **If you do not submit your peer/self-evaluation by the deadline, you will get zero points in this category, regardless of your group members' evaluation about you**.

Midterm Examination

This course also includes a Midterm Examination that covers key concepts and definitions discussed during the semester. The exam will be a timed, handwritten test that is administered during a regular class session, and you are expected to provide a working, charged laptop to complete the exam. Additional details will be provided in the weeks prior to the exam.

* **Note on electronic devices**: Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices during class sessions. Using electronic devices for non-class activities is disrespectful to your classmates and instructor.

* **Concerns about grade and grade change**: Any inquiries regarding concerns about grade should be submitted to the instructor in a written format within one week of the grade being received. In the written statement, you must explain the reason for grading issues. Grade changes will be made only when evidence of an error in grading and/or recording of a grade have been identified.

Grading Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	50	5%
Midterm Examination	100	15%
Group Project Part 1: Overview/Situation Analysis and Proposed Scope of Work	50	15%
Group Project Part 2: Secondary Research-based Customer Persona(s) (100 points) and evolving Generative AI platform prompts (50 points)	150	15%
Group Project Part 3: Qualitative Discussion Guide and Quantitative Survey (100 each)	200	15%
Group Project Part 4: Qualitative Data Summary; Quantitative Survey Data Summary; Social Media Assessment and Influencer Candidate Profiles	300	15%
Group Project Part 5: Final Presentation and Creative Brief	150	20%
TOTAL	**1000**	**100%**

Grading Scale

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B- (B minus)	67% to 69%: D+ (D plus)
90% to 94%: A- (A minus)	77% to 79%: C+ (C plus)	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+ (B plus)	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D- (D minus)
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C- (C minus)	0% to 59%: F

Grading Standards

A – Achievement is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B – Achievement is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
C – Achievement meets course requirements.
D – Achievement is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet course requirements fully.
F – Represents failure and signifies that the work was either completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or was not completed.

Grading Timeline

Grading and feedback for each assignment will take no longer than 1 week from the submission date, unless noted otherwise.

Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics for evaluating the various portions of the group project and group presentation will be posted on Brightspace. In general, the Rubrics are as follows:

Presentations (Midterm and Final)
1. Evidence of presentation team's preparedness and familiarity with content
2. Being on strategy/on-task/fulfills project parameters and learning objectives
3. Strategically Sound Situation Analysis, Cohesive Presentation
4. Quality of slides (graphically appealing, brand-appropriate, error-free, appropriate use of data viz)
5. Quality of commentary (well-informed, thorough, data-supported, compelling conclusions)
6. Professionalism of presentation team and appropriate engagement/rapport with audience
7. Quality of Q&A (demonstrating knowledge beyond slide content to answer questions)

Final Group Report
1. Appropriateness of the research questions and/or hypotheses
2. Sufficiently detailed findings
    a. Use of appropriate data analysis and accurate results reporting
    b. Compelling use of data visualization and storytelling techniques
3. Invigorating discussion of research findings and sound practical implications
4. Well-proofread and edited with no GSP (grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes)

Assignment Submission Policy
- You are expected to complete assignments at the beginning of class on the due date indicated in the course schedule. Late assignments will have an automatic 10% per day deducted. I will not

accept any written assignment one week after the due date. The one-week mark is calculated from the beginning of the class on the date that the assignment is due. After one week, you will receive zero points on this assignment.

- For group projects, please submit one copy per group with all team members' full names on the first page or cover page.
- There is no extra credit in this class.
- Unless otherwise indicated, assignments must be submitted <u>via email</u> to laurajac@usc.edu
- **All submissions <u>must</u> use the following naming convention: Studentlastname.AssignmentName**
- **Written assignments should be delivered in Microsoft Word or a similar program** that allows the instructor to make comments in the document.
  - **Presentations,** including the Midterm and Final Group Presentations **should be submitted as physical PDF attachments, not links**
  - **NOTE**: even if a group chooses to host their presentation on a cloud-based system (i.e. Google slides, Canva, etc.), a PDF of the final materials <u>must</u> be emailed <u>as a physical attachment</u> by the designated due date. Providing links without physical attachments will only delay grading feedback and may result in an overall lowered score for the respective assignment.
- Written assignments will be graded for ***content*** (a demonstrated understanding of the material) ***and for quality of writing.*** It is recommended that you proofread your written work carefully before handing it in, and not rely only on apps (Word Spellcheck, Grammarly et. al) as grammatical and contextual errors may occur. Many graphics and survey software programs lack sufficient proofreading functionality, which is another reason to manually proofread your materials before submission. As noted in the previous section of this syllabus, typos or writing quality that makes reading the work difficult will result in a lower grade.

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 Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/26/24 – 12/06/24; Final Exam Period: 12/11-18/2024)
Link: https://classes.usc.edu/term-20243/calendar/
Last day to add: Friday, September 13, 2024
Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, September 13, 2024
Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, September 13, 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, September 17, 2024
Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, October 11, 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, November 15, 2024

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. Updates will be communicated in class and posted on Brightspace.

Week/Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/ Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 **Aug. 28**	**Introduction to Structured Inquiry** - Role of Research in PR - Using Structured Inquiry in Public Relations and Advertising - Introductions/Syllabus Review/Group Project Overview	Weiner: Introduction and pp 46-52
Week 2 **Sept. 04**	**Foundations of Structured Inquiry: Secondary Research Part 1** - Definitions: Data and Insight, Goals vs. Objectives. Strategies vs. Tactics - Final Project Groups Assigned - Group breakouts: Determine Final Project "Client" - Reviewing, and Evaluating Traditional Secondary Data Sources - Fun With Data	Weiner: pp 67-9 and 97-112 Bring one data-related item from the news to share with the class—this, and every, week. You may or may not be called on. *If there is something you would like shown on the screen, please email it to quast@usc.edu at least one day prior to class.*
Week 3 **Sept. 11**	**Foundations of Structured Inquiry: Secondary Research Part 2 -- Contemporary Research Methods** **Guest Speaker: Chimene Tucker**, USC Annenberg Research Librarian **Secondary Research:** - Question Formulation: Prompt-Engineering for Generative AI Platforms - Competitive Analysis - Situation/SWOT Analysis **Brief Introduction to Quantitative Analysis** Group Meetings	Weiner: pp 26-31 Kozinets: pp 53-65 Sign-up for a Qualtrics Account
Week 4 **Sept. 18**	**Foundations of Structured Inquiry: Primary Quantitative Research** - Survey Question Construction and Instrument Design - Use and misuse of survey data - Sampling - Group meetings - Fun With Data **Targeting and Audience Segmentation**	Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace (Creswell, "Research Design," pp 116-22) In-class: Qualtrics demonstration and Group work creating a Quantitative Survey in Qualtrics

	▪ Principles of Segmentation ▪ Demographics, Psychographics and Behavioral Data ▪ Creating Customer Personas	Begin building group survey/email list **DUE:** Client Overview (Group Project #1)
Week 5 **Sept. 25**	**Content Analysis** ▪ Principles of Content Analysis ▪ Consumer Privacy Considerations ▪ Using Social Listening Tools for Insights ▪ Hands-on Tool Usage ▪ Fun With Data **Ethical Considerations in Research** ▪ Ethics in Primary Research Practices ▪ Ethics in Secondary and AI-Generated Research ▪ Fun With Data **Group Work on Survey** (in and out of class)	Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace (Jugenheimer Ch. 37) **Send draft survey to quast@usc.edu for approval by Oct. 1 (the earlier the better)** **Get survey "in the field" upon approval to start gathering quantitative data** **DUE:** Personas and AI Prompts (Group Project #2)
Week 6 **Oct. 02**	**Social Listening and Big Data Analytics** ▪ Social media monitoring – principles ▪ Measuring & Evaluating Campaign Performance ▪ Overview of Social Listening Tools ▪ Fun With Data **Netnography & Influencer Research** ▪ Principles of Netnography ▪ Fundamentals of Working with Influencers ▪ Overview of FTC Guidelines on Paid Influencers	Weiner: pp 52-66 Kozinets: pp 64-78 & Ch. 12 Kozinets: Ch. 4, 5 & 8 plus Key Terms pp 159-78 Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace (Irreversible: The Public Relations Big Data Revolution by Institute for Public Relations (2016) (Your Apps Know Where You Were Last Night, And They're Not Keeping It Secret NYT (2018)) **Send draft survey to quast@usc.edu for approval by Oct. 1 (the earlier the better)** **Get survey "in the field" upon approval to start gathering quantitative data** Quantitative Survey conducted outside of class (ongoing data collection until final project presentation)

Week 7 Oct. 09	**Foundations of Structured Inquiry: Primary Qualitative Research**
	  ▪ Principles of Primary Research
	  ▪ Qualitative Research Methods
	    o Focus Groups
	    o In-depth Interviews
	  ▪ Designing Qualitative Discussion Guides
	
	Midterm Study Guide/Q & A
		Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace
		(Marshall & Rossman, "Designing Qualitative Research," pp 105-16)
		
		DUE: Group Quantitative Survey Questions

Week 8 Oct. 16	**Midterm Examination**	Qualitative Research conducted outside of class
Week 9 Oct. 23	**Group Presentations – Secondary Research & Quantitative Findings** **In-class Focus Group assignments made (participant vs. client)**	
Week 10 Oct. 30	**In-class Focus Group!** **NOTE:** This class may be conducted via ZOOM.	Groups continue gathering quantitative data Group begin developing qualitative guides, plan research
Week 11 Nov. 06	**Practical Application: Data in the Entertainment Industry** Guest Speaker: **Sandy Padula, fmr. SVP, Research, WarnerMedia** Extra Credit Explanation	Groups continue gathering quantitative and qualitative data **DUE:** Qualitative Discussion Guide and Quantitative Survey (Group Project #3)

Week 12 Nov. 13	**Analyzing Quantitative Data**
	  ▪ Data Analysis and Integration
	  ▪ Fundamentals of Data Visualization
	  ▪ Fun With Data
	
	Guest Speaker: TBD
		Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace
		(Creswell, "Research Design," pp 122-24)
		
		Quantitative Survey conducted outside of class

Week 13 Nov. 20	Practical Application: Data in Government and Public Policy
	
	Guest Speaker: **Senator Anthony Portantino**, Chair of the California Senate Appropriations Committee (TBD)
	
	Garnering Insights from Structured Inquiry
	  ▪ Creative Briefs – An Overview
	  ▪ PR & Advertising Planning
	  ▪ Fun With Data
		Weiner: pp 71-84
		
		Supplemental Reading(s) on Brightspace
		("Team Creative Brief: Creative and Account Teams Speak Out on Best Practices," article by Robyn Blakeman and Maureen Taylor)

Week 14	**NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**	

Nov. 27		
Week 15 Dec. 04	Course Evaluation Extra Credit Presentations Presentation Training Final Group Presentation Dry-Run Rehearsals & Feedback	**DUE:** Near-Final Presentation and Creative Brief (Group Project #4)
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Dec. 11, 7-9 p.m.	Final Group Presentations Summative Experience: Applying data, analysis, and insight in different career environments	**DUE:** Final Presentation and Creative Brief (Group Project #5) **DUE:** Peer Contribution Assessment

Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies
Late assignments: Late is late. Late assignments will not be accepted and earn an automatic "zero." Turn in your assignments EARLY if you know you won't make it to class. Problems (printing, alarm, lazy team members, etc.) can arise. Anticipate them and build a buffer into your timeline.

Communication
Communication: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor outside of class. If office hours do not work, send an email to the instructor to arrange a time to meet. Please expect to receive a reply from the instructor within 48 hours.

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 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. 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).

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 by unpaid and can only be applied to one public relations or advertising class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems
Academic Conduct
The USC Student Handbook (https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf)

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.

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.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity
https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=16&ent_oid=3459
"Since its founding, the 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."

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.

AI In the Classroom Policy

The USC Annenberg Public Relations and Advertising program views generative AI as an addition to USC's digital literacy tools that students are encouraged to experiment with and use inside and outside the classroom. Students may use generative AI tools such as Chat GPT to help complete their class assignments but must disclose such use in the bibliography or notes section. Students are solely responsible for the quality and the accuracy of their submissions, regardless of whether they were completed with the aid of generative AI.

Example AI Citations
1. Reference and in-text citations: OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (Mar 14 version) (Large language model). https://chat.openai.com/chat
2. Parenthetical citation: (OpenAI, 2024)
3. Narrative citation: OpenAI (2024)

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. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems

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

Annenberg Student Success Fund
https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards

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
https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards
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.

About Your Instructor
I have 30 years of experience as a public relations practitioner counseling clients in the corporate, legal, and political arenas. My expertise includes crisis and reputation management; corporate communications; public affairs; corporate positioning and messaging; litigation support; and media and presentation coaching.

I am currently run my own crisis response, reputation management, and strategic communications consultancy. I have worked on more than 80 client engagements in the past 18 months, many of which involved existential threats to a business or reputation. I have led engagements in a variety of sectors including energy, industrials, professional services, financial services, health care, technology and non-profit.

In addition to work, teaching, and being a father of four (including triplets who just entered college), I also serve on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley, and I try to find time to improve my guitar playing when I can find it.

As a working public relations practitioner who has worked in almost every environment (corporate, agency, politics, government, etc.) on challenging and often-controversial assignments, I try to bring a "real world" perspective to my classes so that students understand how the concepts we discuss and skills we develop will apply after graduation.

I am passionate about teaching and in helping my students succeed.

I hold a B.A. in politics and government from the University of Puget Sound, an M.A. in British Government from the University of Essex (U.K.) and I attended the Georgetown University Law Center.