



ALI 245- Academic and Professional Writing III

Units: 2

Spring 2025—T/TH, 11:00 –12:20

Location: DMC 104

Instructor: Olivia Veronica Méndez

Office: PSD 106

Office Hours: TH 1-2 PM

Contact Info: ovmartin@usc.edu; 310-626-2809 (usually responds within 48 hours)

Course Description

According to the University, “[a]cademic success in the United States depends on your ability to communicate effectively in English,”¹ and the “ability to communicate effectively in English— to read, write and speak the language fluently—is vital to your success as a university student.”² This course is designed to help students meet this requirement by working on skills that will improve grammatical and lexical accuracy in academic writing and a better understanding and application of collocations, formulaic phrases and writing style of their field.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to

1. review and apply suitable grammatical structures when writing for academic/professional purposes in their field
2. identify and effectively use lexicon from their field to express complex ideas
3. identify and effectively use collocations and formulaic phrases according to the writing style in their field of study

Prerequisite(s): Students are placed into ALI 235 based on the results of the International Student English (ISE) Exam or a previous ALI oral skills course.

Course Notes/ Grading

This is a credit/no credit course. Your final evaluation will be based on your improvement in written organization and style, vocabulary, and grammar use. Throughout the course you will learn to identify and use the organization, vocabulary and grammar structures used in your field.

Upon completion of the course, you will be evaluated in the areas shown in Table 1. To receive credit for the course, you must obtain an average score of 5 across all 3 categories, complete all assignments, and have no more than 6 hours of absences.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Baker, Lida; Donnalley, Sherman, Lockwood, Robyn Brinks. (2018). Grammar for Great Writing C; National Geographic Cengage Publishers. ISBN: 97813371186134 ([link](#) to book excerpts)
- All other materials will be provided by the instructor and made available through Brightspace.

Table 1 Course Grading Scale

	Organization/Style	Vocabulary	Grammar
1	Fragmented, unclear	Very limited or poor word choice	Little to no grammar control
2	Simplistic, lacks cohesion	Limited or repetitive vocabulary, poor choice of words and phrases	Limited control of grammar, little accuracy
3	Simplistic, repetitive, limited cohesion	Simplistic, repetitive, frequent inaccuracies in choice of words or phrases	Control of simple grammar structures, limited control of complex structures
4	Some lack of clarity, some cohesion	Some accurate but limited vocabulary	Broad range of simple and complex structures with inconsistent accuracy
5	Occasional lack of clarity, some lack of cohesion	Choice of words and phrases sometimes impedes meaning	Broad range of simple and complex structures with some accuracy
6	Generally clear and cohesive	Infrequent errors in choice of words and phrases	Broad range of simple and complex structures, usually with accuracy
7	Clear and cohesive	Few to no errors in choice of words and phrases	Broad range of simple and complex structures with accuracy

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

We will be using Brightspace for the first time in this course and all course materials will be available there. As we will all be using this platform for the first time, please be sure to become familiar with <https://www.brightspacehelp.usc.edu/> to obtain help. I will work on becoming more familiar with the platform and answer whatever questions I can.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

You will start by analyzing and identifying good writing in your field of study. You will then complete 8 grammar presentations showing different aspects of grammar use in your field. At the same time, you will be using this information to craft your term paper for this class. Your term paper must be in your field, following the organization, style and grammatical preferences of your field. This course is led like a writing workshop; therefore, you will be writing in class every day. Please make sure to come prepared with the devices and materials you use for academic writing as you will be using them in class.

Participation

Participation is required in the course. A consistent lack of participation will result in obtaining no credit for the course. Lack of participation includes but is not limited to being on devices carrying out activities not relevant to the course, doing work for other classes, and consistently asking to be excused or walking out of class.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will either be submitted online through Brightspace or in person in class (presentations will require attendance).

Grading Timeline

Students will receive feedback on presentations and assignments within 2 weeks of submission.

Attendance

More than 3 hours of absence will be reported to the ALI student advisor. More than 6 hours of absence will result in a course grade of NC (no credit). If you receive a notification that you have missed 3 hours of class, please reach out as soon as possible so that we can discuss any problems that may arise or any difficulties you may be experiencing.

Course Specific Policies

Arriving late to class will count towards the number of hours missed, if more than 15 minutes late. Leaving class more than 15 minutes early will also be counted toward absences. Leaving class early or arriving late to class regularly may result in receiving No Credit for the course. If you need any special accommodation, please let me know so we can discuss options to help you obtain credit for the course. No late work will be accepted, if you need an exception, please reach out so we can discuss any necessary accommodation.

Classroom norms

As mentioned above, participation is required. Please be aware that because of the nature of our class, there will be different perspectives and cultural norms, and it is required that everyone be respectful during class discussions and assignments. If someone says or does something that is offensive or disrespectful (even if it is me), please reach out so that we can address the problem. A healthy discussion of different viewpoints and cultures is encouraged, but everyone should feel safe and comfortable participating in class.

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.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

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](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators

I expect you to use AI (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools) in this class. Learning to use AI is an emerging skill, and I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to provide guidance with these tools during office hours or after class. Keep in mind the following:

- AI tools are permitted to help you brainstorm topics or revise work you have already written.
- If you provide minimum-effort prompts, you will get low-quality results. You will need to refine your prompts to get good outcomes. This will take work.
- Proceed with caution when using AI tools and do not assume the information provided is accurate or trustworthy. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is incorrect unless you either know the correct answer or can verify its accuracy with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool. It works best for topics you understand.
- AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. Please include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining how (and why) you used AI and indicate/specify the prompts you used to obtain the results and what prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so is a violation of academic integrity policies.

- Be thoughtful about when AI is useful. Consider its appropriateness for each assignment or circumstance. The use of AI tools requires attribution. You are expected to clearly attribute any material generated by the tool used.

You may use AI to help you find writing topics, help edit your work and prepare for your presentations.

Please ask me if you are unsure about what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Collaboration. In this class, you are expected to submit work that demonstrates your individual mastery of the course concepts.

Group work. Unless specifically designated as a 'group project,' all assignments are expected to be completed individually.

Computer programs. Plagiarism includes the submission of code written by, or otherwise obtained from someone else.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such receiving no credit for the assignment or in the course.

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 relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experiences in the class. Students will be asked to rate the course and instructor and provide valuable feedback. Your feedback is important as it helps us continue to mold to meet the students' ever-changing needs. This course has changed significantly since its inception thanks to the feedback from student evaluations. Students will also be required to provide feedback in the form of a written reflection of the course.

Table 2 Course schedule

	Topics/ Objectives	Readings/Preparation	Deliverables
Week 1 1/13	Land acknowledgement Course Intro Diagnostic –2/3	Course Introduction, Writing Diagnostic, Land Acknowledgement	Writing Diagnostic Find 3 papers from your field
Week 2 1/20 (MLK 1/20)	Good vs Bad academic writing –2/3	Analysis of writing in your field Good vs Bad Writing	Analyze one paragraph from each of the papers (clear vs unclear)
Week 3 1/27	Nouns and determiners in your field –1/3	Noun phrases, word forms, participial adjectives Intro to Presentation #1 Noun Phrases	Prepare Presentation #1 Grammar Guide
Week 4 2/3	Templates and formulas –3	Creating templates for good writing Formulaic phrases and collocations	Writing using a template Using formulaic phrases and collocations
Week 5 2/10	Noun Phrases Writing with templates - 1/2	Group Discussion –Noun Phrases Presentation #1 Noun Phrases Writing Assignment #1 (determiners)	Write 1 paragraph using a template of a well-written paper Presentation Add to Grammar Guide
Week 6 2/17 (PRD 2/17)	Verb tenses and forms –1/2/3	Verb Tenses -present, past, present perfect, and passives Intro to Presentation #2 Verbs Editing for determiners and verbs	Prepare presentation #2 Editing verbs using a template
Week 7 2/24	Midterm Assignments – 3	Midterm Presentation Midterm Writing Assignment (match nouns and verbs to your topic)	Midterm Presentation Submit 2 paragraphs using a template, editing noun phrases and verbs Add to Grammar Guide
Week 8 3/3	Word forms and prepositions Editing for grammar – 1/2/3	Intro to Presentation #3 Gerunds, infinitives and prepositions Editing gerunds, infinitives, and prepositions	Prepare presentation #3 Edit writing (600 -900 words)
Week 9 3/10	Editing for grammar –3	Presentation #3 Writing Assignment #3	Writing with a template 600-900 words Edit grammar Add to Grammar Guide
Spring Break 3/17			
Week 10 3/24	Verb forms Editing verbs –1/2/3	Intro to Presentation #4 Editing modals (usage) , and conditionals	Prepare Presentation #4 Edit using template 900-1200 words
Week 11 3/31	Grammar presentation and editing –1/2/3	Presentation #4 Writing Assignment #4	Presentation #4 Edit grammar 900-1200 words Add to Grammar Guide
Week 12 4/7	Modifiers Editing for modifiers and style –1/2/3	Editing adjective, adverb, and noun clauses Editing for sentence variety	Edit grammar 1200-1500 words Add to Grammar Guide
Week 13 4/21	Editing –3	Independent editing of final paper (2000 words)	Edit final draft of term paper Edit Grammar Guide
Week 14 4/28	Submit final paper, Grammar Guide, and final Evaluation		

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

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 consists 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) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX 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.