



**Comm 320:
Group and Team Communication (and
Leadership) 4 units**

Fall 2024: Tu, Th 12:30-1:50 pm PST
Room: Wallis Annenberg Hall (ANN) 409 A, B, C
Section: 20509R

SUBJECT TO CHANGE FOR SPRING 25

Instructor: Professor Andrea Hollingshead
Pronouns: she/her
Contact Info: aholling@usc.edu.
Office: ANN 414L
Office Hours: After class (T, Th 2:00-3:00 pm) and
by appointment.

Course Description

Mastering Team Dynamics and Leadership in a Collaborative World

In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, teamwork is essential to achieving success in the workplace. This course goes beyond the basics of team collaboration to provide students with the advanced knowledge and practical skills necessary to excel both as a team member and as a leader. Students will delve into the complexities of group dynamics and leadership, exploring how to leverage the diverse knowledge, skills, and perspectives within a team to achieve outstanding results.

Through a blend of cutting-edge research and experiential learning, this course offers a dynamic environment where theory meets practice. Students will engage in interactive exercises and real-world scenarios designed to sharpen their ability to navigate team challenges and lead with confidence. By the end of the course, students will have a deep understanding of effective group communication and be well-equipped to lead and collaborate successfully in any team setting.

Course Objectives:

The specific objectives of this course are to equip students with:

- **Practical Experience in Teamwork and Leadership:** Engage in positive, hands-on experiences that enhance your ability to lead and collaborate effectively in team settings.
- **Research-Driven Knowledge:** Gain a deep understanding of the theories and research that underpin effective leadership and teamwork, enabling you to apply these insights in real-world scenarios.

- **Conceptual Frameworks and Terminology:** Develop a solid grasp of key concepts and terminology related to teams and leadership, allowing for precise communication and analysis.
- **Analytical Skills and Tools:** Learn to observe, diagnose, and strategically respond to challenges and opportunities in team and leadership contexts using proven analytical tools and techniques.
- **Leadership Recognition and Action:** Cultivate the ability to identify and seize opportunities for leadership within organizational settings, enhancing your impact and influence.
- **A Supportive Learning Environment:** Benefit from a safe and encouraging classroom atmosphere that fosters learning, experimentation, and personal growth

Required Textbook and Course Materials

The following textbook will be the main resource this semester along with supplemental academic articles, news articles and informational videos on each of the course topics.

Harris, T. E., & Sherblom, J. C. (2018). *Small group and team communication*. (5th Edition) Waveland Press.

I selected this textbook because it is thorough, research-based, highly regarded, and, importantly, affordable. You can purchase or rent it on Amazon or through the Waveland Press website. Renting the Kindle version for the semester costs less than \$20. I will upload supplemental readings, videos, and other class materials to Brightspace the week before they are required.

Class Requirement/Assignments:

In-Class Team Assignments. Starting in the third week, you'll be assigned to a work team that you'll stay with throughout the semester. Each week, your team will complete an assignment that involves discussing, evaluating, and applying concepts from the course readings. Most of these assignments will be in-class and will be graded, with strict deadlines and penalties for late submissions. There will be a total of 8 graded team assignments during the semester.

Each week, your team will select a different leader to guide the team during the assignment. The leader's responsibilities are determined by the team and might include leading discussions, assigning tasks, presenting the team's analysis, and more.

Only team members present in class will receive the team grade for that day's assignment. Absent members will receive a score of 0. Your individual grade will be calculated by dropping your lowest score and summing the remaining 7 team scores. Note: If you serve as the team leader, you cannot drop your score for that week. This component makes up 25% of your course grade.

Individual Midterm Leader Profile Video: For the midterm, you'll create a 7-minute (max) video profile of a leader you admire. The catch? The leader you choose must not be well-known for their leadership, and each student must select a different leader. Creativity is strongly

encouraged. Specific requirements will be provided later in the semester. This assignment accounts for 25% of your course grade.

Team Final Research Project: During the last three classes, teams will present a 12-minute (max) video on a research topic related to team communication or leadership and will facilitate a class discussion afterward for a total of 30 min. Most of the work for this project will be done outside of class.

Teams are encouraged to pick a topic that interests all team members. The only requirements are that the topic is relevant to the course (focusing on teams or leadership communication) and grounded in academic research (with a minimum of 10 academic sources). I'll provide more details on the team project video later in the semester. This component is worth 25% of your course grade.

Leader Self-Evaluation: One course goal is to enhance your leader and teamwork skills. To gauge your progress, you will complete a Leadership Self-Evaluation at the beginning (5%) and again at the end of the semester (15%). The end of the semester self-evaluation is the course capstone assignment. It is longer and requires integrating course content. This component is worth 20% of your course grade.

Class Participation: This course is designed to be engaging and hands-on. Due to the significant amount of group work involved, regular attendance and active participation are essential for both your success and that of your team.

Being “present” in class is not enough to earn a high class participation grade, you must **also** actively contribute to large group discussions and complete all in-class work products. These will vary depending on the class, and may include polls, surveys, chats, or in-class short assignments. Class Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

Course Grade Breakdown:

Assignment	% of Grade
In-Class Team Assignments	25
Leader Profile Video	20
Final Team Project	25
Pre- & Post- Leader Evaluation	20
Class Participation/In-Class Individual Work Products	10
TOTAL	100%

Course Grading:

A = 100-94%

C = 76-73

A- = 93-90
 B+ = 89-87
 B = 86-83
 B- = 82-80
 C+ = 79-77

C- = 72-70
 D+ = 69-67
 D = 66-63
 D- = 62-60
 F = 59-0

Your percentage score must be over the threshold to receive that grade; there is no rounding up.

Below are the grade translations:

Grade A. Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.

Grade B. Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.

Grade C. Satisfactory; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.

Grade D. Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.

Grade F. Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

Grade P/ NP. To earn a passing grade, you must have a C- or higher. You also may not omit any assignments or exams regardless of your average score in the class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Reading assignments will be provided in the final syllabus posted on Sep 3. They are due by class time on Tuesday. Each reading assignment typically includes one textbook chapter, a research article, and some supplementary videos and other materials to prepare for the week's in-class activities.

	Weekly Topics	Deliverables/Due Dates
Week 1 Aug 27	Course Introduction and Foundations	
Week 2 Sep 3	Understanding Group Dynamics	Reading Assignment 1 (Sep 3) Leadership Pretest Assessment due (Sep 6)

Week 3 Sep 10	Effective Communication in Groups	Reading Assignment 2 (Sep 10)
Week 4 Sep 17	Leadership Theories and Styles	Reading Assignment 3 (Sep 17)
Week 5 Sep 24	Evaluating Leadership and Team Performance	Reading Assignment 4 (Sep 24) Midterm Leader Profile Topic due (Sep 25)
Week 6 Oct 1	Group Problem Solving and Decision Making	Reading Assignment 5 (Oct 1)
Week 7 Oct 8	Remote Teams and Leadership	Reading Assignment 6 (Oct 8) No Class October 10 Fall Break
Week 8 Oct 15	Team Diversity and Leadership	Midterm Leader Profile Video Due (Oct 13)
Week 9 Oct 22	Group Creativity and Innovation	Reading Assignment 7 (Oct 22)
Week 10 Oct 29	Team Conflict and Resolution	Reading Assignment 8 (Oct 29)
Week 11 Nov 5	Status, Power and Influence	Reading Assignment 9 (Nov 5) Team Project Topic due (Nov 3)
Week 12 Nov 12	Facilitating and Leading Group Discussions	Reading Assignment 10 (Nov 12)
Week 13 Nov 19	Ethical decision making in groups	Reading Assignment 11 (Nov 19)
Week 14 Nov 26	Course Wrap-Up	No Class Thurs, Nov 28 Thanksgiving

Week 15 Dec 3	Team Project Presentations	Team Project Due
Final Exam Period		Leader Post-Evaluation Due (Dec 14)

Course Policies

Absences: Regular attendance and active participation are crucial for success in this course due to the significant amount of group work involved. I appreciate knowing if you will be absent or late and I understand you may occasionally need to miss a class due to illness or other reasons. Please also inform your team if you will be late or absent on a day with a team assignment. If you miss multiple classes within a short period, please send a brief update on your situation.

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.

Communication Policy: Check Brightspace and your USC email every day for class announcements. Please use USC email to contact me. I generally respond within 24 hours on weekdays, a little slower on weekends. If you don't hear from me within 48 hours, please resend the message.

Assignment Submission Policy: All assignments are due on the date and time specified on Brightspace. ***Late assignments will incur a penalty of one letter grade for each day they are overdue.***

If you have trouble with Brightspace, reach out to Brightspace support directly for help—service is available 24/7 at 213-740-5555. Brightspace submissions that have uploaded successfully automatically generate an email to the student who submitted them. If you don't get the email, then you haven't submitted your assignment successfully. If Brightspace has a problem, you may email your assignment as proof that you completed it by the deadline. However, I can only grade in Brightspace so you will still need to upload there as soon as the system is functioning.

Blackboard will send you a receipt if the assignment was successfully submitted. Allow enough time to upload assignments by the deadline. Please do not email your assignments to me.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: I am committed to creating a classroom where everyone feels comfortable and respected. No matter your background, gender, race, ethnicity, beliefs, abilities, or any other aspect of your identity, you are a valuable and equal part

of this class. We all bring unique perspectives and experiences, and sharing these makes our learning richer and more meaningful.

Our classroom is a place where you should feel safe to ask questions, challenge ideas, and engage with the material critically. It is important that our discussions are respectful and considerate so that everyone can have a positive learning experience. I expect everyone in Comm 320 to treat one another with respect and kindness, and to do their part in creating a safe, positive and comfortable space for sharing knowledge and ideas.

I will present research from a wide range of topics and viewpoints, including those from underrepresented voices. If something in the course materials or in class makes you uncomfortable, please reach out to me. I am committed to supporting every student.

Academic Integrity: The University of Southern California is dedicated to fostering a community of scholars committed to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct undermines this mission and includes any form of dishonesty in academic work, whether in draft or final form.

In this course, we adhere to the academic integrity standards outlined in the USC Student Handbook. Students must submit original work created specifically for this course and this term. Reusing or submitting work completed for other courses without explicit written permission from the instructor is not permitted. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Academic misconduct encompasses, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (such as falsifying data), assisting others in dishonest acts, and any attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage. The consequences of academic dishonesty are severe and may include failing the assignment, failing the course, suspension, or expulsion from the university. An assignment found to contain plagiarism will receive a score of zero, and two or more instances of plagiarism within a semester will result in an automatic failing grade (F) for the course.

For detailed information about academic integrity, please refer to the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, as well as university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Students found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on exams, or purchasing assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards, and may face dismissal from the School of Communication. This policy is strictly enforced with no exceptions.

Additionally, it is assumed that all work submitted for this course is entirely your own and has not been previously submitted for other courses or Learning Labs, unless you have obtained approval from the instructor.

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

Recording a university class requires the express permission of the instructor and notification to the class, or must be conducted as part of an accommodation from the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS). Unauthorized recording can impede open discussion and infringe upon the academic freedom of both students and instructors. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

The distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property from university classes or lectures without the instructor's express permission is also prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing materials with services that distribute course content such as Course Hero. Unauthorized use applies to all information, including materials shared via class, email, internet, or other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy: Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Bard, and Claude, offer both opportunities and challenges. I will allow the use of Generative AI on some assignments and will let you know in the assignment instructions whether you can use Generative AI tools for the assignment. As communication students, it's crucial to use these technologies thoughtfully and ethically. Here's how to appropriately incorporate AI into your work for this course:

1. **Credit AI Use:** If you use generative AI for an assignment, you must credit the specific AI tool used. Refer to Blackboard and the assignment guidelines for instructions on proper citation. Failure to credit AI use constitutes an academic integrity violation and may lead to serious consequences.
2. **Verify Accuracy:** Generative AI can produce incorrect or misleading information. Always verify the accuracy of the AI-generated content and do not rely on it without confirmation.
3. **Quality of Prompts:** The effectiveness of AI output depends on the quality of the prompts you provide. As AI tools evolve, your ability to craft effective prompts will also need to improve.
4. **Critical Contribution:** AI should not replace your own critical thinking and contributions. Writing and reflecting on your ideas are essential for learning and demonstrating your understanding of the subject.

These are initial guidelines and may evolve as AI technology and our understanding of it advance. I welcome your feedback and thoughts on this topic.

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.

Support Systems

Annenberg Mental Health. If you need mental health support, Dr. Kelly Greco is our dedicated Annenberg counselor. Her office is ASC 304. You can schedule appointment with her using myshr, you can message her on myshr, or call the main number 213.740.9355. She can provide support and help you navigate the many mental health resources available to USC students including 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.

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.

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.

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.

About Your Instructor

Andrea Hollingshead is a Professor of Communication (USC Annenberg), Psychology (USC Dornsife), and Management and Organizations (USC Marshall), and an expert on team communication and leadership. Much of her research examines how people communicate their expertise and share knowledge in teams. She studies a wide array of groups and teams: from very small to very large; from offline to online to hybrid; across a wide range of work, social and educational settings. Her current research projects investigate team wellbeing, online incivility, and human-machine teaming. She also studies connections between mindfulness, communication, and individual wellbeing in daily life. She has published three books and her research articles appear in top-tier social science journals such as *Communication Research*, *Communication Monographs*, *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Yearbook*, *Organization Science*, *Academy of Management Proceedings*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* among many others. Professor Hollingshead teaches courses on group communication at the undergraduate, masters and PhD levels; on mindful communication at the undergraduate and master's levels, and undergraduate research methods. 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. She is an avid scuba diver and enjoys plants, LA farmers markets, cooking, and running. She is married and has a pup named Pancho. <https://annenberg.usc.edu/faculty/andrea-b-hollingshead>