



PPD 546:

The Professional Practice of Public Administration

Spring 2025 | Thursdays | 6:00-9:20PM (PT)

Location: VPD 107 | Course Website

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24/7 Technical Support

USC Brightspace [Student Help Portal](#)

Email: brightspace@usc.edu

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Virtual Assistant: Click the speech bubble in Brightspace and submit a case for quick resolution!

Course Description

This is the capstone course for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree. As a course that synthesizes skill and knowledge attained in the program, it assumes that students have completed most of their core courses and management competencies. The primary goal of the course is to give students supervised experience in conducting client-oriented research and analysis. This experience will reinforce, through application, the skills developed in the MPA program, and prepare students to enter a professional career. Through their work in the capstone projects students will hone and demonstrate these abilities that are identified as universal competencies for all accredited schools of public affairs and administration:

- to lead and manage in public governance;
- to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- to communicate with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Students will be assigned in teams to work for a client in the public or nonprofit sector, and will work together to scope the problem facing the client, identify an appropriate study methodology, conduct research and collect data, analyze information collected, and develop findings and recommendations. Team members will produce both individual and jointly-authored interim products all of which will contribute to development of a project report that will be written in stages, with several revisions in response to instructor comment.

In the first class meeting, the instructor will present the set of projects recruited for this semester, and will answer student questions regarding the projects. Students will be asked to identify their three top (unranked) project preferences and also permitted to identify one or two students with whom they would like to work (understanding that this may reduce their chance of getting a preferred topic). In addition, students will provide a resume, professional

competency self-assessment, and identify their comfort with several types of research methodologies. The instructor will take this information into account in assigning students into teams of approximately four-to-six attached to each project.

Course Learning Objectives

This course requires students to apply the competencies that they have acquired in the MPA to complex problems in the public and non-profit sectors. Forging solutions to these problems requires analytic expertise, ability to communicate with and engage diverse stakeholders, and application of political and organizational reasoning. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **Demonstrate professional practice in public administration.** In a professionally written report, students will integrate the core competencies listed above in solving an organizational or management challenge for a client. Specific elements include:
 - **Assessing public service values.** Frame the problem with attention to public service values and the interests expressed by organizational and external stakeholders;
 - **Mapping the organizational context.** Analyze the political, fiscal, and organizational context to identify constraints and opportunities for leadership in public governance.
 - **Establishing analytic integrity and reasoning critically.** Design and implement a feasible and valid research approach and produce a report with analytic integrity and defensible findings.
- **Demonstrate project management and teamwork.** Students will build and refine their project management skills to interact productively in complex and diverse organizational environments. Students will manage teamwork and promote a constructive consulting relationship with the client. They will maintain regular contact with the client to address issues related to communication of findings and changes in the organizational and political environment within which the client operates. Students will collaborate to get the work done in an efficacious and fair manner.
- **Demonstrate tradecraft.** Students will apply and polish skills required for effective professional communication, including professional writing and briefing. Students will write the final report in an iterative fashion, producing intermediate products and drafts. In addition, students will be required to give a briefing to the client and invited guests. Both the briefing and final report should have high production values.

Course Expectations

1. **Participation in class workshops.** The course is taught in a “blended” format, in which class members will meet together roughly once every three weeks, on the dates identified in the syllabus. These meetings will be workshops, requiring briefing on projects and group troubleshooting. Students must attend and participate in required workshop sessions. The remaining instruction will occur asynchronously.

2. *Asynchronous contact time.* During the weeks in which the class is not meeting together, student and instructor contact will happen through the following means, consistent with USC requirements for 3 hours and 20 minutes of instruction per week:
 - a. Facilitated Research Interaction via Google Drive. The instructor will interact with student teams via work uploaded to their Google Drive; reviewing and commenting on work product.
 - b. Discussion Board. In weekly discussion boards students will analyze the constraints and opportunities inherent in the project, reflect on team progress, and debate public service values and professional tradecraft.
 - c. Project Management and Planning Charts. Students are expected to complete three project management and planning charts assignments that will contribute to effective project planning. Review the instructional materials and asynchronous videos for more information on developing strong project management skills and to understand how to create the necessary documentation of incremental action required for these assignments. Project management and planning charts assignments will be scored as completed or not completed.
 - d. Live Session Consultation. The instructor requires regular meetings with teams, scheduled during class time, involving Zoom classroom and/or telephone meetings. These consultations will occur during weeks in which the class is not meeting, rotating teams through 30-minute meetings on a regular basis.

3. *Individual memos and draft sections.* Students will prepare both individual and group writing products that together will constitute much of the preparatory and culminating work required to structure the project, produce the initial draft, and reflect on the experience:
 - a. Individual research memos (IRM) (~2-4 pages single plus attachments, group). In addition to your participation with individual research contributions, you will be called upon in some weeks to prepare written assignments with analysis in response to that week's readings, the client packet and research developed to date. There are three Individual Research Memorandums (IRM) that play two functions: (1) each assignment asks you to integrate some of the skills learned in the program in reflecting on core issues and frameworks in public administration and (2) each requires students to provide written research and analysis materials that the team can later repurpose in writing the larger report.
 - b. Individual draft report section (~5 pages single, individual). The team will outline the report and divide the sections among team members, each of whom will take responsibility for an identifiable portion of the report. This might include the issue statement, analytic sections, a draft of the communications briefer, or other analytic support such as a case study report or methodological or technical appendix.
 - c. Final reflection. Reflection on client presentation and capstone experience (~2 pp; individual): This satisfies the USC requirement for a cumulative experience during finals week. It will be a two-page memo that (a) summarizes your assessment of the client presentation and (b) provides a reflection on what you learned through the capstone experience.

4. *Relatively independent research.* During most of the semester, students will be expected to meet regularly as a group, and to arrange meetings as required at the convenience of the client. Once the client has approved the work plan, the team will work independently to conduct the research and analyze results.
5. *Faculty consultation.* Throughout the process teams are required to attend in person meetings, video meetings or conference calls with the instructor on a regular basis to report progress, discuss issues that arise, and brainstorm the analysis. These meetings typically will happen during the class slot but may be scheduled by mutual agreement by appointment.
6. *Final report.* The team members will collaborate in the iterative production of a professional report to the client. The grade is based on a first draft and the final report. Students should break the report into sections to write in advance (e.g., problem definition, organizational context, alternatives, etc.). Each member of the group must write an identified portion of the final report as noted above. All of the written products in the class will contribute to the creation of a professional report to the client. The instructor will review and provide input on a required first draft as well as any interim drafts provided by students.
7. *Project Briefings.* The team must provide a final briefing for the client and invited guests identified by the client. This briefing must develop a slide deck—which may be converted to Adobe pdf for presentation purposes as circumstances dictate. We will conduct dry runs of the briefings in class prior to the final presentation.
8. *Short communications briefer.* Part of the final report expectation will be a two- or four-page single-spaced communications “briefer” that synthesizes the report in a reader-friendly and professional manner, with excellent graphic elements.
9. *Client Communication.* Students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals when working with a client organization and its leadership on behalf of the University and the Price School. The Capstone course intends to facilitate students with direct contact to clients and without interference or facilitation by faculty as long as the client is satisfied with the level of thoughtful dialogue, transparency between the entire team and the designated client contacts and that the project is progressing in a manner consistent with the understanding reached by the client and the School prior to the initiation of class.

The student who serves as client liaison will commit to serving both the team and the client with open and honest full written documentation. The client liaison from the team will serve as the person responsible for all scheduling of team meetings with the client, the designated client team, and for any presentations including the initial onboarding conversation. The client liaison role is not intended to be the sole person making a connection to the client but rather the person with administrative duties to facilitate all student team members participating in every activity and fulfilling all client requests

while keeping the faculty informed in real time. At no point should the team nor faculty be in the dark about any message sent, request made, or conversation scheduled.

Criteria for Evaluating Client Communications

- a. Timeliness of recording posts in the project management software portal (Basecamp) of any text messages, emails, phone calls, meetings or conversations held between the team and the client organization inclusive of any direct communication approved by the team in full utilizing just one or more students in touch with a client representative or client designee (outside organization contact).
- b. Professionalism of scheduling requests, provision of information about the team and team's ongoing work processes and responses to client inquiries as documented in real-time uploads via the project management software portal.
- c. Substance of the team's response always including prior faculty approval of any materials, writing, drafts or other client project elements released, shared or discussed with the client in accordance with the School's agreement with the client.
- d. Insightfulness: Does the client communication respond to client concerns in real time? Is the material provided to the client appropriate for the project's delivery timetable? Are the post- conversation meeting minutes complete and do they include student understandings of key client objectives shared in a timely manner (within 24 hours) of the meeting or conversation?
- e. Collaboration: Are the client communications shared with all team members equally, including questions asked of the client and deliverables shared? Does the client clearly see that all team members are copied on correspondence and that all team members participate in any scheduled conversation?

Requirements and Grading:

Assignment	Category	Length	Due date	% of Grade
<i>Participation (Group contributions; peer review)</i>	Individual			5
<i>Discussion Boards, Project Management and Planning Charts</i>	Individual		Various	5
<i>Individual Research Memos (IRM-3)</i>	Individual	2-4 pp. single	Feb 2, Mar 2, April 6	15
<i>Peer Review of IRM-1</i>	Individual	2-4 pp. single	Feb 13	
<i>Research prospectus</i>	Group	2-4 pp. single	Feb 13	5
<i>Draft Report Section</i>	Individual	~5 pp. single	Mar 30	10
<i>Report draft</i>	Group	20-30 single	April 13	10
<i>Capstone Project Brief dry run</i>	Group		April 17, 24	10
<i>Capstone Project Brief draft</i>	Group	2-4 pp. single	April 27	
<i>Capstone Project Brief</i>	Group	2-4 pp. single	May 8	10
<i>Final staff report</i>	Group	30-40 single.	May 8	25
<i>Reflection on project and course</i>	Individual	2 pp. single	May 8	5

Assignment Submission Policy

- **Form and style:** All assignments should be single-spaced, and must be written in plain, concise prose, as described in Strunk and White's Elements of Style. Referencing should use APA format. Please use 11-12 point, sans serif font.
- **File exchange protocol:** All file exchange will be handled electronically through submission and return of electronic documents using the Turnitin function on the class Blackboard site. Unless arrangements are made in advance I will not accept any material via email or in hard copy. Labeling protocol: please label all files by your last name and name of assignment (e.g., alcantara_briefer.doc). Repeated submission of improperly labeled files will result in a grade penalty. Please keep a copy of your Turnitin receipt with the date and time of your submission.
- **Policy on late and missing assignments:** I will grade late assignments down by approximately 10 percent for each day late. Please inform me in advance if you must miss a deadline. **Repeated late or missing assignments may result in a non-passing grade.**
- **Group work:** Unless specifically designated as a 'group project,' all assignments are expected to be completed individually.
- **Digital Backup:** It is good practice to *back up* your work to cloud storage, so theft or equipment failures do not cause you to miss deadlines

Grading Timeline

Grades will be posted to the course gradebook, and generally will be posted within a couple of weeks after the assignment has been submitted. For drafts, feedback will be given with time to integrate into your next assignment. Please review the feedback and incorporate it in your next assignment. If a student has a question about the feedback, please contact the professor.

Grading Range

A	≥ 94%	B-	≥ 80%, < 84%	D+	≥ 67%, < 70%
A-	≥ 90% < 94%	C+	≥ 77%, < 80%	D	≥ 64%, < 67%
B+	≥ 87% < 90%	C	≥ 74%, < 77%	D-	≥ 60%, < 64%
B	≥ 84%, < 87%	C-	≥ 70%, < 74%	F	< 60%

Textbooks & Materials

- **Books** (to purchase):
 - Bahng, G., Musso, J. & Vertenten, D. (Eds.). (2023). *Collaborative policy research: Handbook of experiential client-facing research* (Revised Preliminary Edition). Cognella Academic Publishing. E-book \$85.95
 - <https://store.cognella.com/>
 - Enter "University of Southern California"

- Enter “546” and choose “PPD 546 - Capstone in Public Administration”
- Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2024). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (7th ed.). CQ Press.
 - E-book \$54.00 from [VitalSource](#) or paperback ~\$68.00 from Amazon, etc.
- **Articles** (available on our course site):
 - Crosby, B. C. (2010). [Leading in the shared-power world of 2020](#). *Public Administration Review*, 70(4), S69-S77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02248.x>
 - Frederickson, H.G. (1991). [Toward a theory of the public administration](#). *Administration & Society*, 22(4), 395-423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009539979102200401>
 - Gawthrop, L.C. (2005). [Public administration in a global mode: with sympathy and compassion](#). *Public Integrity*, 7(3), 241-259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2005.11051278>
 - Hammer, D., & Wildavsky, A. (1993). The open-ended, semi-structured interview: An (almost) operational guide. In Aaron Wildavsky (Ed.), *Craftways: on the organization of scholarly work* (pp. 57-101). Transaction Publishers.
 - Moore, T. (1991). [A practical guide for managing planning projects](#). *Journal of the American Planning Association*, (57)2, 212-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369108975490>
 - Musso, J., Biller, R., & Myrtle R. (2000). [Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem solving](#). *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19(4), 635-646. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6688\(200023\)19:4<635::AID-PAM7>3.0.CO;2-P](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6688(200023)19:4<635::AID-PAM7>3.0.CO;2-P)
 - The Myers-Briggs Company. (2023). [History, reliability and validity of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\) assessment](#).
- Additional Resources:
 - USC Libraries—[Research Guides: Public Administration and Policy Home Page](#)
 - USC Libraries—[Research Guides: Copyright and Images](#)

Course Meeting Schedule

(Highlighted dates are required workshop sessions)

Week 1: Logic Model - Background Research & Team Project Role Formation **Jan. 16**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Packet of Client Proposed Projects
- *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (Bardach, 2024):
 - “Step One: Define the Problem”

- “Step Two: Assemble Some Evidence”
- “Construct the Alternatives”
- “Select the Criteria”
- *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022):
 - Ch. 1, “Defining Team Roles and Identifying Workstyles”
 - Ch. 2, “Positionality and Bias in Collaborative Policy Research”
- Read and review Week 1 instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- Discussion of project scoping; problem definition and work plans
- Discussion of projects and team assignment
- Please upload your resume to course website; answer survey by January 19.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 20

Week 2: Class Workshop on Issue Diagnosis and Public Values

Jan. 23

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read the following in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022):
 - Ch. 3, “Managing the Client Relationship”
 - Ch. 4, “Establishing a Workable Team”
- Read "Toward a Theory of the Public for Public Administration" (Frederickson, 1991).
- Read "Public Administration in a Global Mode: With Sympathy and Compassion" (Gawthrop, 2005).
- Read "Leading in the Shared-Power World of 2020" (Crosby, 2010).
- Read and review Week 2 instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- Introduction to Issue Scoping and Design Matrix
- Orientation to Group Google Drive
- Discussion: Working as a team
- Discussion: Public Service Values

Week 3: Issue Scoping and Research Design

Jan. 30

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read the following in *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (Bardach, 2024):
 - “Step Five: Project the Outcomes”

- “Step Six: Confront the Trade-Offs”
- Part II, “Assembling Evidence”
- Part III, “Handling a Design Problem”
- Read the following in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022):
 - Ch. 5, “Project Scoping”
 - Ch. 6, “Conceptualizing Policy and Management Problems”
- Read "A Practical Guide for Managing Planning Projects" (Moore, 1991).
- Read the research method readings that your instructor will provide.
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 3 instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Issue Scoping
- Discussion Board: Logic Model - Methods Selection & Work Plan
- Individual Research Memos 1 Due Feb 2
- Team Meetings by Assignment

Upload IRM-1 to Turnitin February 2

Week 4: Scoping Memo Peer Review

Feb. 6

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read the following in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022):
 - Ch. 7, “Feasible Research Design”
 - Ch. 8, “Research Ethics”
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 4 instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/ Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Issue Scoping Continues
- Discussion Board: Challenges and Solutions in Issue Scoping
- Team Meetings by Assignment
- Students are assigned memos for peer review to be shared in Week 5

Upload Research Prospectus Turnitin February 13

Week 5: Class Workshop: IRM, Research Prospectus, & Work Plan**Feb. 13**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read Ch. 9, “Project Management for Client-Focused Research” in Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research (Bahng et al., 2022).
- Read “The Open-Ended, Semistructured Interview: An (Almost) Operational Guide” (Hammer & Wildavsky, 1993).
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 5 instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- Research Prospectus Due Feb 13 before class
- Each group provides an oral briefing on the background of the problem, issues or policies it raises, project scoping memo and design
- Peer discussion/evaluation of research prospectus
- After revision each group will submit the work plan to the client

<i>Work Plan Due to Client following Class discussion on February 13</i>

Presidents Day***Feb. 17*****Week 6: Project Research I****Feb. 20**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 6 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Research
- Discussion Board on Logic Model – Interview, Research & Analyze
- Team Meetings by Assignment

Week 7: Project Research II**Feb. 27**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read Ch. 10, “Engaging Stakeholder Perspectives” in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022).
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.

- Read and review Week 7 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Research
- Discussion Board on Stakeholder Environment
- Assignment: Project Management Work Plan Charting
- Team Meetings by Assignment

<i>Upload IRM-2 to Turnitin March 2</i>
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Week 8: Project Research III

Mar. 6

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read Ch. 11, "Getting to Solutions" in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022).
- Read "Tradecraft: Professional Writing as Problem Solving" (Musso et al., 2000).
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 8 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/ Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Research
- Assignment: Partial Report and Data Visualizations
- Team Meetings with Instructor by Assignment

Week 9: Workshop on Progress to Date; Reporting

Mar. 13

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 9 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- Each group briefs class on progress to date, on fieldwork or other research techniques it is using, and on any problems that are emerging in the research.
- We will discuss how to build interim products toward a final report, including incorporating visual aids.

Spring Recess

Mar 17-21

Week 10: Research and Analysis**Mar. 27**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read Ch. 12, “Communicating as a Team” in *Collaborative Policy Research: Handbook of Experiential Client-Facing Research* (Bahng et al., 2022).
- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 10 and 11 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work on Research
- Discussion Board on Organizational Feasibility/Implementation
- Team Meetings with Instructor by Assignment

Upload Individual Report Sections to Turnitin March 30

Week 11: Individual Reporting and Peer Review**Apr. 3**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 11 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work: “Mop-Up” Research
- Students Post Individual Report Sections
- Discussion Board Peer Review on Report Sections
- Team Meetings with Instructor by Assignment

Upload IRM-3 to Turnitin April 6

Week 12: Building Toward Report**Apr. 10**

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 12 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Facilitated Work: “Mop-Up” Research Continues
- Discussion Board: Foreseeing and Filling In
- Team Meetings with Instructor by Assignment

Upload Draft Reports to Turnitin April 13
Upload Briefing Dry Runs Presentation to Turnitin April 17

Week 13: Briefing Dry Runs

Apr. 17

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 13-14 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- One-half of groups will deliver a 15-minute presentation.

Week 14: Briefing Dry Runs, Continued

Apr. 24

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.
- Read and review Week 13-14 Instructional Materials.

Assignment(s) Due/In Class Activities:

- One-half of groups will deliver a 15-minute presentation.

Upload Communications Briefer to Turnitin April 27

Week 15: Production of Final Reports

May 1

All materials below are **due before class** (except as otherwise indicated).

Required Reading(s):

- Read all research materials collected by the team for the client project.

Assignment(s) Due/Activities:

- **Asynchronous Instruction**
- Discussion board: Matching final products to client expectations.

Final Assignments Due On or Before May 8:

- ***Upload Final Report to Turnitin***
- ***Upload Revised Communications Briefer to Turnitin***
- ***Brief Client***
- ***Reflection on client presentation and capstone experience to Turnitin (Individual)***

Dropping and Adding Courses

All such changes must be processed by Web registration. Failure to withdraw officially will result in the mark of “UW,” which is computed in the GPA as zero grade points. A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty during the first 12 weeks of the semester. If the course is dropped within the first three weeks, it does not appear on the academic transcript; if the course is dropped within weeks four through 12, it will be recorded with a mark of “W.” No course may be dropped after the end of the 12th week. A student may not withdraw from a course in which he or she committed or was accused of committing an academic integrity violation. After registering, it is the student’s responsibility to withdraw officially from a course if he or she decides not to continue in a course. Courses may be added only during the first three weeks of the semester.

The specific dates for adding and dropping a course in a semester can be found at the Registration Calendar link in the [USC Schedule of Classes](#).

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](#).

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 as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

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.

Prohibition on Uploading Course Materials to Generative AI Services

Submitting assignment prompts or other course materials to an AI generator is a violation of intellectual property and is disallowed under the USC policy prohibiting distribution of course materials (The USC Student Handbook, p. 13).

Policy on the Use of AI Generators

You are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, which encompass the appropriate and honest use of AI generators, such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, Copy.ai, and others.

What constitutes ethical use?

It is expected that all work you submit is yours and yours only, and that you use AI generators ethically should you choose to use them as a study tool. Ethical use comes down to your **intent** when utilizing these tools. If you use generative AI to complete portions of your work— to generate all your research, to write whole sentences or paragraphs, or to produce the entire assignment itself—then you are committing academic misconduct. Unless otherwise stated clearly in the assignment prompt or by your instructor, all work must be researched, planned, crafted, and completed by you.

Further, the submission to an AI generator of work that is not your own, such as assignment prompts provided by your instructor, other students' notes, or elements of assignment drafts not written by you, goes against the Course Content Distribution Policy, which states that no course content may be shared outside of the learning environment. Submitting course materials or the work of others to an AI generator is a violation of intellectual property and is prohibited.

Verifying and citing AI generators

Generative AI is prone to problems, such as creating fake or inaccurate information. You should neither assume that its results are correct nor that the information is unique to the AI tool: "[I]n addition to including the works of others without authorization, some generative AI models imitate another creator without clearly stating so and offering proper credit and attributions. This can be of particular concern when using AI-generated content in your research and academic work as you may be inadvertently including another person's work with incorrect or no citation and attribution" (USC Libraries Research Guides, "[Ethical](#)

[Concerns with Generative AI](#)"). Whenever you use generative AI, you are expected to back it up with other reputable sources.

Moreover, you must always demonstrate how you acquired the knowledge that you relay in your work. If you use generative AI to complement your research—note that it should never be the sole method of your research—you must cite it after you verified its accuracy. For guidance on how to cite AI, please refer to the USC Libraries research guide, "[Using Generative AI in Research](#)."

Explanation of AI Use

No matter how little or how much you use an AI generator, you are responsible for providing an explanation that details why and how you used it. This explanation must be submitted with any assignment you complete with the help of AI. In your explanation, you must address the following points:

- Why did you choose an AI generator over other resources available to you, such as those offered by the USC Libraries or other resources that your instructor provided?
- How did you use the AI generator? For example, did you use it to brainstorm an idea, to spell check your writing, or did you extract information from it based on a prompt you inserted?
- What prompt(s) did you use to obtain the results (please see the note in the section above on ethical use)?
- Lastly, indicate in your description which parts of your assignment were crafted with the aid of an AI generator.

Failure to provide the above information when you use generative AI is considered a violation of academic integrity.

Consult your Instructor

Failure to comply with these policies will result in reporting the academic misconduct to the Office of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions or doubts about what constitutes legitimate and ethical use of AI, please consult your 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 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).

Course Evaluations

At the end of the semester, all students will be provided with course evaluations to complete. Please complete them and provide your thoughtful feedback. I do read them and work to incorporate your feedback into future courses. Additionally, a mid-semester evaluation will also be distributed to enable feedback to be incorporated into the course.

Student 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.

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.