COMM 320: Small Group and Team Communication

This is a DRAFT. The content is subject to change.

4 units
Fall 2025
Section 20509
Meeting Days and Time: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:50pm Pacific
Meeting Location: Wallis Annenberg Hall (ANN), Room 406

Instructor: Julianna Kirschner, Ph.D.
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Email: jjkirsch@usc.edu
Note about email responses: I usually respond to emails expeditiously, but there are times when I may need 48 hours to get back to you. I generally stop or slow down in responding to emails after 7:00pm on weekdays. If you send an email over the weekend, I may not have the opportunity to respond until Monday.
Office: My office is located in ASC, suite G21B (Located on the lower level near the loading dock).
Office Hours: TBD

I. Course Description
Welcome to COMM 320, Small Group and Team Communication. This course will cover the following: *"Group process theories relevant to communicative behavior in small group/team settings, including information exchange, decision making, leadership, and meetings; student team projects testing theoretic propositions" (University Catalogue).*

This course will help you become a more effective and confident communicator within a team structure, and it emphasizes the development of skills that will enable you to contribute to a collective message. Theories of group decision-making and leadership will be explored to analyze group and team interaction. Preparation for organizational communication contexts will be highlighted through critical thinking and problem-solving projects.

II. Student Learning Outcomes
This course is designed with these objectives in mind:
- Compare theories of small group and team dynamics.
- Apply career building strategies in a team context.
- Cultivate communication skills that contribute to effective leadership.
- Discover, evaluate, and accurately report information about small group and team experiences.
- Cultivate skills to contribute to sustainability practices.
- Effectively prepare, practice, and deliver oral presentations in a team setting.
- Design a research agenda and convey results as a team.
- Evaluate the role of small groups and teams in connection with diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

III. Required Readings and Additional Course Notes

I will provide required reading materials on Brightspace (http://brightspace.usc.edu/). You do not need to purchase a textbook for this class. However, I do recommend having a printer with a full ink cartridge in the event that you want to print the readings.

Optional purchase:
Hirokawa, R. Y., et al. (2003). *Small Group Communication: Theory & Practice: An Anthology (8th Edition).* Oxford: Oxford UP. ISBN: 9780195330007

I don't post my slides on Brightspace, because they are not very helpful out of context. I design it this way on purpose to promote greater learning, rather than students just copying slides. I recommend reaching out to peers, so you can share notes.

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.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Response Assignments (35 points each, a total of 140 points): You will compose a total of four (4) response assignments to the reading that share your thoughts and interpretations. *Choose one type* for each response assignment (You can repeat the same type over several response assignments as you see fit. However, don't try to do all three for one response assignment). You may complete these assignments in any of the following forms:
- Infographic/artistic response (this must also include a brief written narrative, about 1-page double spaced, to address the requirements noted below)
- Recorded 8-10 minute video
- Recorded 8-10 minute podcast

If you have additional ideas for unique forms of this assignment, you may also propose an alternative form; however, you will have to email me at least a week before the deadline to propose this alternative form. My approval is required.

In each response assignment, you will answer (or illustrate your answer) at least three of the following questions. In each answer, offer a detailed argument and explanation using specific examples and citations from the assigned reading, video, and/or outside source (see italicized note below).
- What is unique about the argument made by the author?
- Do you agree with the author(s)? Do you disagree?
- Are there common fallacies or challenges associated with the topic discussed in the reading? (Use your outside source to support this claim.)
- How might you use the content from this reading/video in your future career? In your relationships? In other words, how might you apply these ideas in the "real world"?
- What theory or theories are discussed and/or applied in the reading?
- How has this assigned reading and outside source contributed to the work you are or will be doing in this class?
- What new questions has the assigned content sparked for you?

Don't read or include the questions you are answering in your response assignment itself. Simply provide your answers in the modality of your choosing. I will know from context which questions you are answering.

In addition to answering three of the above questions, find at least one credible outside source addressing the topic at hand, and use it to support your claim regarding the assigned reading. Regardless of the response type you select (infographic/artistic response, recorded video, recorded podcast), there are a few things to note about source citations:
- Cite sources verbally for both the video and podcast options. Pay attention to how I cite my sources in class to get an idea of how to do this. We can talk about verbal citations as a class if you need clarification.
- You are required to submit a References page with all sources used, including the class reading. This means you will have at least two sources: The applicable class reading and the credible outside source.

In terms of content, each response assignment requires the following:
- Regardless of the modality you selected (artistic response with a written statement, recorded video, or recorded podcast), the content should be developed enough to convey what you would have written in a comparable paper.
- Brightspace has space limitations. If your image, video, or audio files are too large, you will receive an error message. Before preparing to submit your work, I recommend uploading it to a shareable service: YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, Google Drive, etc. *You are required to make sure these files are accessible to me, so confirm that I am able to view it prior to submission.* Submitted assignments that are not accessible will receive a zero.
- *The response assignments are required to be turned in on Brightspace (as a link or direct upload, if the file size is small enough) before the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus calendar.*

Use this as an opportunity to actively engage with the course material, and share your thoughts about the issues raised in class. You are welcome to be creative in your response.

Hiring Committee Project (110 points): The hiring committee project serves as a formal introduction of yourself to the class and an opportunity to serve on a mock hiring committee. You will complete this project in a series of steps:
- Individually, you will find a real job posting, internship posting, or call for applications for a graduate program (choose one). You will practice applying for this position or graduate program as part of this assignment. All job, internship, or graduate school listings must be posted on Brightspace in PDF form by the date listed on the syllabus. When you submit your listing, I will also ask you to categorize the position (e.g., Is it a marketing internship? A job in the legal field? An MBA program?). A few words to describe the opportunity you selected will be sufficient.
- I will organize teams based on listing similarities and announce them in class. After the announcement has been made, your new team will have an opportunity to meet and exchange contact information. You will also share your selected job posting with your team.
- Your team will formulate specific questions for each interviewee. Every member of your team will be an interviewee, in addition to serving on the hiring committee.
- Each interview begins with a prepared pitch by the interviewee, which will prompted with the question, "Tell us about yourself." During the pitch, interviewees will discuss their

experiences and qualifications (We will discuss this in class in advance of the interviews). The pitch will last no more than 2 minutes.
- After the interviewee's pitch is over, the members of the hiring committee will take turns asking prepared questions of the interviewee. This will last 6 minutes.
- The interview will last a total of 8 minutes, which is inclusive of both the pitch and interview questions. Consider this exercise to be the first 8 minutes of what would normally be a much longer interview.
- When all interviews are complete, the rest of the class will have a discussion about the interviewing process and collective hiring practices.
- After your team's interviews have concluded, you will be asked to evaluate each team member and the team as a whole. Feedback will be submitted in a Qualtrics survey, and I will provide the link in class. *Feedback responses will be due no later than 1 week after all interviews have concluded.*

A more developed version of the hiring committee project guidelines will be provided on Brightspace.

Sustainability Project (150 points): In a team of 3-5 students, you will choose from two options:
- Option #1: You will complete a service project to support the mission of a charitable organization.
OR
- Option #2: You will serve as sustainability consultants for an organization.

If your team chooses **option #1**, you will perform a service project of some kind. This project will involve the following:
- Community Partners: I will provide you with access to community partners/organizations that have agreed to work with us. However, if you or a member of your team has an established volunteer history with a local organization, you may select that option. However, if you find your own organization, please let me know as soon as possible.
- Select an Organization: Teams will confirm their selected organization by the date noted on the syllabus calendar.
- Project Proposal: By the date noted on the syllabus calendar, your team will turn in a written proposal. There will be one proposal per team. The proposal will identify the organization receiving the service, and it will discuss a detailed plan describing what your team will do. Include dates and locations as part of your plan as well. The proposal will be 2-3 pages, double-spaced.
- Plan: Your team will carry out the plan after you receive my feedback on the proposal. At least one person in the team is responsible for photographing the event, but that responsibility can be rotated.
- Verbal Report: Your team will deliver a 7-8 minute verbal report on the project, and your team will include the event photos in a slide deck, which will be displayed during the presentation.
- Slide Presentation: Prepare a slide presentation (PowerPoint, Canva, Google Slides, etc.) to use during the verbal report noted above.
- Feedback: After your team's verbal report, you will be asked to evaluate the team as a whole. Feedback will be submitted in a Qualtrics survey, and I will provide the link in class. *Feedback responses will be due no later than 1 week after the presentation.*

If your team chooses **option #2**, you will develop a plan of action for an organization of your choice. Your group will choose an organization with which someone in the team has an existing connection

(e.g., an organization where a teammate is currently interning or has previously interned, an organization where a teammate has worked or continues to work part-time or full-time, etc.). The primary objective is to engage the organization as informal communication consultants and provide recommendations to improve their sustainability practices.

- Select an Organization: Teams will confirm their selected organization by the date noted on the syllabus calendar.
- Project Proposal: By the date noted on the course calendar, your group will turn in a written proposal on Brightspace. Only one proposal per group should be turned in, and it will be 2-3 full pages, double-spaced.
- Organizational Research: After receiving feedback on your team's proposal, investigate the areas for sustainability improvement your team already identified. Find materials to help you assess possible recommendations. Your team should locate 5 credible sources total to guide this process.
- Verbal Report: Your team will give a 7-8 minute presentation on the project. In the presentation your team should discuss the following: An overview of the plan developed by the group in the proposal, the research your group collected and connect it to the organization in question, the team's sustainability recommendations, and additional courses of action you would have taken if more time were available.
- Slide Presentation: Prepare a slide presentation (PowerPoint, Canva, Google Slides, etc.) to use during the presentation noted above.
- Feedback: After your team's verbal report, you will be asked to evaluate the team as a whole. Feedback will be submitted in a Qualtrics survey, and I will provide the link in class. *Feedback responses will be due no later than 1 week after the presentation.*

A more developed version of the sustainability project guidelines, including more details on options #1 and #2, will be provided on Brightspace.

Leading Team Project (200 points): In teams of 3-5 students, you will research a topic of the team's choosing. You are encouraged to consider sustainability-focused topics, but they are not required. After the topic is confirmed, you will develop an interactive agenda for the class. Your team will complete this project in a series of steps:

- After getting the input of all team members, you will share a list of ranked topics with me. By the next class meeting, I will make an announcement about team topics.
- Literature Review and Preliminary Agenda: After your topic has been approved, your team will begin researching. This part of the assignment will have a preliminary literature review and an overview of your interactive agenda. This assignment will be turned in on Brightspace on the day noted on the course calendar.
- Interactive Agenda: You will then carry out your approved plan for leading class. You will provide a brief introduction to your topic based on the research you conducted. Then, you will lead a discussion on your topic with the class. Be prepared with questions to get the conversation started. Then, you will engage the class in some kind of activity. It could be a role-playing exercise, a puzzle or game you created, a competitive exercise. The activity should tie into the topic you have selected. Be as creative as possible! Think about the delivery formats of media you find interesting: What makes them stand out? Why are they so engaging? You will have 15-20 minutes total, which includes the discussion and activity.
- Outline: Your team will turn in a general outline about the topic and what you have learned. Only one outline for the whole team is required. This outline will be submitted electronically, and it will be dispersed to the rest of the class. There will be questions on the final exam that pertain to each team's outline and activity.

- After your team's interactive agenda has concluded, you will be asked to evaluate the team as a whole. Feedback will be submitted in a Qualtrics survey, and I will provide the link in class. *Feedback responses will be due no later than 1 week after the scheduled interactive agenda.*

A more developed version of the leading team project guidelines will be provided on Brightspace.

> We will frame all presentational elements (e.g., interviews for the hiring committee project, verbal reports for the sustainability project, the interactive agenda for the leading team project, etc.) in a professional environment, so you will gain practice in a skill that you will use in the future. You should plan to dress accordingly on your scheduled interview/presentation day.

Exams (100 points for the Midterm Exam; 100 points for the Final Exam): The exams are based on the course readings, lecture material, and discussions in class. The midterm covers the first half of class, and the final covers the second half. Although the final is not cumulative, general knowledge of earlier material is expected. The questions are a mix of multiple choice and short answer. Further details will be provided in class.

In-Class Assignments (200 points): In-class assignments include but are not limited to the following:
- Check-in responses
- Team and/or pair exercises
- Problem-solving exercises
- Research scaffolding exercises
- Written responses to lecture content
- Impromptu speeches
- Extemporaneous and impromptu debates
- Creative collaborative assignments

These building block exercises we complete in class will be integral to your success and understanding of the practice of effective team building. In-class assignments also refer to your engagement in class. Lectures, presentations, class discussions, and class exercises are not the same without you. Furthermore, you should be willing to offer constructive feedback and receive it. Respect everyone in class and be willing to listen to a side of an argument with which you might not agree. See the class policies for more information on in-class conduct.

V. Grading
Grade Breakdown

Points Possible	% of Final Grade	Assignment
140 points	14%	Response Assignments (4 assignments at 35 points each)
110 points	11%	Hiring Committee Project
150 points	15%	Sustainability Project
200 points	20%	Leading Team Project
100 points	10%	Midterm Exam
100 points	10%	Final Exam
200 points	20%	In-Class Assignments
1000 points	**100%**	**Total Possible Points**

We will use the +/- system, and course grades will be determined using the following scale:

Earned Points	Percentage (%)	Grade
940-1000	94-100%	A
900-939.99	90-93.99%	A-
870-899.99	87-89.99%	B+
840-869.99	84-86.99%	B
800-839.99	80-83.99%	B-
770-799.99	77-79.99%	C+
740-769.99	74-76.99%	C
700-739.99	70-73.99%	C-
670-699.99	67-69.99%	D+
640-669.99	64-66.99%	D
600-639.99	60-63.99%	D-
0-599.99	0-59.99%	F

Grading Standards
Each assignment will have their own rubric, which will explain assessment in more detail how grades are calculated. In general, grades will generally reflect the following:

Grades	Quality of Assignment
A/A-	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B+/B/B-	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C+/C/C-	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D+/D/D-	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

Grading Timeframe and Missing or Inaccurate Score Inquiries/Disputes
I make a sincere effort to grade your assignments expediently. Every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams and post grades within two weeks. Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Brightspace. You are responsible for notifying me, the instructor, within one (1) week of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate. Moreover, you only have this period of time to contest a score on an assignment/exam. If you fail to inquire/notify me of any discrepancy, missing score, or contest a score within one week of the date the score is posted, no further changes will be made.

VI. Course Policies

Before I share what is expected of you, let me first share how I see my role. My goal is to help you reach your potential and fully realize your own humanity. Part of that realization also includes the acknowledgement of other people's agency. I want you to learn how to better communicate with other people and empathize with different positions than your own. I know these are lofty goals, but I see this class as a piece of the ever-evolving puzzle that is your university experience. I am here to help you navigate it to the best of my ability.

I also consider it my responsibility, indeed higher education's responsibility, to guide you to mastery of the professionalism you need to get, keep, and excel in the jobs you seek. In my work within and outside of academia, I have seen many talented people passed up for promotions, and others who have lost their positions because they did not know what was needed to succeed. I don't want that to be you. My policies are meant to help you avoid ending up like those who did not know how to work with rigor, adhere to standards, and/or comply with job requirements. I want you to succeed, so please contact me if you need further clarification on course concepts, assignments, and/or policies.

Read the following policies carefully. Enrollment in the class constitutes agreement with and understanding of these policies. Ignorance of these policies does not excuse their violation.

Due Dates

It is important that you keep up with the due dates, because we work together best when everyone is on the same page. Assignments are due on assigned days. Documented illnesses or emergencies are the only exception to this policy, and you will need to contact me *before* class begins whenever possible. Please bring documentation when applicable.

Interview, Verbal Reports, and Interactive Agenda Due Dates: When announced in class, you will have the opportunity to sign up for the dates your team will deliver presentations and interviews based on the syllabus schedule. As a class, we will try to accommodate everyone's request, but it is not guaranteed. The schedule will be provided after the sign-up process is complete. If a presentation is not delivered when scheduled, the highest percentage one can earn is 50% (e.g., if a student misses the interview for the hiring committee project, which is normally worth 110 points, a maximum of 55 points can be earned for late delivery. Also, this example assumes we will have time in class for make-ups, which is not always possible). Extenuating circumstances should be brought to my attention immediately.

Late Response Assignments and Other Work: Assignments not turned in on the day due will be given one grade lower than the one deserved for each day the assignment is late (for example, a "B" for an "A" quality paper if a response assignment is one day late, a "C" for an "A" quality assignment if it is two days late). If you submit an assignment late, you will have to contact me. Brightspace is not set to accept late assignments.

Missing an Exam: The midterm and final exams need to be completed when scheduled, and they cannot be made up.

Attendance and Participation

Much of the learning in a communication class comes from lectures, observing presentations, and participating in class discussions, so it is very important that you attend class. The University of Southern California prohibits the awarding of points solely on a student's physical presence in a

class. However, they allow the use of unexcused absences and excessive tardiness to count against a grade. This includes leaving class early.

Although I recognize that we all have other obligations outside of class, we will all benefit from everyone attending regularly. Changes in work schedule, personal celebrations (e.g., birthdays), transportation problems, etc. are not considered legitimate reasons to excuse an absence. If you do miss a class, it is important for your success to catch up on anything you might miss. Your success is partly due to having knowledge of all material covered in class, whether an absence is excused or not.

If you find yourself experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, in keeping with university recommendations, you should:
- Stay home! This is the best way to prevent spreading COVID-19 as supported by scientific evidence; Please do not come to an in-person class if you are feeling ill, particularly if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Nothing we do in our class is worth risking your health, my health, or the health or your peers.
- Contact your instructor to identify options available for keeping up with course requirements and content.

Documentation of your presence will be taken at the beginning of each class via Qwickly. If a student is present during class but does not check in using Qwickly, the student will be marked absent for that day. Keep in mind that signing in is simply not enough; you must actively participate and complete in-class assignments (see the in-class assignment description above for more details).

Your religious practices are supported and honored. If religious observances will prevent you from completing assigned work on a scheduled date, you are responsible for discussing this matter with me, your instructor, as soon as possible, and no later than the second week of classes. For the University Office of Religious Life policy regarding religious observations, see: https://orl.usc.edu/life/calendar/absences/
Accommodations will be made for such circumstances in accordance with University policies and guidelines.

Participation is part of your grade, but it is measured through in-class assignments. Engaging in discussion, completing in-class written work, collaborating in teamwork, etc. are some of the ways this portion is measured.

Grade Calculations
See grading breakdown in the earlier section on grading. More details about grade calculations are provided below.

If a student's final grade is on the cusp between one grade and another, I reserve the right to adjust grades up based on engagement in class. For example, students with a final grade of 89.99% may earn an A- (instead of a B+ grade) if they have made a significant contribution in class activities and discussions. However, if that is not the case, the grade will remain as is. I will never lower a student's grade below what he, she, or they have earned. To protect your privacy, please note that I will not send grades or grade-specific information via email. Grades and feedback will be available on Brightspace.

If you have a problem or question about performance on an assignment, you must contact me within a week of receiving your grade. I give you a great deal of feedback on your assignments, so

please review these comments before attempting to dispute a grade. If you are disputing a grade for an assignment (see earlier note about grade disputes in the grading section above), you must reference the assignment guidelines I have provided, and put your concerns in writing. Consider also these questions:

- Was your assignment submitted on time?
- Did you follow the directions of the assignment?
- Did you turn in your best work? If it was a written assignment, did you use proper grammar and syntax? Did you misspell words? Was your work neat and professional? Did you use weird spacing to make the paper appear longer than it really was?
- Did you practice your presentation? If the work was an oral assignment, did you complete the presentation within the allotted time limit? Did you read your presentation as opposed to presenting it?
- Did you credit your sources? Are your references properly formatted?
- Did you wait until the last minute to complete the assignment?

Again, please come see me within a week of receiving feedback on an assignment if you have questions about how it was evaluated. I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss ways you can improve. The earlier you ask for help, the better!

Guest Speakers
Whenever possible, I invite guests to visit and speak with our class. Guest speakers take time out of their schedules to come speak with you on important topics related to this class. Please focus on the guest speaker when they are present. Ask them questions and participate in discussion, which will count toward your in-class assignments grade.

Courtesy to Others
Promptness is expected as a general rule. If you should happen to be late on a presentation day, wait in the hall until you hear applause and then enter. I cannot stress this enough—DO NOT walk in during another team's presentation. If we are having a lecture or discussion, come in only when appropriate. Public speaking in general can create a lot of anxiety for people, and the classroom must remain a safe place for everyone.

Recording
This class will be entirely in person, so we will not be recording class. The only time I anticipate holding class on Zoom is in the off chance that I am ill or COVID-positive. Should that be the case, I will give you as much notice as possible. I may need to change this policy if the need arises.

Please remember that USC policy prohibits sharing of any course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of course material under existing student handbook policies regarding class notes (https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- My priority as your professor is to ensure a safe, respectful education environment where all students can learn and thrive. The University does not tolerate any form of protected class discrimination or harassment (e.g., discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, pregnancy, etc.). This includes sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking, or related retaliation.

- The university values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.
- As your professor, I hold the fundamental belief that everyone in the class is fully capable of engaging and mastering the material. My goal is to meet everyone at least halfway in the learning process. Our classroom should be an inclusive space, where ideas, questions, and misconceptions can be discussed with respect. There is usually more than one way to see and solve a problem and we will all be richer if we can be open to multiple paths to knowledge. I look forward to getting to know you all, as individuals and as a learning community.
- As your instructor, I am committed to creating a classroom environment that welcomes all students, regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, etc. We all have implicit biases, and I will try to continually examine my judgments, words, and actions to keep my biases in check and treat everyone fairly. I hope that you will do the same, that you will let me know if there is anything I can do to make sure everyone is encouraged to succeed in this class.
- The topics that we're covering in this class are often difficult, not just intellectually but emotionally. While I expect there to be rigorous discussion and even disagreement in the course of our class discussions, I ask that you engage in discussion with care and empathy for the other members in the classroom. Aim to disagree without becoming disagreeable. In this class we will not shy away from the uncomfortable. Critically examining and assessing our most basic assumptions and values is not just one of the tasks of philosophy but is an activity vital to living an authentic life. I urge you to have the courage to be uncomfortable in this class. In exchange for your courage, I will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

Gender Pronouns and Language Use
USC students can change their name or gender pronouns online through myUSC. Student choices may reflect nicknames, middle names, or names that better align with their gender identities.
- A critical part of building a learning environment that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity is asking and correctly using someone's name and pronouns. You can add your pronouns in the myUSC system. Names and pronouns may change during the term, so feel free at any point to let me know that you would like to be addressed differently. As a community, we will strive to address each other with the names and pronouns identified. If we make mistakes or are corrected, we will briefly apologize and correct ourselves.
- I will gladly honor your request to address you by your chosen name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this at any point in the semester so I can make the appropriate changes. If I accidentally use an incorrect gender pronoun when addressing you, please feel free to let me know, in whatever manner makes you comfortable, what pronouns you use so that I can make every effort to correct that error.
- It is important to establish mechanisms to acknowledge and support individuals' self-identification. One way we can support self-identification is by honoring the name and pronouns that each of us go by. In this classroom, we seek to refer to people by the names they go by.

Please use gender-neutral language in your speaking and writing. Because the language we speak and write leads us to perceive in certain ways, gender-neutral language will help all of us perceive women, men, trans women, trans men, and non-binary/third gender folks on equal terms,

participating equally in the world. For example, use *he, she, or them* instead of *he* when the person to whom you are referring could be of any gender. Similarly, use *people* or *humanity* or *individuals* instead of *man* or *mankind*, *you* or *you all* instead of *you guys*, and *chair* or *sales representative* instead of *chairman* or *salesman*. If you need more clarification on this policy, please ask me! Here is a syllabus treat: If you see this message on or before September 12, 2025, send me an email listing the title of your favorite book and the author who wrote it. If you do this by the deadline, you will receive 5 extra credit points.

Content Notifications
In this course, we will discuss a variety of sensitive topics. It is important that we discuss these issues respectfully, avoiding stereotypes and the impulse to diagnose ourselves and those around us. If at any point, you have concerns about class content or want to discuss your personal reactions, I encourage you to email me, come to office hours, or schedule an appointment.

Please prepare for sensitive topics accordingly and employ self-care throughout in-class discussion. One self-care option is to make use of Counseling and Mental Health Services (in USC Student Health). Given the nature of topics covered, some course materials may include uncensored content, which some class members may find offensive. I will provide forewarning of such instances.

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.

Land Acknowledgement
This statement has been adapted from Van Hunnick History Department of USC:
We acknowledge our presence on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Tongva people and their neighbors: (from North to South) the Chumash, Tataviam, Kitanemuk, Serrano, Cahuilla, Payomkawichum, Acjachemen, Ipai-Tipai, Kumeyaay, and Quechan peoples, whose ancestors ruled the region we now call Southern California for at least 9,000 years. We pay respects to the members and elders of these communities, past and present, who remain stewards, caretakers, and advocates of these lands, river systems, and the waters and islands of the Santa Barbara Channel.

Statement on Academic Conduct
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

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

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

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.
Sources *must* be cited properly. MLA or APA are acceptable citation formats for this class, but if you would prefer another style, please notify me in advance. Also, if you are unclear about proper citation, please ask. It is better to ask than to assume, especially in this case.

Artificial Intelligence Policy
Students must obtain permission from me before using AI composition software (like ChatGPT) for any assignments in this course. Using these tools without my permission puts your academic integrity at risk.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:
- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Fine tuning your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:
- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose written assignments assigned to you.

- Completing group work that your team has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool (this agreement must be made with your team and the instructor).
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will receive a zero. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

Please Note: I will not be using any AI tools in writing the feedback I provide you. All comments will be mine and written personally by me.

VII. Support Systems
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.

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
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
http://988lifeline.org/
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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
http://eeotix.usc.edu/
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
http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
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; formerly Disability Services and Programs) - (213) 740-0776
osas.usc.edu
Support and accommodations for students. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411
http://campussupport.usc.edu/
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
http://diversity.usc.edu/
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.usc.edu
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
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
http://ombuds.usc.edu/
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
http://chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice

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

TrojansAlert
https://dps.usc.edu/services/trojans-alerts/
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
https://safety.usc.edu/
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 Brightspace, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

ITS Customer Support Center (CSC): (213) 740-5555
https://itservices.usc.edu/students/
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
https://policy.usc.edu/violence-free-campus/
Visit the website to read more about prohibited behaviors, reporting responsibilities and where to report.

Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters
https://saas.usc.edu/academic-support-services/travel/
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.

VIII. COMM 320 Course Schedule

Be advised that this calendar is subject to change—and probably will change—based on the progress of the class, news and world events, and/or guest speaker availability. An updated version will be provided on Brightspace if and when changes occur.

Note: All readings will be available on Brightspace.

Week	Date	In-Class Activities & Topics	Required Reading	Assignments Due
1		Course Introduction		
		Group Practices & Approaches	*When Small Teams Are Better than Big Ones*, Wang & Evans	
2		Systematic Thinking	*Groups as Systems*, Henman	
		Solving Problems	*Why Diverse Teams are Smarter*, Rock & Grant	Copy of Job, Internship, or Grad School Listing Due
3		Small Group Theories	*Symbolic Convergence Theory*, Bormann	
		Preparing to Collaborate & Hiring Committees Announced	*Group Communication and the Structuring Process*, Poole	Resume Due
4		Anticipating Teamwork & Workshop Interview Questions	*Transactive Memory Theory and Teams: Past, Present, and Future*, Hollingshead, et al. (Read the first 9 pages.)	Response Assignment 1 Due
		Group Development & Workshop Interviewee Pitch	*Multiple Sequence Model of Group Development*, Poole	
5		Hiring Committee Interviews		
		Hiring Committee Interviews		
6		Hiring Committee Interviews		
		Spatial Relationships	*Space as a Resource in the Politics of Consumer Identity*, Maciel & Wallendorf (Read the first 8 pages.)	Cover Letter Due
7		Team Process & Form Sustainability Project Teams	*Feedback Processes in Task Groups*, Haslett & Ogilvie	Complete Sustainability Training
		Interpersonal Communication	*Relational Leadership for Sustainability: Building an Ethical*	

		Select organization for Sustainability Project	*Framework from the Moral Theory of 'Ethics of Care,'* Nicholson & Kurucz	
8		Midterm Exam Review	*Perceiving Leadership Structures in Teams: Effects of Cognitive Schemas and Perceived Communication,* Cook, et al. (Read the first 12 pages.)	Response Assignment 2 Due
		Leading Change	*Ch-Ch-Ch-changes: How Action Phase Functional Leadership, Team Human Capital, and Interim vs. Permanent Leader Status Impact Post-transition Team Performance,* Maynard, et al. (Read the first 9 pages.)	
9		Sustainability and Leadership	*The Value Relevance of Reputation for Sustainability Leadership,* Lourenço, et al.	Midterm Exam Due
		Leadership and Gender (Continued) Confirm teams for the Leading Team Project	*Women and Leadership: Selection, Development, Leadership Style, and Performance,* Gipson, et al.	Sustainability Project Proposal Due
10		Leadership and Culture	*Culture of Candor,* O'Toole & Bennis	
		Leadership and Culture (Continued)	*Toward a Racially Just Workplace,* Roberts & Mayo	Response Assignment 3 Due
11		Sustainability Project Verbal Reports	*External Communication About Sustainability: Corporate Social Responsibility Reports and Social Media Activity,* Reilly & Larya	Sustainability Project slide deck due (for those presenting)
		Sustainability Project Verbal Reports	*Exploring Member-Leader Behaviors and Interaction in an Online Support Group,* Emily A. Paskewitz & Stephenson J. Beck	Sustainability Project slide deck due (for those presenting)
12		Online Case Studies of Groups and Teams	*Computer-Mediated False Consensus: Radical Online Groups, Social Networks and News Media,* Magdalena E. Wojcieszak	
		Online Case Studies of Groups and Teams	*100 million strong: A case study of group identification and deindividuation on Imgur.com,* Jude P. Mikal, et al.	Leading Team Literature Review & Preliminary Agenda Due

13		Evaluating Groups and Teams	*Evaluating Group Discussion,* Beebe & Barge	Response Assignment 4 Due
		Class Selected Topic	TBA	
14		Leading Team Interactive Agendas		All Leading Team Outlines Due
		Leading Team Interactive Agendas		
15		Leading Team Interactive Agendas		
		Final Exam Review		
Study Days	TBD			
Finals Week	TBD	Final Exam		