

COMM 375: BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SPRING 2008

Instructor: Paula D. (Patnoe) Woodley
Office: ASC Room 227, #4
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday
2:00 - 3:00 p.m. or by appointment

Section: TTH, 12:30-1:50 p.m., ASC# 331
Telephone: 323-683-4831(cell)
E-mail: woodley@usc.edu

COURSE GOALS

The overall goal of this course is to develop your professional communication skills and knowledge. While we will cover some theory to enhance your understanding of the business world, the bulk of our time will be spent focused on your applied skills in the communication field. I would like you to walk out of this class confident that you can deliver excellent presentations; be comfortable and successful in interviews; write first-rate cover letters and resumes; and have a basic understanding of important communication and business-related issues that you will encounter in the work force.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your version of the text below is an abbreviated, custom edited version. It is only available through the USC bookstore.

- **Adler, R. B. & Elmhorst, J. M. (2008). *Communicating at work (9th Ed.)*, McGraw-Hill.**
- Several additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester. As indicated on your syllabus, readings will be posted on Blackboard (Bb), with others may be emailed to your USC address, or provided as handouts in class. Additionally, some readings may be on electronic library reserve (accessible through Online Reserve).

COURSE STANDARDS

1. This course will be as action-packed as you should expect your professional life to be.
2. The requirements of consistent attendance, punctuality and active participation are essential to your success and will affect your grade.
3. Missing class is no more acceptable than it would be to miss important workdays at any company. Excessive absences and tardiness can adversely affect your grade up to 1/3 of your total grade.
4. The deadline for any assignment, reading, or presentation is at the very beginning of class that it is due. *These deadlines will come up often: don't allow yourself to fall behind!*
5. Missing a presentation, assignment or exam will result in a failing grade on that assignment unless you have physical proof of some serious emergency that prohibited your presence (e.g., a bill from the paramedics).
6. All assignments missed due to an excused absence must be made up within one week of returning to class.
7. Students who are instant messaging, web surfing, or involved in other similar activities during class will be marked as absent. Cell phones are to be turned OFF, *not* on "vibrate."
8. Presentations and papers must be the original work of the student and not used for any other course. Violation of this policy is an Academic Integrity Violation.
9. Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner. There is a 24-hour "wait period" after receiving a grade, but then you should address questions within the next 10 days.
10. You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

Note: While it is not a prerequisite, it is strongly recommended that you take COMM 204 or an equivalent public speaking class before enrolling in this class.

Here's the fine print. Read it.

- Any student who misses more than four classes may fail the course.
- If you turn in an assignment late, it will be downgraded by a full letter grade for every day it is late.
- Should you miss a class and not receive reading materials or an assignment; it is **your** responsibility to obtain it either from your classmates or instructor. Be sure to check Blackboard first.
- All elements required of every assignment must be turned in on the due date. Missing elements cannot be turned in late and will result in a 10% grade deduction on the assignment.
- Student's attire should be appropriate for a business setting on speech days. Unprofessional dress can negatively affect perceptions of credibility as well as your grade.
- Typos, grammatical and punctuation errors, page layout inconsistencies, etc. count greatly in this class. Expect to lose valuable points for these types of errors on all of your assignments. *Proofread your work!*

ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The Annenberg School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the policies and procedures detailed in the *SCampus* guide section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING (percentages are approximate)

Formal Presentations

Introductory Presentation	25 points	30% -- 160 points
Informative Presentation	60 points	
Persuasive Presentation	75 points	

Written, Oral and Group Assignments

Goals Essay	20 points	35% -- 195 points
Job Package	65 points	
Group Project	45 points	
Informational Interview Project	65 points	

Exam

Quizzes (assigned and pop)	45 points	
Final Exam	100 points	25% -- 145 points

Misc. Points

Will be given for class participation, etc.

50 points	10% -- 50 points
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TOTAL

100% -- 550 points

Participation (including attendance, promptness, being prepared for class discussions, participation in classroom activities, courtesy and professionalism) will significantly affect your grade.

Your personal improvement is highly valued in this class. Even if you already possess superior skills, you should incorporate feedback and make improvements from one assignment to the next. Such demonstrations of improvement are necessary and will be reflected in your grade.

SYLLABUS

Readings should be completed prior to class the day they are scheduled. Bb=find readings on Blackboard; Reserve=retrieve through library electronic reserve.

This schedule is subject to change.

<u>Wk</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1	Jan. 15	Course Introduction Presentation Boot Camp I Organizing your presentation		
	Jan. 17	Presentation Boot Camp II Delivery with confidence		1) A&E Ch. 10 2) Handouts given in class & on Bb
2	Jan. 22	Presentation Boot Camp III Informative presentations	Goals Essay	1) A&E Ch. 13
	Jan. 24	<u>Introductory Presentations</u>	Presentations	
3	Jan. 29	<u>Introductory Presentations</u> Visual Aids (PowerPoint design elements)	Presentations (day 2, if needed)	1) Handouts & PowerPoint presentation (Bb)
	Jan. 31	Resumes & Cover Letters Special guest: Megan Hutaff Annenberg Career Center		1) A&E Appendix pp. 517-529 (handout); 2) Greene, B., <i>Get the Interview Every Time</i> (Bb); 3) Handouts provided in class by Megan
4	Feb. 5	Working in Groups & Teams I	Topic Proposal for Informative Presentation	1) A&E Ch. 8
	Feb. 7	Working in Groups & Teams II Short presentation by Suzanne Alcantara Annenberg Career Center (Myers Briggs)	Quiz 1	

5	Feb. 12	Writing for Business	Myers Briggs questionnaire due to Suzanne	1) Danziger, E., <i>Get to the Point</i> (Bb); 2) <i>OWL Business Writing handouts</i> (Bb)
	Feb. 14	Resume & Cover Letter Clinic	Draft of Resume (bring 2 copies/red pen)	
6	Feb. 19	Culture at Work	Group Project Presentation - Team 1	1) A&E Ch. 2
	Feb. 21	Session on Myers Briggs Special guest: Suzanne Alcantara Annenberg Career Center		
7	Feb. 26	<u>Informative Presentations</u>	Presentations	
	Feb. 28	<u>Informative Presentations</u>	Presentations (day 2) (Team 1 members will present on day 2.)	
8	Mar. 4	Interviewing Skills Special guest: Linda "Tish" Tisherman Staff Support	Quiz 2	1) Handouts provided in class by Tish 2) Interview tips & articles (Bb) 3) Interviewing worksheet (Bb)
	Mar. 6	Workplace Communication I Listening	Group Project Presentation - Team 2	1) A&E Ch. 3
9	Mar. 11	Presentation on Public Relations Special guest: Merry Aronson, MerryMedia		
	Mar. 13	Mock Interviews with Suzanne & Megan <i>Location TBA</i>	Bring in completed Interviewing Worksheet Business attire required Job Package	1) Handouts in class
	Mar. 18			
	Mar. 20	SPRING BREAK	HAVE A GREAT WEEK OFF!	
10	Mar. 25	Interpersonal Skills		1) A&E Ch. 5
	Mar. 27	Interpersonal Skills II Dealing with Difficult People		1) McRae. B., <i>Negotiating & Influencing Skills</i> (Bb)

11	Apr. 1	Workplace Communication II Verbal & Nonverbal Messages; Sexual Harassment	Group Project Presentation - Group 3	1) A&E Ch. 4
	Apr. 3	Page Layout & Design Basics Special guest: TBA	Quiz 3	1) Bring in examples of good and bad design 2) <i>Ten Most Common Mistakes</i> (Bb) 3) <i>Six Questions</i> (Bb)
12	Apr. 8	<u>Informational Interview Reports</u>	Project Due; Oral Reports	
	Apr. 10	<u>Informational Interview Reports</u>	Oral Reports (day 2)	
13	Apr. 15	Strategies for Effective Persuasive Presentations		1) A&E Ch. 14 2) Handouts (Bb) 3) PowerPoint (Bb)
	Apr. 17	Networking		1) Cohen-Leadholt, B. et al, <i>Have No Career Fear</i> (hard copies provided) 2) Other readings TBA
14	Apr. 22	<u>Persuasive Presentations</u> <i>Location TBD</i>	Presentations Business attire required	
	Apr. 24	<u>Persuasive Presentations</u> <i>Location TBD</i>	Presentations (day 2) Business attire required	
15	Apr. 29	Max Sacks International: Special Sales Training Session		Handout provided in class
	May 1	Final Exam Review and Course Wrap-up		
	May 14 (Wed.)	FINAL EXAM 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.		

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS (see Blackboard for the complete assignments)

Introductory Presentation

This is a short presentation about a topic that you hold deep convictions about. Your purpose is NOT to convince us to see the issue your way, but simply to share with us why you think your topic is

important. An outline will be required. No visual aids. This is your chance to get back into practice giving presentations.

College & Career Goals Essay

This is a 1-page paper on what your college goals are and what direction(s) you are considering for after graduation. This will be your first attempt at writing *succinctly*. Please keep in mind that it is much more difficult to get your entire message across in one page than it is two or more - be prepared to edit! This assignment will allow me to learn more about you and to see how you write. (Digital Dropbox)

Informative Presentation

This is a presentation (with visual aids of any type) on noteworthy current events, "hot topics," or new trends that will require extensive research, analysis of the situation and more. The instructor must approve each topic, as only one person per topic is allowed.

Group Assignment

The class will be broken into three groups. Each group will be provided with a different course topic (from a text book chapter) from which they will present required key issues. All members of the team will participate in a presentation consisting of PowerPoint slides, a class-participation activity, and a handout you prepare for the class.

Job Package

Your completed job package is the key to a successful job search. For this assignment, you will locate a job you are interested in, develop a cover letter, resume and obtain references. Hint: an effective resume requires numerous revisions. Plan your time accordingly.

Informational Interview

For this project, you will interview an individual that currently holds a job that you are considering. The interviewee must hold a position that you would be qualified for within three years after graduation (i.e. no management positions). You will write a 1-2 page executive summary in a memorandum format as well as give a brief oral presentation on your experience. This assignment is more time-consuming than it looks. Start early!

Persuasive Presentation

For this assignment, you will individually prepare and deliver a presentation with PowerPoint to a foundation with the intent of persuading them to fund your charity. As with any business-related presentation - particularly those requesting donated funds in support of a cause - careful research, preparation and practice are critical to make this a successful presentation.

Quizzes and Final Exam

There will be three assigned quizzes (and maybe some pop quizzes) this semester. The final exam will be comprehensive. All will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions taken from your readings, class lectures, discussions, and activities.