

# **WRT 276: Communicating Your Professional Identity in Political Science & International Relations (PSC/IR 299)**

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Spring: CRN: 41342 2 credits  
Instructor: Kellie Hernandez  
Office Hours: Monday 12-1, Tuesday 12-1,  
Wednesday 4-5, Or by appointment

Thursday, 1650-1805, Dewey 4-162  
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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This interactive course teaches “real life” communication skills and strategies that help students present their best professional selves and develop a fulfilling career. Students will explore and articulate their internship, career and graduate school goals for distinct audiences and purposes as they develop a professional communication portfolio of materials such as resumes, cover letters, statements of purpose, electronic communications, elevator pitches, project descriptions and abstracts, and online profiles (i.e., LinkedIn). Students will revise and refine their written and spoken work across the semester based on feedback from peers, instructors, and alumni. By the semester’s end, students will have gained extensive experience with the communication skills expected in today’s competitive environment.

## **COURSE GOALS**

Through this course, you will learn to:

- Discover and define your professional identity/identities.
- Research and define your audience.
- Tailor your message to audience and purpose.
- Avoid unintended messages.
- Represent yourself and your message in various situations (e.g., written correspondence, spontaneous conversations, and interviews) and through different media (writing, speaking, and online).
- Expand your understanding of what it means to be professional in different contexts.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Readings and handouts are available via Blackboard.

## **CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE**

In the context of this course, acting responsibly involves attending all classes and meetings, arriving on time to class and out-of-class meetings, being fully present during class and during meetings (no use of cell phones, personal email, or social networking sites), responding promptly to communications, completing all assignments on time, providing and listening to feedback in a thoughtful manner, and generally being a good citizen.

A critical outcome for this class is increasing awareness of appropriate professional behavior in our multicultural world. We recognize that you all come into this class with different understandings of professionalism based on different cultural backgrounds and experiences. For this reason, we encourage you to use our course as a space to ask questions and come to common (if not always shared) understandings of what it means to be professional in different contexts.

## **LAPTOPS/TABLETS IN CLASS**

You are welcome to bring your laptop or tablet to any class, as in-class activities will often involve writing. For the classes in which a laptop/tablet is required, please notify me in advance if you do not own one; we may be able to make arrangements. When using a laptop or tablet in class, please avoid distracting behavior, as previously described.

## **INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS**

Because our class meets just once a week, I will do my best to give you written feedback on your work within a week of receiving assignments. I will post comments and feedback through Blackboard.

## **PEER FEEDBACK**

Throughout the semester you will receive feedback from your instructor, peers, and Real Readers (described below) on your work: this includes your writing, speaking, listening, peer review and work during in-class activities. This feedback is meant to help you strengthen your professional communication skills. You'll document your level of success in these areas through self-reflections, responsiveness to feedback on individual assignments, and a final portfolio.

In working with your peers during peer feedback workshops and activities, personal and sensitive information may on occasion be shared. This information should remain in the classroom and never be shared with others outside of our class. Please consult me with concerns.

## **REAL READER PROGRAM**

In this class, you will interact with "Real Readers"—alumni and professionals in the world of work who can tell you about their professions and act as a relevant audience for your work. We will discuss how to work with the Real Readers in a professionally appropriate way as part of the course. Please note that working with Real Readers (most of whom are UR alumni) is a benefit of enrolling in this course. Since your partnership with a Real Reader is part of this class, please do not share his or her contact information with others. If you have any questions about appropriate interactions with Real Readers outside of the regular assignments, please ask me.

## **CONTACTING YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

I will be delighted to discuss your suggestions, ideas, and concerns about this course with you. You should feel free to drop by during my office hours (see page 1), or I'm happy to make other arrangements. Please email me in advance if you need to cancel an appointment.

Email is the best way to reach me for quick questions and concerns. I will generally respond to all emails within 24 hours. Please plan your electronic communications accordingly.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING<sup>1</sup>**

Rather than providing an individual grade for each assignment, your course performance will be assessed using the grading method described below. This method has been designed to account for your commitment to meeting expectations of professional behavior, your engagement in the process of becoming a flexible, conscious communicator, and assessments of the quality of your work by both your instructor and your Real Reader.

No Incomplete will be given, except in the case of medical or other documented emergency.

**Your final grade will be comprised of the following components (see below for full explanation of what these entail):**

- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Contract grade:         | 50% of final grade |
| 2. Final portfolio:        | 40% of final grade |
| 3. Real Reader assessment: | 10% of final grade |

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Deborah Rossen-Knill's course at the University of Rochester, WRT 245: Advanced Writing and Peer Tutoring; Risa Applegarth's writing course at the University of North Carolina; and Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow, "A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching," CCC 61:2 (December 2009): 244-268.

## 1.) Contract Grade

Contract grading is an approach that gives you a great deal of control over your course work and grade. Essentially, the components of the contract for this course include the extent to which you have completed basic course requirements (or not: i.e., contract breaches—see below) and the number of additional activities you choose to complete.

### How Does Contract Grading Work in this Course?

50% of your final course grade is contract based and equals ***basic requirements*** (see section I) plus ***additional activities*** of your choice (see section II), with grade reductions resulting from any ***breaches*** (see section III).

This is represented by the following equation:

$$50\% \text{ of final grade} = [\text{Basic Requirements} + \text{Additional Activities}] - \text{Breaches}$$

### (I) Basic Requirements

Attend class and be on time.
Be prepared for and engage productively in class activities.
Complete all assignments on time and according to criteria.
Interact with instructor, classmates and Real Reader respectfully and with integrity.
Copyedit all final revisions of assignments so that they conform to the standards of edited, standardized English.
Use genre- and audience-appropriate citation methods (e.g., web link, in-text attribution, formal academic citation) to document all material that is not your own.
Communicate with your instructor (ideally in advance) about any issues that prevent you from meeting course requirements.

### (II) Additional Activities

Additional activities are flexible opportunities to further practice your writing and speaking skills, as well as to explore and develop your professional identity. There are three categories of additional activities you can complete: **Writing**, **Speaking**, and **Professional Development**. A 500-word reflection paper is required for each additional activity; see separate Additional Activities Guidelines handout for specific instructions regarding additional activity options and what is expected of these reflections.

You may complete a maximum of five additional activities: two per month unless permitted otherwise by instructor. Additional activities that fall into multiple categories may only count once.

Assuming that you have met all of the basic requirements as detailed in Part I, additional activities affect your contract grade in the following way:

- no additional activities = **B-**.
- two additional activities (must include Writing and one other category) = **B**.
- three additional activities (must include Writing and at least one other category) = **B+**.
- four additional activities (must include at least one from each category) = **A-**.
- five additional activities (must include at least one from each category) = **A**.

### (III) Breaches

Failing to meet the basic requirements detailed in Section I, or “breaches,” will affect your course grade in the following ways:

- A **major breach** typically involves requirements that, if not met, significantly hinder your ability or your classmates’ ability to learn positively and productively from course activities; or behaviors that negatively affect our classroom atmosphere. Major breaches include such things as:
  - Missing class without a valid reason and without prior permission of instructor
  - Turning in the midpoint or final portfolio late to instructor or Real Reader
  - Not turning in an assignment to instructor or Real Reader
  - Not completing a peer review activity

- Failing to incorporate feedback received from peers, instructor, and Real Reader when revising assignments

**Each major breach will lower your contract grade (based on basic requirements and additional activities, as described above) by 1/3 of a letter grade.** For example, a grade of B would be lowered to a B-

- A **minor breach** typically involves requirements that, if not met, negatively affect our classroom atmosphere and/or your learning, but not in a severe way, including such things as:
  - Arriving late to class
  - Poor workmanship on an assignment
  - Turning in an assignment late to instructor or Real Reader (applies to assignments other than the midpoint and final portfolios, which count as a major breach)

**Three minor breaches equal one major breach.**

## 2.) Final Portfolio

40% of your final course grade will be based on how well your final portfolio meets the specific assessment criteria described in the assignment prompt. The portfolio will be given a letter grade.

- In general, an A-range paper may need a tweak here or there, but generally accomplishes all the expectations well.
- A B-range paper may need tweaking in many ways, or it might be quite effective in some ways but not others.
- A C-range paper carries out each expectation, but in a way that consistently requires some revision (as opposed to editing).
- A grade below a C fails to carry out several expectations in a competent way, or completely fails to address a key expectation.

## 3.) Real Reader Assessment

As 10% of your final course grade, your Real Reader will assess your written and spoken communication skills, as evidenced by your final portfolio submitted at the end of the semester, as well as the level of professionalism you have exhibited in interacting with your Real Reader throughout the semester.

Real Readers will provide their assessment through answers to the follow two questions:

1. Hypothetically, how likely would you be to refer this student to your network of contacts based on the quality of the materials you have reviewed?
2. Hypothetically, how likely would you be to refer this student to your network of contacts based on the student's professional behavior?

These questions are answered on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not likely and 5 = extremely likely.

In the event that your Real Reader does not submit the assessment, you will not be penalized, provided you submitted the portfolio to your Real Reader on time. In this case, your contract grade will make up 55% of your final grade, and final portfolio quality will make up 45% of your final grade.

Portfolios submitted late may not be reviewed by your Real Reader; in this case, you will receive a zero for the 10% Real Reader assessment.

## How Grades Are Computed

Following is the 100-point scale used for calculating your final grade. Please also see separate grading worksheet.

<u>LETTER → NUMERICAL GRADE</u>	<u>REAL READER ASSESSMENT SCALE</u>	<u>RANGE</u>
A = 97	5.0 = A (97)	95 – 100 = A
A- = 92.5	4.5 = A- (92.5)	90 – 94 = A-
B+ = 88	4.0 = B+ (88)	87 – 89 = B+
B = 85	3.5 = B (85)	83 – 86 = B
B- = 81	3.0 = B- (81)	80 – 82 = B-
C+ = 78	2.5 = C+ (78)	77 – 79 = C+

C = 74.5	2.0 = C (74.5)	73 – 76 = C
C- = 71	1.5 = C- (71)	70 – 72 = C-
D+ = 68	1.0 = D+ (68)	67 – 69 = D+
D = 64.5	No feedback due to late	63 – 66 = D
D- = 61	submission = 0	60 – 62 = D-
E = 58		Below 60 = E

No assignment submitted = 0

### Example:

Contract grade of B+	88 x 50%
Final portfolio grade of B	85 x 40%
Real Reader assessment of 5 & 5 (A)	$\frac{97 \times 10\%}{}$
Final course grade	= 87.7 → <b>B+</b>

## POLICIES ON ABSENCES, LATE AND MISSED WORK

As stated previously, you are expected to meet certain standards of professional behavior in this course. Not meeting these expectations (such as missing class without prior notice, turning in work late or not making up missed work) count as major or minor breaches of the contract.

### Absences and Missed Classwork

While attendance at all classes is required, absences due to illness or religious holiday observance are excused as per College policies. Advance notice is required, and missed work must be made up as the instructor deems appropriate. Not completing make-up work will result in the absence counting as a major breach.

### Late Assignments:

- Up to one week late: counts as one minor breach
- Up to two weeks late: counts as two minor breaches
- More than two weeks late: becomes a major breach
- Turning in the midpoint and/or final portfolio late to your instructor or Real Reader counts as a major breach.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY<sup>2</sup>

As the Writing, Speaking and Argument Program states, “it is through our own honesty and our trust in others’ honesty that we can learn from each other and work together to create new knowledge. For this reason, when dishonesty enters our community, we put in question all of the work we do and undermine our ability to bring new knowledge and good to the world”

([http://writing.rochester.edu/InstructorResources/InstructorManual/WSAP\\_syllabus\\_guidelines.pdf](http://writing.rochester.edu/InstructorResources/InstructorManual/WSAP_syllabus_guidelines.pdf)).

As defined in the University of Rochester College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering Academic Honesty Policy (<https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy.html>):

**Academic honesty** means acting with truthfulness and sincerity in carrying out all aspects of our individual and collaborative work, maintaining ownership over our work and acknowledging our debt to the work of others.

[**Plagiarism** is] the representation of another person’s work as one’s own, or the attempt “to blur the line between one’s own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source.” (Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003, <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>). More specifically, [it is] the use of an idea, phrase, or other material from a written or spoken source without signaling the source at the place of use in a work for which the student claims authorship.

This applies to all drafts of work submitted, both rough and final, including written work, spoken work, online media such as LinkedIn, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Solveiga Armoskaite and Deborah Rossen-Knill’s course at the University of Rochester, LIN 161: Modern English Grammar.

In cases of suspected academic dishonesty or plagiarism, the College's procedures and policies governing academic honesty will be followed. Any incident of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the Board on Academic Honesty and be subject to the academic honesty policy's sanctioning guidelines.

An academic honesty policy violation can affect not just your grade, but also your future applications for leadership positions, internships, jobs and graduate schools, as well as your visa status in the case of suspension or expulsion.

### ***Course-Specific Academic Honesty Expectations***

- You are expected to adhere to the guidelines in "Academic Integrity: Understanding How to Give and Receive Help When Writing Papers" (Writing, Speaking and Argument Program: <https://writing.rochester.edu/assets/pdf/AcademicIntegrity2013.pdf>).
- Working with peers in the ways specified as acceptable in the guidelines (see above link) is fine, but collaboration in which group members all participate in completing a single assignment is not allowed unless the instructor indicates that work may be completed in groups.
- You must attribute and cite all source material used in completing assignments, including reflections and audience analyses. These may be unfamiliar genres, but they do require citation if sources are used; you should follow citation guidelines discussed in class.
- Sample documents will be used in class to demonstrate genre conventions and the range of choices writers have. Document design, such as resume formatting (font choice, headers, bold/italics, and layout), may inspire the "look" of your documents; however, work completed for class should be your own, including content, organization, sentence structure, etc.
- You must include the following honor pledge with your final portfolio: "I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own." (<https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy.html#pledge>).
- **When in doubt, contact your instructor *before* turning in work.**

### **ADDITIONAL CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and that I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. In addition, you may wish to take advantage of the following resources on campus:

#### ***THE WRITING AND SPEAKING CENTER***

At the University of Rochester, we all communicate as writers and speakers, and every writer and speaker needs an audience. The Writing and Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the University—undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty. The Writing and Speaking Center welcomes visitors who are at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to polishing a final draft. Similarly, students can visit a Speaking Fellow at any point as they are developing or practicing a presentation, or preparing for an interview. To learn more about the Writing and Speaking Center's services and/or to find a tutor, please visit: <http://writing.rochester.edu>.

#### ***GWEN M. GREENE CAREER AND INTERNSHIP CENTER***

The Career and Internship Center offers a variety of services, resources, and events to help you explore careers, articulate your goals, and implement an effective search for a job or internship. For the purposes of this course, you may wish to meet with a PCA (Peer Career Advisor) for formatting and general help with resumes, CVs and cover letters; the specialist advisers can serve as an additional audience for feedback on writing and speaking assignments, as well as help you apply the skills you are learning to your applications for jobs, internships, research opportunities, or graduate school programs. Be sure to specify that you are a WRT 27X student. Stop by 4-200 Dewey Hall or call 585.275.2366 to make an appointment. Also, visit the Center's website at [www.rochester.edu/careercenter](http://www.rochester.edu/careercenter).

#### ***CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING***

CETL is a resource available to all students in the College. All kinds of students with all kinds of GPAs and academic records make use of its programs. CETL works with strong students who wish to become even better, as well as with students who have not yet tapped into the strategies needed to succeed in college, and everyone in between. It offers an extensive study group and Workshop program, individual study skills counseling, study skills workshops and a study skills course, and disability support. CETL is located at 1-

154 Dewey Hall. To make an appointment or to learn more, stop by the office, call 585.275.9049, or send an email: cetl@rochester.edu.

## **LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Required for Midpoint Portfolio**

- Two targeted resumes (or CV)
- Two cover letters (an REU essay or graduate school statement of purpose may substitute for one letter)
- Reflective essay

### **Required for Final Portfolio**

- Letter to Real Reader
- Reflective essay
- Two targeted resumes (or CV) – Revised from the Midpoint Portfolio
- Two cover letters (an REU essay or graduate school statement of purpose may substitute for one letter) – Revised from the Midpoint Portfolio

### **Additional Options for Final Portfolio (at least two are required)**

- Networking note
- Elevator pitch (recorded oral presentation)
- Project description
- LinkedIn profile

### **Other Assignments, Not Part of Portfolios**

- Career exploration and goals reflection
- Informational interview with Real Reader and reflection paper

# PSC/IR 299 (WRT 276): Communicating Your Professional Identity in Political Science & International Relations

Spring: CRN: 41342

Instructor: Kellie Hernandez

Office Hours: Tuesday 12-1, Wednesday 12-1, 4-5

Thursday, 450-605, Dewey 4-162

Office Location: Career Center, 4-200 Dewey Hall

Contact Information: [kellie.hernandez@rochester.edu](mailto:kellie.hernandez@rochester.edu)

Or by appointment

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**Week 1:** *Introduction to Professional Communication / Identity*  
**January 18** Goals of course; defining key terms: Career/Writing/Identity; Syllabus Review

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**Week 2:** *Audience and Purpose ; Professional Email Etiquette*  
**January 25**  
**Writing due:** [Written reflection on goals \(submitted through Blackboard\)](#)  
**Reading due:** Rawlins, Jack. 1992. "What Good Writing Is: The Sense of Audience" Writing, Speaking and Argument Program. 2017. "Student Real Reader Guide for WRT 273."  
Hoyt, Elizabeth. 2015. "10 Professional Email Tips." Fastweb, July 8  
Sumter, Lana. 2013. "How to Write Professional Emails." YouTube, November 17.

Select your Real Reader, using the database link below (the link is also posted in Blackboard):

<http://writing.rochester.edu/Engineering/StudIDPrompt.php?class=WRT276>

The database will be live on Thursday, January 25th at 9am

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Writing due during class 2/1: Networking Note to your Real Reader (BCC me!!!)

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**Week 3:** *Networking Notes and Informational Interviewing: What to say and how to say it*  
**February 1**

**Writing due:** [Networking Note due \(draft or outline\)](#)

**Networking Note Peer Review and finalization in class**

Please bring a laptop or tablet, to access your networking note, to class. If this isn't possible, please let me know.

**Reading due:** Writing, Speaking and Argument Program. 2013. "Academic Integrity: Understanding How to Give and Receive Help When Writing Papers."  
Hansen, Information Interviewing Tutorial: A Key Networking Tutorial

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**Week 4:** *Introduction to Elevator Pitches*

**February 8**

**Writing due:** [Elevator Pitch \(draft or outline\) – practice in class](#)

**Reading:** Pollak, Lindsey. 2012. "Talk. Listen. Repeat. (i.e., Network.)" In *Getting from College to Career: Your Essential Guide to Succeeding in the Real World*, 89-97.  
Boston University. 2012. "The Art of the Elevator Pitch." YouTube, July 27.

University of California - Berkeley School of Information, 2013. "Career Services: Crafting an Elevator Pitch." YouTube, November 19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMSz5MZxuPM>

University of Rochester: Gwen M. Greene Career & Internship Center, 2017. "Guide to Business Professional Clothing."

University of Rochester: Gwen M. Greene Career & Internship Center, 2017. "Guide to Business Casual Clothing."

*On Campus Spring Career Expo*  
*Thursday, February 15 11:00 am - 2:00 pm*  
*Suggested reading: Career Center web page, "Career Fair Success"*

**Week 5: Summarizing Professional Identity; Developing Professional Resumes and Cover Letters - Resumes and CVs**

February 15

Reading due:

Career Center, "Guide to Resume Writing" and samples

Spolsky, "Sorting Resumes" (7pp)

Brooks, "You Majored in What?" (Chapters 8 – resumes)

Optional:

UC Davis Internship & Career Center, Curriculum Vitae

UNC Chapel Hill, Curricula Vitae (CVs) vs. Resumes

**Week 6: Cover letters / Personal Statements / Statement of Purpose**

February 22

Writing/Recording due: [Elevator Pitches and Audience Analysis in Blackboard](#)

Reading due:

Career Center, "Cover Letters"

Brooks, "You Majored in What?" (Chapters 9 – cover letters)

Optional:

Koepfel, "Want Your Letter to Stand Out? Here's a Tip: Write it Yourself" (2pp)

Korkki, "A Cover Letter is Not Expendable" (2pp)

Asher, Graduate Admissions Essays, Chapters 5-7, 55-78 (if you're writing a SofP)

*Social Good Career Expo*  
*Wednesday, February 28 11:00 am - 2:00 pm*  
*Suggested reading: Career Center web page, "Career Fair Success"*

**The Informational Interview with your Real Reader should be completed by March 1st.  
Request feedback via the Real Reader system within one week of completing your interview.**

**Week 7: Resume / CV ; Cover Letters / Personal Statements / Statements of Purpose – Bringing the Application Together**

March 1

Peer Review:

[Goal Set 1](#)

[Bring laptop or 3 hard copies of each document.](#)

**Week 8: Resume / CV ; Cover Letters / Personal Statements /**

**March 8**

**Statements of Purpose – Bringing the Application Together**

Writing due:

Informational Interview Reflection.

Peer Review:

Goal Set 2

Bring laptop or 3 hard copies of each document.

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*Spring Break March 10-18*

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**Midpoint to RR's by March 19th**

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**Week 9:**

***Representing Your Work***

**March 22**

Peer Review due:

Complete review of Elevator Pitches by today

Writing due:

Midpoint Portfolio to Instructor

Reading:

Koopman, "How to Write an Abstract" (2 pp)  
Sample descriptions, abstracts, memos, etc.

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**Week 10:**

***Project Description Peer Review ; On-Line Presence - LinkedIn***

**March 29**

Writing due:

Project Description Peer Review

Final revision of project description should be turned in in BlackBoard. It will also be included in your Final Portfolio

Reading Due:

LinkedIn, "Building a Great Student Profile" three articles  
The Muse, "4 Key Elements of a Killer LinkedIn Summary"  
LinkedInInsights.com, "3 Stunningly Good LinkedIn Profile Summaries"

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**Week 11:**

***Interviewing***

**April 5**

Reading due:

Brooks, You Majored in What?, Ch. 10  
Career Center Website  
Quintessential, "The 150 Typical Job Interview Questions"  
Zhang, "30 Behavioral Questions You Should Be Ready to Answer"

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**Week 12:**

***Linked in Peer Review***

**April 12**

Writing due:

Project Description Final due in BlackBoard

LinkedIn profile - Peer review and feedback on LinkedIn profiles in class

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**Week 13:**

***Interviewing Continued .... Speaking Fellows***

**April 19**

Writing due:

Interview Prep worksheet  
LinkedIn Final due

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**Week 14:**

***Communication Scenarios***

**April 26**

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**Final Portfolio due to Real Reader:**

**April 29th**

**Final Portfolio due to instructor:**

**May 1st**

**Emailed thank you note to Real Reader:**

**May 1st**