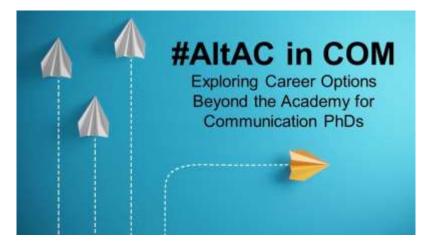COM 692 – How a COM PhD can lead to #AltAc Professional Work – SLN 34809

Sarah J. Tracy (she/her), Ph.D., Professor – Sarah.Tracy@asu.edu

Meetings available via appt. Just email me and we'll find a time!

This 1-unit 692 course consists of a speaker series that highlights the career paths and stories of communication PhDs who hold positions in corporate, nonprofit, administrative, health, and consulting work. Furthermore, it provide hands-on workshops for those are interested in being prepared for #AltAC (alternative to academic) career opportunities. The course will feature speakers visiting as part of an awarded "Advancing the Discipline Grant" from The National Communication Association. The module is motivated by an ethical determination to help assist doctoral students pursue robust careers even in the face of tightening academic job markets. Speakers will include a Microsoft tech researcher, professional coach, academic administrator, organizational consultant, and professional ethnographer.

Note: Thank you to co-investigator Marco Dehnert for facilitating logistics of this NCA grant.

Required Course Materials:

Caterine, C. I. (2020). Leaving Academia. Princeton University Press.

Miscellaneous short articles as assigned on Canvas website

Course delivered via ASU Sync at the following times:

https://asu.zoom.us/my/sarahjtracy and Eventbrite (register below)

Tues Mar 30 3-5:45 – Introduction and Course Overview
Tues April 6 3-5:45 – Core Workshop 1 (register below)
Frid April 9 1:30-4:15 – Core Workshop 2 (register below)
Tues April 13 3-5:45 – Core Workshop 3 (register below)
Frid April 16 1:30-4:15 -- #AltAC Portfolio Workshop
Tues April 20 3-5:45 – Buffer for presenting & NCA planning

Recommended Free ASU-affiliated auxiliary resource:
https://beyondprof.com/aurora/

Course Objectives and Activities:

The objectives of this course are to sharpen participants' abilities to:
1. Unlearn myths that sediment the notion that #AltAC careers are "lesser than" traditional academic positions.
2. Cultivate important skills sets that will make participants marketable for #AltAC careers.
3. Communicate and translate academic experience so it is explicable in professional arenas.
4. Understand the multiple pathways to and the diversity of #AltAC positions.
5. Create a Linked-In profile and professional CV.
6. Construct networks that may lead to #AltAC positions.
7. Develop confidence and craft goals that lead to professional work.
8. Build community and collaboration with like-minded others.

Among other course activities will be:

1. Reading a book on leaving academia
2. Creating focused questions and short reflections related to the speakers
3. Developing a professional Linked-In profile/CV.
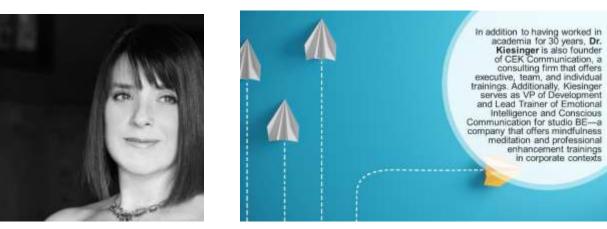4. Students will also be invited to plan and take part in an affiliated NCA panel.

The culminating assignment will be developing a portfolio related to activities offered in the workshops and the course text.

See Canvas website for detailed assignment descriptions and due dates.
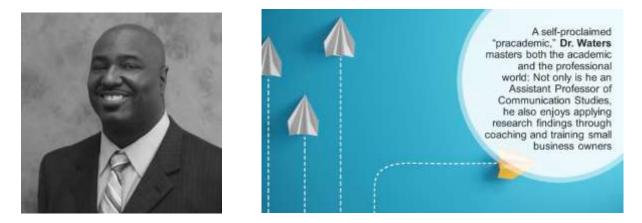
Core Workshops Include:

Tuesday, April 6 - #AltAC: From Academy to Industry 3 to 5 p.m. PT/MST

Register HERE

In addition to having worked in academia for 30 years, **Dr. Kiesinger** is also founder of CEK Communication, a consulting firm that offers executive, team, and individual trainings. Additionally, Kiesinger serves as VP of Development and Lead Trainer of Emotional Intelligence and Conscious Communication for studio BE—a company that offers mindfulness meditation and professional enhancement trainings in corporate contexts

Christine E. Kiesinger

Workshop Title: *Leaving Home: Finding Place, Purpose and Possibilities Outside the Walls of Academia*

A self-proclaimed "pracademic," **Dr. Waters** masters both the academic and the professional world: Not only is he an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, he also enjoys applying research findings through coaching and training small business owners

Eric D. Waters

Workshop Title: *Making Meaning Matter for Business: Pracademic Preparation for the Uncertainties and Realities of the New Academic Economy*

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Friday, April 9 - On Being a Professional Researcher - 1:45 to 3:45 p.m. PT/MST

Register [HERE](#)

After earning her PhD in Communication and working as Assistant Professor and Professor in academia, **Dr. Baym** joined Microsoft Research, where she is now part of an interdisciplinary research lab charged with conducting curiosity-driven research with the potential to help shape the future of computing

[Nancy Baym](#)

Workshop Title: *So you'd like your research to shape technology rather than respond to it?*

With more than 20 years of experience pioneering ethnographic field and analysis methods for business consumption, **Dr. Rea-Holloway** is president and CEO of Ethnography Inc., a professional ethnography firm

[Melinda Rea-Holloway](#)

Workshop Title: *Notes from a professional people watcher: Turning nosiness into a career*

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Tuesday, April 13 - "Pracademics" and Administrators: At the Intersections of Academy and Industry
3 to 5 p.m. PT/MST

Register **HERE**

Dr. Martin is a full-time administrator at the University of Kentucky, where she serves as the director of Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Education

Nicole L. Martin

Workshop Title: *"I Made It Up:" (Re)Imagining What's Possible with a PhD in the Academy*

Dr. Mitra combines the academic and professional worlds by serving as an Associate Professor of Communication Studies while being active in corporate and nonprofit work through prior work experience, community engagement research projects, and hosting of the website "Org Com in the News"

Rahul Mitra

Workshop Title: *Cultivating a Skill Set that Sets up Success in an #AltAC Career*

April 6 (Kiesinger & Waters):

- 3:00 – 3:05: Introduction of workshop series by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Kiesinger by ASU doctoral student
- 3:05 – 3:35ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Kiesinger
- 3:35 – 3:50ish: Q&A Dr. Kiesinger, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 3:50 – 3:55: Break
- 3:55 – 4:00: Segue by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Waters by ASU doctoral student
- 4:00 – 4:30ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Waters
- 4:30 – 4:45ish: Q&A Dr. Waters, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 4:45 – 4:50: Wrap up (and reminder of future workshops) by Marco
- 4:50: End for external audience/Break for ASU doctoral students
- 5:00 – 5:30: Optional meeting for Drs. Kiesinger and Waters with ASU doctoral students

April 9 (Baym & Rea-Holloway):

- 1:45 – 1:50: Introduction of workshop series by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Baym by ASU doctoral student
- 1:50 – 2:20ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Baym
- 2:20 – 2:35ish: Q&A Dr. Baym, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 2:35 – 2:40: Break
- 2:40 – 2:45: Segue by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Rea-Holloway by ASU doctoral student
- 2:45 – 3:15ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Rea-Holloway
- 3:15 – 3:30ish: Q&A Dr. Rea-Holloway, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 3:30 – 3:35: Wrap up (and reminder of future workshops) by Marco
- 3:35: End for external audience/Break for ASU doctoral students
- 3:45 – 4:15: Optional meeting for Drs. Baym and Rea-Holloway with ASU doctoral students

April 13 (Martin & Mitra)

- 3:00 – 3:05: Introduction of workshop series by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Martin by ASU doctoral student
- 3:05 – 3:35ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Martin
- 3:35 – 3:50ish: Q&A Dr. Martin, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 3:50 – 3:55: Break
- 3:55 – 4:00: Segue by Dr. Tracy and introduction of Dr. Mitra by ASU doctoral student
- 4:00 – 4:30ish: Workshop/presentation Dr. Mitra
- 4:30 – 4:45ish: Q&A Dr. Mitra, moderated by Dr. Tracy
- 4:45 – 4:50: Wrap up by Marco
- 4:50: End for external audience/Break for ASU doctoral students
- 5:00 – 5:30: Optional meeting for Drs. Martin and Mitra with ASU doctoral students

Portfolio Assignment #1 -- Dread & Discern

Read Chapter #1 of course Text

And engage in the activities listed at the end of Chapter #1.

These include:
1. Start a career journal. Your first entry should discuss why you entered academia and how you feel about leaving.
2. Sit down with someone you trust to have a frank discussion about why you (may) want to leave higher education. Afterward, journal about what you discovered through this conversation.
3. Do something to celebrate! You are about to cultivate a new potential direction for your future career. You are welcome to say how you celebrated in your journal, but not required.

Read chapter #2 of your text and engage in the recommended activities as is plausible given your time constraints:

- 1. Take a day for yourself. Afterward, reflect on the activities or relationships that drew you in when free from typical academic commitments. Log these preferences. What brought you joy? Flow? A feeling of expertise or "I've got this?"
- 2. Take yourself back to the goals you had at 10 years old, in high school, in college. Jot them down in your journal and then questions how or if they still hold... or whether you've simply been putting them on hold... and in what ways?
- 3. Ask where you'd live if you could pick anywhere in the world? What are the driving values here (environment, proximity to family, pace of life, cultural ethos, etc.).

Please note: Consider taking only the time and length you need to answer these questions. Longer does not = better. Because I've never assigned this before, I can't say what my expectation are in terms of length. But I'm guessing that this assignment could be accomplished in a page or two.

Portfolio Assignment #2 - Discover

Read chapter #3 of your text and engage in these recommended activities:

To act upon:

1. Find someone from the communication discipline who has left academia and arrange your first informational interview [Linked in is a good place to start]. How did you choose this person? What are the steps you're taking to prepare and the questions you hope to ask? In your final portfolio, you will be asked to report upon what you've learned in this and several other informational interviews.
2. Practice writing shorter emails (or social media private messages) that start with the main point and only provide information that's strictly necessary. What's more, try to make the email as much or more about the other person as it is about you. What did you discover in practicing this activity?
3. Come up with a twenty-second version of why you're cultivating options for a career outside academia in a way that frames your departure in positive terms. Share that 20-second (or several sentence) version.

Furthermore, critically reflect upon and share in terms of these prompts:

1. What types of work *could* you do? [consider reviewing job listings on Indeed.com, Monster.com or other sites]
2. What types of work do you *want* to do?
3. What are the most obvious gaps in your experience?
4. Caterine notes, "I long considered networking perverse" (p. 70). In what ways does this feeling resonate (or not) with you? How would you assess your orientation toward networking? What does your orientation suggest in terms of possibilities or challenges of cultivating opportunities for #AltAC work?

You are also welcome to share anything else -- questions, concerns, ideas, discoveries...

Portfolio Assignment #3 - Decipher

Read Chapter 4 of your text and engage in these activities. You'll have an opportunity to continue and update them in your final portfolio. This is a place to start. In your career journal...

1. Write an entry that consists of just three sentences: 1) an overview of your strengths and interests. Return to this weekly until you have a single statement of your professional value.

2. Review Linked-In and survey how others cast their professional persona. In crafting your own professional persona, what are five things that you noticed that you would like to emulate? What are five things you'd like to avoid?

3. Using the formula offered on the bottom of p. 98, estimate the budgetary amount of education services you deliver annually. How does it feel to frame your work in this way?

4. The author makes the case that most academics are experts at several key skills.

4a. Write a bullet or two that demonstrates your proficiency in at least 10 of the following skills and furthermore note how this skill may be translatable to an #AltAC job position: a) project management, b) public speaking, c) running meetings, d) balancing stakeholder interests, e) emotional intelligence (and I would add as part of this, delivering constructive feedback), f) writing; g) formatting/style, h) interdisciplinary thinking, i) team collaboration, j) information synthesis, k) data analysis, l) problem-solving, m) assessing and deconstructing persuasive speech; n) strategic communication and stakeholder focused messaging; o) audience analysis. A brainstorm on this is available here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1au70D_0JOXBdEgZmFtvSie__KWnfYqMo3 1KFSGS2XQ4/edit (Links to an external site.)

4b. After completing the exercise above, practice articulating these things with a friend or colleague.

4c. What did you discover in trying to make sense of and then articulating your skills in this way?

5. Reflecting on the course readings and activities so far, draft a resume that translates your academic experience into terms that are intelligible to people in the #AltAC fields you're interested in. This is a first draft.

6. Reach out to the contact you identified in terms of an informational interview (or reach out to an additional #AltAC person) and ask them to critique your first resume draft.

7. Practice writing at least one email with an "external focalization"--those that begin sentences with "You" rather than "I" (see p. 118 for more on external focalization).

Portfolio Assignment #4 - Develop and (look forward to) Deploy

Read Chapter 5 & 6 of your text and engage in the related reflections and actions. Turn in your progress here.

For Reflection:

1. Using your informational interviews as a guide, identify three specific roles you'd be interested in holding. Use LinkedIn and company websites to determine the skills and knowledge you would need to be considered for those jobs. What did you discover?
2. Research and identify three local charities or nonacademic initiatives at your college that you'd be interested in supporting. Send a short note to each and see if they can staff you in a role that would build one of the skills you identified in item #1.
3. According to Caterine, there are four practical ways to build your resume on short notice: online learning; professional training; volunteering; and part-time work. What are at least **three** specific goals for building your resume in the coming year (please go beyond vague ideas and actually research out how you might do this and consider creating a "to do list" to accomplish; the "develop" chapter has lots of specific ideas about how to do this). For at least one of these goals, take a look at the ASU course catalogue. What course(s) could you take at ASU in the next few years that would help prepare you for your dream #AltAC or #AltAd(acent) career? What are the logistics to make that a reality?
4. What traditional academic work are you willing to cut back on in the next few years so that you have time to pursue these other options? What conversations do you need to have with your advisor (if any) about these choices?
5. Check the privacy settings on your social media accounts and update your public profiles. If you have a personal website, check that its design is clean, that its copy is error-free, and that its pages reflect your new professional persona. In what ways do you need to add to or adapt your current digital profile? What challenges do you face in doing so? What are your feelings about the advice (p. 150) to be always assiduously positive in digital interactions?
6. TWO THINGS TO SIMPLY THINK ABOUT: Caterine offers the advice to leave in mid-semester if need be. I don't need you to comment on this here (no need to have it in print) but I'd like to discuss this issue in class!! :-) Also, in the final chapter, he recommends being as quiet about your PhD as possible. How does this feel? Do you think you could do this??

Class Policies and Procedures

Canvas and Technology Help: Students can navigate directly to the course Canvas website via myASU or http://canvas.asu.edu. If you need technical assistance, it is available via the Canvas "Help" icon located on the left-hand navigation menu and phone and live chat support are available 24/7 at http://contact.asu.edu. ASU Tech Studios provide a variety of support services on all ASU campuses: https://uto.asu.edu/services/campus-it-resources/techstudio. To learn the basics, refer to the Student Guide: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 and the Canvas Glossary: http://links.asu.edu/student-canvas-glossary.

Absences, Due Dates, Late or Incomplete Work, Extra Credit: Assignments may receive a 10% each day they are late and not accepted two weeks past their due date (nor accepted after the last day of class). In-class work will receive credit when completed during scheduled class time. Incompletes are discouraged and may be requested if you: 1) experience serious documented illness or emergency; 2) finish more than 75% of the coursework, 3) negotiate incomplete before the final day of class. Extra credit, if available, will be announced in class.

If you miss a due date because of a personal emergency, please notify Dr. Tracy within 24 hours (or as soon is reasonable) and propose a new due date. Students who want to renegotiate a deadline due to a university-excused absence should do so at least two weeks prior. The following explains ASU's policies: http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-04.html; http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-02.html.

Accessible Academic Needs: Students with academic accessibility needs should contact Dr. Tracy in the first couple sessions to discuss accommodations. Please consider the value of partnering with ASU's Student Accessibility & Inclusive Learning Services Center (https://eoss.asu.edu/drc).

Norms of Civility: Please contribute to a safe and supportive classroom environment by engaging professionally in all course meetings and by listening and respecting others' confidences, their identities, and their points of view. Violating norms of civility may result in up to a 15-point grade deduction per incident. ASU's policy on "Handling Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Individuals on Campus" at http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html explains the results of interfering with the peaceful conduct of university-related activities (which may include withdrawal with a mark of "W" or "E").

Academic Integrity: ASU's academic integrity policy warns students to avoid cheating or plagiarizing (see, https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity). Such activity includes excessive "help" or "editing" from others (if in doubt, ask), copying, misrepresenting research hours / activity, not following exam instructions, and using past coursework, the Internet, the text, or other sources without proper citation. Students are responsible for knowing APA 6th or 7th edition style for citing outside sources.

Course content, including lectures, power-points and course website resources are copyrighted material and students may not sell notes (see ASU's "Commercial Note Taking Services" policy: http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-06.html). Students in violation of any of these expectations will face disciplinary action which may include being suspended or expelled from the Course, College or University; given an XE; referred to Student Judicial Affairs; and/or having his/her name kept on file.

Sexual Violence, Discrimination, Mental Health, and Mandated Reporting: Doctoral studies can take a toll on mental health. Students are invited to access ASU's full range of services here, led by professionals specifically trained to support students' mental wellbeing: https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling.

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person shall be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy prohibit sexual violence and harassment. Students who have been subjected to sexual violence or harassment, can seek support from the university. Resources are available here http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students. As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, **https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling**, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately**.**