Writing 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning
Issues in Sustainability
Syllabus – Fall 2017
Instructor: Pamela Albanese, PhD
Email: palbanes@usc.edu
Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:30 and by appointment (UUC Room 219)
Office Phone: 213-740-1980

<u>Class Meetings</u>
Section 64590, MWF 12:00 – 12:50 (GFS 113)

<u>Writing 150 – Issues in Sustainability</u>
Writing 150 - Issues in Sustainability will strengthen your writing and critical thinking skills by approaching writing as a process that you can break down into stages, from prewriting, to drafting, to revision. Central to this process is the idea that writing is recursive; writers must continually return to their drafts to reformulate, to reorganize, and to revise. Through the theme of sustainability, you will compose formal and ancillary writing projects that develop the rhetorical and critical reasoning skills necessary to engage deeply and thoughtfully within our academic discourse community.

In analyzing the issues related to a topic as broad as sustainability, we must consider a vast array of complex and interrelated systems and processes. Critical concepts like politics, technology, globalization, and climate change are all significant players in the sustainability discussion, and they all possess their own interconnected webs of sub-issues. How do we confront such huge concepts in an academic context without resorting to preconceived notions and predetermined narratives? How do we explore sustainability, an urgent issue that impacts all of our lives, in a mode that intensifies our analysis of the issues through insightful, original writing?

New ways of thinking call for a shift in perspective and a break with habit and convention. Writing 150 is fully invested in the development of methods that will enhance your ability to generate ideas that go beyond a surface understanding or analysis of the issues. Not only are we going to practice prewriting techniques that will help you to develop thought-provoking, compelling topics, but we are going to ask strategic questions and consider multiple angles to deepen our thinking about sustainability.

During the drafting process, we will focus on methods for effectively arranging and organizing ideas into a coherent structure, while delving into the fundamentals of integrating credible sources to support our arguments. Finally, we will practice and perfect the art of revision, perhaps one of the most important stages of the writing process. Revision is integral to strengthening our writing, as structural and stylistic flaws often are not apparent until the writer has taken a break and can return to the work with fresh eyes. Ideally, the practice of revision will become second nature to you early in your college career.

Writing 150's emphasis on writing as process, to breaking down writing into a series of stages, will teach you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and to adjust accordingly. Furthermore, the writing as process approach enforces the idea that writing is ultimately an act of learning, thinking, and discovery—an approach that will benefit you throughout college and beyond.

Required Texts

Writing 150 Course Book, 2017-2018 (available at the USC Bookstore)
Assigned readings (posted on Blackboard and distributed in class and via email)

Evaluation

Your final course grade will be determined by the following components:

5%   Class Participation
15%   Ancillary Writing Assignments
10%   Writing Project 1 (4-5 pages)
15%   Writing Project 2 (5-6 pages)
20%   Writing Project 3 (6-7 pages)
35%   Writing Project 4 and Final Portfolio (7-8 pages and supplementary writing assignments)

Important Dates

9/13:   Writing Project 1 due
10/4:   Writing Project 2 due
10/30: Writing Project 3 due
11/29: Writing Project 4 and Final Portfolio due

Writing 150 is a demanding class, in terms of both the basic workload and the rigor with which we evaluate your writing. Teachers in the USC Writing Program apply a consistent grading rubric to all work for the class; for information about the rubric, see "Writing Program General Evaluation Rubric" on pages 134-137 of the *Writing 150 Course Book*.

Formal Writing Projects

Writing 150 comprises four major writing projects. Each is worth progressively more in terms of your final grade. You will receive a detailed assignment sheet for each writing project.

Ancillary Writing Assignments

During the semester you will write a series of shorter, informal assignments, (either in-class or for homework), aimed at generating and exploring ideas and techniques that contribute to formal writing projects. Even though these are low-stakes assignments and count for a much smaller percentage of your grade, you still need to take them seriously; they will only enhance and strengthen the quality of your Writing Projects.

Photography/journaling project

You will also be responsible for submitting a series of photographs and journal entries: early in the semester, select an object/location/landmark/ on campus that relates to the theme of sustainability. It should be an aspect of sustainability that interests you, as you will revisit it throughout the semester. Photograph the same spot or landmark and write a corresponding, page-length journal entry that explores issues related to the topic of the current formal writing project. Submit your photograph and journal entry to Blackboard by the following dates: Sept. 1st, Sept. 22nd, Oct. 20th, Nov. 10th. This assignment will count for part of your ancillary writing grade.

Ancillary Writing Assignments will be graded as follows:

√+   Remarkably sophisticated in thought and articulate in expression
√   Respectably thoughtful and articulate college-level work
√-   Somewhat unfocused/superficial, could have been better

Participation and Attendance

Writing 150 is not a lecture class; it is a workshop. I expect everyone to contribute to our discussions, to participate in class activities, and to keep up with the reading and other assignments. A productive, thought-provoking, and lively class requires the active participation and regular presence of each student. Active participation and punctual, regular attendance will earn you full credit for participation. Accumulating more than two unexcused absences could lower your participation grade. In-class writing assignments will occur frequently and cannot be made up; more than two unexcused absences could lower your ancillary writing grade too.

Any student who accumulates six or more absences before the semester withdraw date should withdraw from Writing 150. Any students who do not withdraw—and any students who reach six or more total absences after the withdraw date—risks failing the course, because a large number of absences will adversely affect your performance in this class.

If you have to miss class because of an emergency, please notify me as soon as possible so we can discuss how you can make up the missed class.

Class Etiquette

Please be respectful of your fellow students and refrain from behavior that could disrupt the class. Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class and conferences. Laptops must also be put away unless I specifically request you to use them during class. Our classroom environment provides a safe, supportive space to discuss, to debate, to disagree, and to learn from each other. Rude, disrespectful, or intimidating remarks or attitudes will not be tolerated.

Office Hours

Please visit me during my office hours if you would like to discuss anything related to your writing, your work in our course, or academic life in general. If my regular office hours conflict with your schedule, we can set up an appointment. I'm also available by email to answer any questions.

Conferences

Four times throughout the semester, approximately one week before each Writing Project is due, we will cancel a class period for individual conferences. Conferences are required, and missing one will count as an absence from class. A sign up sheet for conferences will be available online. I will not hold regular office hours during conference weeks.

Blackboard

Visit our course Blackboard website regularly (log in at blackboard.usc.edu). I will frequently post announcements, readings, resources, and other assignments there. I will also e-mail you about important course matters, so please check your USC account daily.

Submitting Your Work

Formal writing projects must be submitted on paper in class on the day they are due, and they must adhere to the formatting requirements posted on the assignment sheet. On the day you submit a writing project, you must also upload the essay to Blackboard.

Late Work

Late papers will lose one grade step every day they are submitted late (for example, a B will become a B-). You will have the option of handing in **one** paper (only Writing Project 2 or 3) up to one week late without penalty. **WP1, WP4, and the Final Portfolio assignment cannot be turned in late**.

If you are going to be late with WP2 or WP3, please notify me as soon as possible.
I will only grant extensions in extraordinary circumstances.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

USC takes plagiarism and other forms of illegitimate assistance very seriously. If you plagiarize or commit another act of academic fraud, you will receive an F on the assignment, and quite possibly and F in the course. The incident may also be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards, which could jeopardize your standing at USC. For more on what constitutes academic fraud, see pages 144-145 of our Course Book.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification can be obtained from DSP; please make sure that this letter is delivered to me as soon as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and can be contacted at (213) 740-0776 or ability@usc.edu.

Campus Mental Health Resources

College students deal with many stressors, including competition for grades, strained or conflicted relationships, lack of sleep, financial worries, etc. At USC, we encourage students to become familiar with the mental health resources available to them. If you think that you might benefit from these resources (including counseling), visit https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/. If you need help navigating these resources, please let me know.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, located in THH 216, is an incredibly valuable and free resource available to all students at USC. Experienced consultants will work with you on any stage of the writing process, from interpreting a prompt to creating a rough plan to polishing your final draft. The Writing Center consultants will not proofread or edit your paper for you, but they will help you to develop skills to revise your own work. In order to maximize your meeting with a Writing Center consultant, come prepared with a copy of your assignment and specific questions. See pages 146-148 in your Course Book for more information. Visit their website (dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/) to make an appointment.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/.   Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.
https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. https://equity.usc.edu/

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. http://dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. https://diversity.usc.edu/

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, http://emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. http://dps.usc.edu

Resources for International Students

1. The Writing Center (https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/)

Individual Consultations: The Writing Center (not to be confused with the Writing Program) offers free services to all USC students in the form of one-to-one consultations. The WC's goal is to contribute to the development of better writers, not just better products, and to assist with the skills and processes of critical thinking, drafting, and revising that lead to clearly expressed positions, coherent arguments, and persuasive reasoning. Thus, please be aware that the Writing Center isn't just for international or MLL students, and that one-to-one consultations prioritize higher-level over lower-level concerns.

Group Workshops: The Writing Center also offers free small-group workshops on a variety of topics, from grammatical features such as articles and prepositions to working with sources or style. These fifty-minute sessions present an excellent opportunity to improve your composition skills with the help of a Writing Center consultant in a small-group setting.

Useful Materials link: https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/resources/

2. The American Language Institute (http://ali.usc.edu/)

The American Language Institute (ALI) offers English language courses for those students who want to improve their English as well as those who are required to take classes as a result of taking the International Student English (ISE) exam. Students who wish to participate will need to take the International Student English (ISE) examination before classes start.

Conversation Groups: The Conversation Groups Program has been an ALI standard for over 10 years. If you're an international student, this free resource (included in tuition) is an excellent way to supplement your studies; it provides a venue in which you can practice your growing English skills with a native English-speaking USC student in a casual environment. Past participants have reported an improvement in their English speaking fluency, a comfort in interacting with English native speakers, and a higher level of confidence in the English language. Meetings are held at various locations and are 50 minutes long. All sessions are run on a first-come-first-serve basis (capped at 5), so arrive on time! The program is open to all international students; in the event of overflow, priority will be given to current ALI students.

One-on-One Conversation Partners: The One-on-One Partners page provides the opportunity to sign up for one-on-one conversation partner sessions by filling out conversation partner request form. As an international USC student, these meetings provide an opportunity to practice your oral skills one-on-one with a native English speaker. All meetings are held on the UPC campus. Please note that the One-on-One Conversation Partner Program is meant to be used as an educational resource and that only current USC students and sometimes other persons associated with USC (i.e. faculty, staff, spouses of current students) may utilize this service. However, be aware that there's a non-negotiable flat-rate fee for 60-minute sessions.

English tutors: The ALI also provides a list of recommended English tutors and their rates here: http://ali.usc.edu/find-an-english-tutor/

3. Office of International Services (http://ois.usc.edu)
For questions about visa requirements, employment status, and information (finances; health insurance; housing; etc.) geared specifically at international students, you can contact the Office of International Services (OIS) at USC. Their contact information is ois@usc.edu or (by phone) (213) 740-2666.