

**WRITING 150**  
**WRITING AND CRITICAL REASONING: THEMATIC APPROACHES**  
**ARTS & AESTHETICS**  
**Fall 2014 – SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:** Antonio Elefano   **Email address:** elefano@usc.edu  
**Office address:** JEF 130A   **Office hours:** MW: 10:00-11:00 a.m. and by appointment  
**Section 64255; MWF: 9:00–9:50 a.m., Room GFS 229**

**INTRODUCTION**

Writing 150 will explore writing as a process – breaking it down into stages to better identify, not only what makes an effective paper, but what makes a strong idea. We will focus on **critical analysis** as a component of argumentation and as a means to innovate in our thinking by using diverse methods of **invention**. We will also consider the effective **arrangement** of ideas to achieve our goals of persuasion, and will rely heavily on **revision** to allow ideas to evolve effectively. We will also explore the ways in which we can use the surface features of a text to reinforce its purpose, by honing **style** and adopting the conventions of academic writing.

**WRITING 150 – THEME**

The thematic focus of our class is Arts & Aesthetics. To guide our studies, you will be writing four papers centered on the following questions:

1. How do we judge art?
2. What are the moral boundaries of art?
3. What is the next evolution in art?
4. Choose a problem of your choice stemming from our topic. What should be done to help solve that problem?

**REQUIRED BOOKS AND MATERIALS**

- *Writing 150 Course Book*, 2014-15 (available in the bookstore) (CB)
- Assigned readings, posted on Blackboard (Bb)
- A notebook to take notes during discussion and draft in-class writing assignments
- Two two-pocket folders: one to collect handouts and one to submit writing assignments (all prewriting and drafts should be on the left; the Final Writing Project should be on the right).

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

You are allowed three excused absences throughout the semester. Absences are only excused if you e-mail me ahead of time to let me know you will not be in class. You don't have to provide an excuse or supporting documentation (no doctor's notes required); all I demand is notice. (Note: missing a conference is the same as missing class and also requires advance notice.) If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what work you missed from one of your classmates. Also, you are responsible for any assignments due on a day you miss; accordingly, you must either give your assignments to another student or send them to me via e-mail.

Every unexcused absence—meaning every absence in which you fail to provide notice and/or any absence beyond the excused three—will carry a one step (e.g., B to B-) penalty **on your final grade for the semester**. Students with more than six absences in a given semester will be advised to withdraw to avoid a failing mark.

Finally, though being in class is extremely important, attendance alone does not equal participation. The majority of this class will be conducted as a writing workshop. You will have many opportunities to contribute to class dynamics, either through in-class discussions, group work, or written responses that are seen by the group. The success of the class relies on you coming to class fully prepared and ready to work.

## EVALUATION

All formal written assignments will be evaluated in terms of the "Writing Program General Evaluation Rubric" provided in the *Writing 150 Course Book*. The final semester mark will be determined by six components:

- 5%    **Class Participation**
- 15%    **Ancillary Work** – diverse smaller writing assignments given throughout the semester that intersect with the thematic or the particular assignment
- 10%    **Writing Project 1** (4-6 page essay)
- 15%    **Writing Project 2** (5-7 page essay)
- 20%    **Writing Project 3** (5-7 page essay)
- 35%    **Writing Project 4 and Final Portfolio**

## ANCILLARY ASSIGNMENTS

You will be assigned multiple smaller tasks throughout the semester to facilitate the pedagogical goals of the course. These include a diagnostic essay, quizzes, observations of related phenomena, oral presentations, reviews of relevant events, and reflections of various types.

## LATE PAPERS and EXTENSIONS

Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified submission date. Only under dire circumstances will late work be accepted. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade (e.g., A to B) for each **calendar day** they are late. Once you've reached three calendar days past the due date, the paper will not be accepted at all. All papers, including late papers, must be submitted both in hard copy and in electronic form via Blackboard. Failure to submit in both formats on the due date will result in a one-step (e.g., B+ to B) grade penalty.

## CONFERENCES

On 4-5 occasions throughout the semester we will meet in conferences in lieu of our regular class period. Some of these conferences will be scheduled as individual meetings with me, while others may be organized as small group sessions. *For these conferences, please bring a copy of the assignment to be discussed and prepared notes and questions regarding your ideas.* During conference weeks my regular office hours will be canceled.

## TENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Diagnostic Essay – In-class on Monday, Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Writing Project 1 – due Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>  
Writing Project 2 – due Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Writing Project 3 – due Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>  
Writing Project 4 and Final Portfolio – due Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

## OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

September 1<sup>st</sup> – LABOR DAY (no class)  
November 26-28<sup>th</sup> – THANKSGIVING BREAK  
November 14<sup>th</sup> – Last day to Withdraw with a “W”  
December 5<sup>th</sup> – FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE and last day of class

## OFFICE HOURS

My office is JEF 130A. My office hours are 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. In addition, I am happy to schedule appointments at other times if those hours are difficult for you. Should you have any questions about the class, and particularly if you encounter any special difficulties or concerns about an assignment, please speak to me as quickly as possible, whether before or after class or during office hours. I am also available by email.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please be respectful of your fellow students and refrain from behavior that might disrupt the class. ***Laptops, blackberries, cellphones and all other electronic devices should be shut off during class and during individual and group conferences, unless instructed otherwise.***

## A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Students who present another writer’s ideas or words as their own, or who turn in a paper they’ve used for another class, are guilty of *plagiarism* and will receive an F on the assignment and/or an F in the class. In serious cases, the student will be referred to the Academic Dean’s office for further action. We will discuss ways to avoid plagiarism in class. Please also review “Your Responsibilities” in the *Writing 150 Course Book*, and come to me with any questions you might have.

## THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center (a component of USC’s Writing Program) is located on the second floor in Taper Hall on campus. The center is open to all students of the university and offers free consultations for any type of writing assignment. You are encouraged to visit the center throughout the semester for any additional guidance on the assignments for this course. Call or email the center for an appointment with a writing consultant, and be sure to bring the relevant assignment sheet, paper, or prepared questions to your session (740-3691; [writing@usc.edu](mailto:writing@usc.edu)).

# SYLLABUS

Class	Topic	Assignment for next class
1 Mon. Aug. 25	<b>Introductions &amp; Judging Art</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Diagnostic Essay: “What is art?”</li> <li>• Discuss writing as process</li> <li>• Discuss limitations of 5-paragraph paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invention Exercise: Who <i>will</i> win and who <i>should</i> win a particular category at tonight’s Emmy Awards? Explain your reasoning</li> <li>• Read CB Part I, Section 1: “Critical Reasoning, Analysis, and Argumentation,” pp. 3-17</li> <li>• Read and annotate David Koepsell’s “What art can learn from science about awarding greatness” and Matt Zoller Seitz’s “Please, Critics, Write About the Filmmaking” using the critical reading habits from your CB. Locate any logical fallacies</li> </ul>
2 Wed. Aug. 27	<b>Close Reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invention Exercise: Analyze exercise from last night and think about the different criteria you used in determining who “will win” and who “should win”</li> <li>• Discuss close reading</li> <li>• Discuss Koepsell and Seitz readings</li> <li>• Discuss Writing Project 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read CB Part I, Section 2: Invention, pp. 19-35 and CB Part I, Section 3: Arrangement, pp. 37-45 (through “A Method for Testing Thesis Statements”)</li> </ul>
3 Fri. Aug. 29	<b>The Topoi</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invention Exercise: Posit the Topoi of “Values” and “Form/Structure” as applied to art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compose thesis and points-to-make list and bring to next week’s conferences</li> </ul>
4 Wed. Sept. 3	<b>Conference 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular classes are cancelled</li> <li>• Instead, you must attend one 15-minute conference to discuss your thesis and plan for Writing Project 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read CB Part I, Section 3: Arrangement, pp. 57-72 (starting with “The Paragraph” to the end of the section)</li> <li>• Complete Rough Draft of Writing Project 1</li> </ul>
5 Fri. Sept. 5		
6 Mon. Sept. 8	<b>Judging Writing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangement Exercise: Thesis Speed Dating</li> <li>• Revision Exercise: Determine the criteria for a good essay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read CB Part I, Section 5: Revision, pp. 83-94.</li> <li>• Apply the criteria for a good essay that you’ve established in class to your own essay. Do you meet your own criteria? In areas where you feel you’ve fallen short, posit a plan to remedy the shortcomings. Bring your rhetorical self-analysis to class</li> </ul>
7 Wed. Sept. 10	<b>Revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss rhetorical self-analyses and revision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete final draft of Writing Project 1</li> </ul>

Class	Topic	Assignment for next class
8 Fri. Sept. 12	<b>Aesthetics &amp; Morality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Writing Project 1</li> <li>• Discuss Aesthetics &amp; Morality</li> <li>• Discuss Writing Project 2</li> <li>• Invention Exercise: Fact/Idea List about the boundaries of art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and annotate Douglas Gentile, Julia Maier, Mary Rice Hasson and Beatriz Lopez de Bonetti's "Parents' Evaluation of Media Ratings a Decade After the Television Ratings Were Introduced"</li> <li>• View Kirby Dick's <i>This Film is Not Yet Rated</i></li> </ul>
9 Mon. Sept. 15	<b>Close Reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss levels and conventions of discourse</li> <li>• Discuss Gentile et al. reading and documentary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read CB Part II, Section 1: Using Source Materials, pp. 97-108</li> <li>• Ancillary Writing: Watch a television show or film and assign it a rating (e.g., PG-13 or TV-MA); explain your reasoning in a paragraph or two</li> </ul>
10 Wed. Sept. 17	<b>Library Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring laptop to class</li> <li>• Discuss how to find sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read CB Part II, Section 2: Documentation Conventions (read whichever convention you prefer using)</li> <li>• Invention Exercise: Find 1 outside source on a moral issue you want to explore for Writing Project 2; annotate the document, then draft a short summary and bulleted list of key propositions</li> </ul>
11 Fri. Sept. 19	<b>Reading Against the Grain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss chosen issues</li> <li>• Invention Exercise: Take the summary and bulleted propositions from your homework and craft counter-arguments for each item</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invention Exercise: Find at least 2 more outside sources on the moral issue you want to explore for Writing Project 2; annotate the document and draft summaries, bulleted lists of key propositions, and counterarguments</li> </ul>
12 Mon. Sept. 22	<b>Principles of Argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss strategies and principles of argument</li> <li>• Invention Exercise: Draft three iterations of an argumentative thesis for Writing Project 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangement Exercise: Draft introductory paragraph(s) (ideally including your thesis) and points-to-make list for Writing Project 2. Bring 3 hard copies to class next time</li> </ul>
13 Wed. Sept. 24	<b>Principles of Counterargument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invention Exercise: Discuss your prospective thesis with a partner; then craft a list of prospective counterarguments</li> <li>• Exchange Introductions/Points-to-Make Lists with Conference Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancillary Writing: Mark both the Introductions and Points-to-Make lists of your fellow group members and compose 2-3 paragraph critiques of both. Bring two copies of each critique (one for the author and one for me) to your Group Conference</li> </ul>

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment for next class</b>
<b>14</b> Fri. Sept. 26	<b>Conference 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular class is cancelled</li> <li>Instead, you must attend one 40-minute group conference to discuss each member's Introductions/Points-to-Make</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Rough Draft of Writing Project 2</li> </ul>
<b>15</b> Mon. Sept. 29	<b>Peer Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review rough drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise Rough Draft</li> <li>Come to class with 1 question/dilemma/issue with your current draft to discuss with workshop</li> </ul>
<b>16</b> Wed. Oct. 1	<b>Revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss final issues with Writing Project 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete final draft of Writing Project 2</li> </ul>
<b>17</b> Fri. Oct. 3	<b>The Evolution of Art</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Writing Project 2</li> <li>Discuss the Evolution of Art</li> <li>Discuss Writing Project 3</li> <li>Invention Exercise: "Change" Topoi as applied to art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Adam Kirsch's and Mohsin Hamid's "Are the New 'Golden Age' TV Shows the New Novels?"</li> <li>Ancillary Writing: In response to the reading, propose in 2-3 paragraphs one way in which the novel might evolve in the future</li> </ul>
<b>18</b> Mon. Oct. 6	<b>Close Reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss Kirsch and Hamid reading</li> <li>Invention Exercise: Using the Ancillary Writing, trace back the roots and predictors of your future novel</li> <li>Discuss Annotated Bibliographies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find sources for Writing Project 3 and begin composing an Annotated Bibliography</li> <li>Compose 3 alternative theses for Writing Project 3</li> </ul>
<b>19</b> Wed. Oct. 8	<b>Outlining</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review theses</li> <li>Discuss outlining and the integration of research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compose final thesis and outline for Writing Project 3 (with at least some research references) for conferences</li> </ul>
<b>20</b> Fri. Oct. 10	<b>Conference 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular classes are cancelled</li> <li>Instead, you must attend one 15-minute conference to discuss your thesis, outline and plan for Writing Project 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete full outline with all (or most) research references for Writing Project 3 and begin drafting Writing Project 3</li> <li>Compose 3-5 minute oral presentation introducing your next evolution in art</li> </ul>
<b>21</b> Mon. Oct. 13		
<b>22</b> Wed. Oct. 15	<b>Oral Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present to class your proposed next evolution in art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working on Rough Draft for Writing Project 3</li> </ul>

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment for next class</b>
<b>23</b> Fri. Oct. 17	<b>Oral Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete oral presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Rough Draft</li> </ul>
<b>24</b> Mon. Oct. 20	<b>Peer Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer review rough drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise Rough Draft</li> </ul>
<b>25</b> Wed. Oct. 22	<b>Source Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring laptop to class</li> <li>• Peer review sources from revised rough drafts</li> <li>• Discuss evolution of Writing Project 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete final draft of Writing Project 3. Bring 3 hard copies to class next time</li> </ul>
<b>26</b> Fri. Oct. 24	<b>Problems &amp; Approaches to Solution in Art</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Writing Project 3 to instructor and group conference partners</li> <li>• Discuss expectations for conference peer review</li> <li>• Discuss Problems &amp; Approaches to Solution in Art</li> <li>• Discuss Writing Project 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancillary Writing: Compose 1-page single-spaced peer critiques for each of your two conference partners' essays; bring 2 copies of each to the scheduled conference</li> <li>• Invention Exercise: Brainstorm ways of expanding/adapting work from any previous Writing Project into a problem and solution for Writing Project 4 (if you would prefer, however, you may choose an entirely unrelated problem and solution); draft a 2-3 paragraph proposal for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
<b>27</b> Mon. Oct. 27	<b>Developing Your Own Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Writing Project 4 proposals</li> <li>• Discuss project development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin composing Annotated Bibliography for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
<b>28</b> Wed. Oct. 29	<b>Conference 4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular classes are cancelled</li> <li>• Instead, you must attend one 45-minute group conference to discuss each member's Writing Project 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue crafting Annotated Bibliography for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
<b>29</b> Fri. Oct. 31		
<b>30</b> Mon. Nov. 3	<b>Proposal Arguments: Defining the Problem</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss methods for defining problems</li> <li>• Arrangement Exercise: In small groups, choose a problem in the arts; then think of a way to dramatize that problem for the class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue crafting Annotated Bibliography for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>

Class	Topic	Assignment for next class
31 Wed. Nov. 5	<b>Proposal Arguments: Developing Solutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss strategies for developing solutions and approaches to solution</li> <li>Arrangement Exercise: In the same small groups from last class, develop a solution to your problem. Make sure to address (1) its likely effectiveness and (2) its feasibility; draft an outline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin drafting outline for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
32 Fri. Nov. 7	<b>Proposal Arguments: Anticipating Counterarguments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss strategies for counterargument</li> <li>Arrangement Exercise: Exchange solution outlines with another group, then craft counterarguments to as many points on the outline as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete outline for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
33 Mon. Nov. 10	<b>Peer Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss how to analyze outlines</li> <li>Peer review outlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise outline</li> <li>Begin drafting Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
34 Wed. Nov. 12	<b>Proposal Argument: Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss strategies for opening Writing Project 4</li> <li>Discuss oral presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare 3-5 minute oral presentation introducing your problem and solution for Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
35 Fri. Nov. 14	<b>Oral Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present oral introductions to Writing Project 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue crafting Rough Draft</li> </ul>
36 Mon. Nov. 17	<b>Oral Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue presenting oral introductions to Writing Project 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Rough Draft</li> </ul>
37 Wed. Nov. 19	<b>Peer Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review rough drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
38 Fri. Nov. 21	<b>Optional Conference 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular classes are cancelled</li> <li>Instead, you have the option to schedule a 15-minute conference to discuss Writing Project 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 2nd draft of Writing Project 4</li> </ul>
39 Mon. Nov. 24		



<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment for next class</b>
<b>40</b> Mon. Dec. 1	<b>Peer Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring laptop to class</li> <li>• Peer review 2nd draft and all sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin assembling Final Portfolio, which will include Writing Project 4, all process writing, and a Reflection on Revision</li> </ul>
<b>41</b> Wed. Dec. 3	<b>Reflection on Revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit diagnostic essays</li> <li>• Discuss expectations for Reflection on Revision and Final Portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Final Portfolio</li> </ul>
<b>42</b> Fri. Dec. 5	<b>Final Thoughts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring laptop to class</li> <li>• Submit Final Portfolios</li> <li>• Final Thoughts on course</li> <li>• Complete course evaluations</li> </ul>	

#### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

USC offers accommodations and support services for students with learning disabilities. Any student requesting academic accommodations 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 me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 740-0776.

The University also provides specialized support for students in terms of academic counseling, psychological counseling, learning skills, and career placement. Your tuition pays for these services; you have every right to use them, and I recommend that you take advantage of them should you have need.