

ALI 245: High Intermediate Writing Skills (2 units)

Section No.: 10138

Instructor: Dr. Tracy Levin

Office: PSD 106K

Classroom: THH 117

Email: tlevin@usc.edu

Class time: 3:30 – 4:50pm M/W

Office Hours: By appointment

Semester Holidays/Important Dates:

1/15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no class)

2/19 – President’s Day (no class)

Midterm exam: 2/26

Midterm Consultations/Topic Proposals for final

Research paper: 2/28 – 3/6

Spring Break: 3/12-3/16

Library Orientation/Research 3/21

End of term Writing Assessment: 4/16

Last day of Class- 4/23

Final paper due: 4/23

According to USC: *“The ability to communicate effectively in English - to read, write and speak the language fluently - is vital to your success as a university student. USC graduate students are therefore expected to demonstrate English-language proficiency.”¹*

Course Description

This course has been designed to give you the academic writing skills needed to succeed in an American university and be prepared for an academic or professional world. Readings and assignments cover major components of academic writing, including genre-specific rhetorical organization and styles, data commentaries, paraphrasing, summarization, and citation. These units also cover specific language issues (grammar, vocabulary, academic and professional register) that can be difficult for non-native speakers of English.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to prepare you for professional writing experiences. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Craft texts in different genres (e.g., summary, problem statement, annotations, etc.).
- Produce an original academic research paper in your field of studies.
- Practice analysis in written form through synthesis of academic papers.
- Provide constructive feedback to peers on their written work, and address issues identified by the instructor and peers when revising your own written work.
- Correctly use the preferred citation style (e.g., IEEE, MLA) in your field of studies.
- Use standard written English conventions or grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Learn strategies to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

¹ Proficiency in English. USC Graduate Admissions: International Students. Retrieved on Jan. 7, 2016, from

Course Materials

There will be no textbooks required for the course; however, you are expected to access selected chapters of books/articles I will provide through ARES:

<https://reserves.usc.edu/ares/>

Recommended: Frodesen, Jan & Wald, Margi. (2016). *Exploring options in academic writing: Effective vocabulary and grammar use*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. (ISBN: 978-0-472-03426-0)

Recommended: Swales, John M., & Feak, Christine B. (2012) *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (3rd ed.). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. (ISBN: 978-0-472-03475-8)

Additionally, selected websites and handouts will be loaded onto the USC Blackboard website: <https://blackboard.usc.edu> for course assignments and readings. You will find these under the “Course Content” and “Assignments” sections of Blackboard. During the course, you will also be required to find academic journals that specifically address issues related to your Final Research Paper.

You are responsible for checking announcements on Blackboard daily and for reading and responding to emails regarding coursework and course materials in a timely manner.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted. You should therefore work on assignments well before the due date so that you can get the appropriate feedback, which is essential to improving your writing skills. In the case of serious personal emergencies, you will need to consult with me.

Consultations

At certain times in the semester, we will have scheduled one-on-one consultations to discuss your work during our regularly scheduled class time and at mutually convenient times for both of us. You are also encouraged to make additional appointments with me in my office throughout the semester to go over any questions you may have.

ALI Attendance Policy

Improving proficiency in a second language requires practice; hence, it is important that you not miss classes. If you find it absolutely necessary to be absent from class because of illness or an emergency, keep in mind that you are responsible to master all information presented during your absence. Do not ask me to repeat important information – identify a

classmate who will help you.

More than 6 hours of absence will result in a course grade of NC (no credit). Absence is counted for *any* reason, including illness, emergencies, and conference attendance. (Athletes, please note that a written excuse for absence due to competitions must be filed with the ALI Student Advisor.)

Assessment

This is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, which means that you will not receive a final letter grade (A/B/C/F) on your USC transcript. Assignments are given to prepare for and practice material that is covered in class. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your academic writing skills, your proficiency in these skills at the end of the course determines your final assessment. Therefore, it is in your own interest to do your best on each assignment. Do not expect your writing ability to improve simply by coming to class and putting minimum effort into your assignments. You will be expected to demonstrate significant and meaningful improvement in your writing skills by the end of the semester.

To **help me evaluate** your writing progress and proficiency, the course grading will be based on a 100% grading scale with the following breakdown.

Assignments	Percentage of Total Grade
Selected writing assignments (including all drafts and careful revisions/proofreading and editing)	25%
Homework preparation/In-class Participation	10%
Midterm Examination	15%
Writing Assessment/Grammar Quizzes	10%
Final Research paper and presentation -	40%

Course Assignments & Exams/Quizzes

There will be in-class tests and homework assignments during the semester. These will serve as a self-assessment for you to see your strengths and weaknesses as well as for me to see areas where additional instruction is necessary. The midterm exam, end of term Writing Assessment, and the final research paper, together with the on-going evaluation of your work will help me assess your writing skills.

Grading

Students are required to complete all assignments with an overall score equivalent to 70% in order to receive credit for the course. The quizzes, midterm and final writing assessment will include course material covered during the semester. The final paper, which is

cumulative, will require students to demonstrate writing skills reflecting significant, meaningful, and verifiable progress. All drafts of papers must be turned in and will be graded, not just the final drafts, so paying careful attention to proofreading and editing your first and subsequent drafts, making significant changes and applying the skills learned in class will be important.

Writing Assignments

Graded writing assignments will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and may include the following: Process Writing, Extended Definition, Process Description, Literature Review, Annotated Bibliography, Critical Reviews (of books, products, or movie), and Summary Writing. There will be at least two drafts of each writing assignment.

Professional Writing

Students will have the opportunity to develop a professional writing portfolio consisting of cover letter, resume, bio-statements, etc. Other aspects of professional writing, such as email and letters of complaints may be discussed in class.

Final Research Paper and Presentation with Power Point

The major assignment for this course is a final research paper. The purpose of the final project is to provide you with an experience of writing a research paper as a specialist in your field. The final project requires demonstration of a number of distinct academic writing skills in both creation and presentation (which we will cover in the course of the semester) of your paper. Please note, your topic must be approved prior to officially starting your research writing process. You may **NOT** change your topic without my approval.

Therefore, be thoughtful and conscientious about your topic choice.

The Final Research Paper must meet the following requirements:

- Approximately 5 - 7 pages in length of written text (double-spaced) in 12-point font (**NOT including** illustrations or your Works Cited/References list)
- Minimum of 2 illustrations (e.g., table, graph, chart) with data commentary
- Minimum of 5 scholarly sources (preferably peer-reviewed journals)
- Documentation of sources using the style in your field (e.g., APA, IEEE)
- "Reference/Works Cited" page at the end of your essay where you list the sources you used in your paper (not counted towards the required minimum)

Drafts of final papers are required and all drafts of the final papers must be turned in by the due dates unless a student has experienced a serious emergency (contact the instructor).

**** IMPORTANT -- In addition to submitting hard copies of the paper, students will be asked to submit their final papers to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) via Blackboard to ensure that the work is not plagiarized.**

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 Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards*, https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/11/SCampus-Final-112015_v8.pdf. 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/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity*, <http://equity.usc.edu/>, or to the *Department of Public Safety*, <http://dps.usc.edu/contact>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community—such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member—can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men*, <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/cwm/>, provides 24/7 confidential support, and the *Sexual Assault Resource Center* webpage, <https://sarc.usc.edu/>, describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute*, <http://ali.usc.edu/>, which sponsors additional courses and workshops specifically for international students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*, <http://dsp.usc.edu/>, provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information*, <http://emergency.usc.edu/>, will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Classroom Courtesy

As a courtesy to your classmates and teacher, please make sure that your cell phones are off during class time and refrain from conversation when your teacher or others are talking. Text-messaging is distracting, so please stay focused on the class activities for maximum benefit. Also, please use English only in the classroom.

Use of Technology

Computer use as a tool to learning is acceptable in the classroom, but please keep in mind the importance of being courteous and attentive to the professor and other students when they are speaking. In other words, **NO** social media use should go on during class time.

Course Schedule*

WEEK/S	TASKS	HOMEWORK
1 1/8 - 1/10	Writing Diagnostic Course Introduction Review language errors/proofreading and editing Summary/Response review	Bring CV/Resume for peer interviews and bio-statements; Write bio-statement and submit to Blackboard by Monday 1/15
2 1/15 -1/17	**No class Monday, 1/15 for MLK, Jr. Birthday (university holiday) Professional Writing – email etiquette (Bio-Statements, Resume, Cover Letter, Email)	Write email and revision of bio-statement
3 1/22 –1/24	Cont. Professional Writing EOAW, ch. 1 (vocab development)	Resume/CV, cover letter
4 1/29-1/31	Summary Writing/Paraphrasing Skills Academic Integrity & Citation	Summary Writing Cont. revising prof. writings
5 2/5-2/7	Approach to Academic Writing AWGS Unit 1, pp. 4-49 (available via ARES)	AWGS Unit 1, TBD
6 2/12-2/14	EOAW, ch. 2 (verbs) AWGS , Unit 2 General-Specific Texts	Term Definitions EOAW ch 3, TBD Take-home Practice Midterm TBD
7 2/19-2/21	**No class Mon. 2/19 President’s Day (university holiday) EOAW, ch. 3 Review take-home practice midterm	Review for Midterm Exam
8 2/26- 2/28	MIDTERM EXAM – 2/26 Midterm consultations this week. Class canceled 2/28 for midterm consultations.	Topic proposal for final research paper/Summary writing revisited

9 3/5-3/7	Midterm Consultations: Class canceled 3/5 for midterm consultations. Topic proposals/Intro to Annotated Bibliographies	Topic Proposal Outline & References Annotated Bibliographies
10 3/12 – 3/16	NO CLASSES! ☺ ☺ Spring Break!!!!	
11 3/19– 3/21**	Library Orientation – Wed. 3/21 Database Research using RefWorks Final Research Paper Problem-Solution Text	EOAW chs 4-5, TBD
12 3/26-3/28	EOAW, chs. 4-5 (causal relationships) Problem Statement/Outlining	EOAW chs 4-5, TBD
13 4/2-4/4	Data Commentary Hedging/Qualification	Writing Final Paper
14 4/9-4/11	EOAW, chs. 7-8 (cohesion) Writing/Grammar Workshop/Consultations	Writing Final Paper
15 4/16-4/18	Writing Assessment – 4/16 Final Paper Presentations/Consultations	Writing Final Paper
16 4/23	Consultations/Final Paper Presentation Last Day of class is Mon. 4/24 – Final papers due	

****Subject to change at instructor's discretion***