

## **Writing 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning**

### **Issues in Aesthetics**

Syllabus – Spring 2020

Instructor: Pamela Albanese, PhD

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Office Hours: Tue, Thu 11:30 – 12:20 and by appointment

Office location: (JEF 241)

### **Class Meetings**

Section 64265	Tue, Thu	9:30 – 10:50	(VKC 151)
Section 64600	Tue, Thu	12:30 – 1:50	(SOS B37)
Section 64775	Tue, Thu	2:00 – 3:20	(MRF 206)

### **Writing 150 – Issues in Aesthetics**

*Writing 150 - Issues in Aesthetics* 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 lens of aesthetics, 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 approaching a topic as all-encompassing and abstract as aesthetics, we must consider a broad array of complex and interrelated ideas, disciplines, and phenomena. Art, literature, media, politics, fashion, culture, identity, and technology are all intrinsic to defining a contemporary theory of aesthetics, and all elicit their own interconnected webs of issues and associations. How do we confront such vast concepts in an academic context without resorting to preconceived notions and predetermined narratives? How do we explore aesthetics, a philosophical construct we engage in constantly—both viscerally and intellectually, deliberately and reflexively—in a mode that intensifies our analysis 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 analysis of the issues. We will practice prewriting techniques to develop thought-provoking, compelling topics, while asking strategic questions and considering multiple angles to deepen our thinking about aesthetics.

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 and sound reasoning to support claims. 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, 2019-2020* (digital access code available for purchase at the USC bookstore)  
Assigned readings (posted on Blackboard and distributed in class and via email)

### **Evaluation**

Your final course grade will be based on the following components:

- 5% class participation and professionalism
- 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 (7-8 pages) and final portfolio (supplementary writing assignments)  
[25% writing project 4 + 10% ancillary writing = 35% final portfolio]

### **Approximate Writing Project Deadlines (dates subject to change)**

- 2/6: writing project 1
- 3/3: writing project 2
- 3/31: writing project 3
- 4/30: writing project 4 and final portfolio

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 136-139 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.

Ancillary Writing Assignments will be graded as follows:

- √+ Sophisticated ideas and articulate expression / engages with the assignment in-depth
- √ Thoughtful, competent college-level writing / adequately fulfills assignment requirements
- √- Unfocused, superficial, unclear, incomplete / falls short of assignment requirements

### **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 presence of each student. Active participation and punctual, regular attendance will earn you full credit for participation. Accumulating more than two unexcused absences and/or repeatedly showing up late for class will lower your participation grade. Browsing social media, texting, online shopping, or working on assignments from other classes will also 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. If you have to miss a class or arrive late because of an emergency, an illness, a religious holiday, or an official USC activity, please notify me as soon as possible so we can discuss how to make up the missed class.

**PLEASE NOTE: Any student who misses three or more weeks of class—for any reason—will be required to either drop the class or receive a final grade of "F." Since our class meets twice per week, missing six or more classes will result in a failing grade.**

### **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. Please do not chat, text, or browse social media during class time. Laptops must also be closed 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 am also available by email to answer any questions and can usually respond within 24 hours.

### **Conferences**

Four times throughout the semester, approximately one week before each writing project is due, we will cancel one class for individual conferences. Conferences are required, and provide an opportunity to discuss your writing one-on-one. Take note that I will not accept a writing project if we do not meet to discuss it during one of the required conferences. A sign up sheet for conferences will be available online a few days in advance of the meetings. I will not hold regular office hours during conference weeks.

### **Blackboard**

Visit our course Blackboard website regularly (log in at [blackboard.usc.edu](http://blackboard.usc.edu)), where I regularly post readings, resources, and assignments. I will also e-mail you announcements related to the course, so please check your USC account daily.

### **Submitting Your Work**

Formal writing projects must be uploaded to Turnitin via Blackboard on the day they are due, and they must adhere to the formatting requirements posted on the assignment sheet. All ancillary and process work assignments will also be due on Blackboard.

### Late Work

Late papers will lose one grade step every day they are submitted late (for example, a B will become a B-). If you are going to be late with a paper, please notify me as soon as possible. I will only grant extensions without a grade penalty in extraordinary circumstances, and only once per semester; however, **the final writing project must be submitted by the last class meeting and cannot be turned in late**. Furthermore, students cannot hand in the final writing project if any other major writing assignments are missing.

### 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 an 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, and please read the statement on Academic Conduct at the end of this document.

### Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification can be obtained from DSP; if possible, please deliver this letter to me early in the semester. DSP is located in GFS 120 and can be contacted at (213) 740-0776 or [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:ois@usc.edu) or (by phone) (213) 740-2666.