Writing 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning
Theme: Technology & Social Change

Instructor: Grace Franklin
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Class Time: T/Th 8:00-9:20 a.m. (Pacific Time)
Location: Online
Office Hours: Thursdays from 10:00-11:00 a.m. (Pacific Time) & by appointment

Course Overview
Welcome to Writing 150! First and foremost, this course prepares you for college-level writing. You will, of course, continue to grow as a writer and critical thinker throughout your time at USC, so think of this class as the first step in that journey—a chance to try out new strategies, explore ideas, make mistakes, learn from your peers, hone your style, and stretch your analytical thinking skills. Ideally, you will leave this class feeling confident and capable of tackling writing assignments in all manner of college courses. This confidence comes from gaining rhetorical tools, resources, and practice, but also from understanding writing as a process rather than an outcome. In Writing 150, we will work on releasing the pressure to produce an airtight final product on the first try. We'll start each writing project early, work on writing in stages, regroup, and revise. We'll spend time not only on structure, sources, and thesis-driven arguments, but also on invention, on content creation. Often, the most exciting reading experiences result when a writer gives themself freedom to think through ideas on the page rather than planning out every move ahead of time. In other words, I want to hear your ideas, your distinct voice, rather than simply learn from the sources you've gathered.

Writing 150 Focus on Technology & Social Change
Each Writing 150 section takes up a broad theme as a point of focus for developing writing processes and as an avenue for shared conversation. Ours, Technology & Social Change, is a vast topic that facilitates myriad paths of inquiry. If you are a history major, this topic may have prompted you to think about the Industrial Revolution, of machines that instigated mass production on an unprecedented scale or of the invention of the railroad which radically changed our sense of geographic distance and facility of movement. If you are in the School of Cinematic Arts, this topic may have made you think about the cultural changes effected through images. If you are a marketing major, political science major, or computer engineering major, you may have thought about the power of social media to activate people, draw them together, or drive them apart. No matter where you are coming from or what you hope to do, we are all social beings who interact with technology every day. This has perhaps never been more apparent, than in a virtual class such as this one, in which technology has enabled us to gather from disparate places and time zones.

All this to say, we all have experience with and insights on this topic, and each of your perspectives on technology and social change are eagerly welcomed. I am here to equip you as writers and critical thinkers, and I will provide readings and writing prompts related to our theme, but I hope to learn as much from you on this topic as you do from me. Each of our four units will consider technology and social change through a different lens—personal, social, environmental, and ethical—but you will have leeway to write about this topic from any vantage point that interests you.

Office Hours & Conferences
Office Hours: I will be on Zoom and available for office hours every Thursday from 10:00-11:00 a.m. Pacific Time. During this hour, you are welcome to drop in via a meeting link that I will send out Thursday mornings! However, you should also feel free to reach out whenever you have questions, concerns, thoughts, or just wish to talk about how things are going. I'm always happy to respond via email or check-in on Zoom at a time that suits both of our schedules.

Conferences: There will be **four mandatory conferences** during the semester, during which I will meet with you individually to discuss each of your writing projects. The first round of conferences will take place prior to Writing Project 1, and I will send out a conference sign-up sheet when we near that date. For Writing Projects 2 and 3, you can choose whether you would like to meet with me before turning in your paper or after I have given it back to you with a grade. Meeting prior to turning in your paper will give you and I a chance to discuss your ideas or challenges that you are having. Meeting after I've given you feedback on an assignment enables us to look more specifically at writing strengths and areas for growth. For our final conference, we'll meet prior to Writing Project 4, and I will send out a conference sign-up sheet like I did for WP1. A missed conference counts as an absence from class.

Assignments

Ancillary Writing Activities (AWAs)
Ancillary Writing Activities are short writing assignments intended to prepare you to participate in class discussion and to keep you on pace with your major Writing Projects. Some AWAs will be used in class, while others will be assigned as homework to be posted to our course discussion board or turned in to me via email. AWAs will be graded on a credit/no credit basis; these will typically be assignments pertaining to your work on an upcoming Writing Project, such as a rough plan of your argument or a draft of your introduction paragraph.

Writing Projects
You will write four thesis-driven essays over the course of the semester, ranging from 3 to 9 pages in length (i.e. the first essay will be 3-5 pages long, and each one thereafter will include an additional length requirement). Writing projects will also be worth more as the semester goes on to account for your improvement as a writer and the additional expectations of each project. I will give you a broad prompt, writing guidelines, and schedule of relevant readings and AWAs at the beginning of each writing unit. So, on our first day of class, you'll receive a schedule for our first three weeks of class, culminating in Writing Project 1.

Final Portfolio
The final for this class will take the form of a portfolio, due Friday, November 13th at 5 p.m. Your portfolio will include your final draft of WP4, along with a few supplemental pieces. I'll give you a list of supplemental pieces to choose from closer to the date! These may include a revised version of an earlier writing project, or a reflection on how your writing process has evolved over the course of the semester, among other options.

Required Text and Materials
- *Writing 150 Course Book,* 2020-2021 edition ($11.25)
- Other assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard

Grading
My evaluation of your essays will follow the Grading and Evaluation Rubric provided in the *Writing 150 Course Book* on pp. 137-139. Don't worry, we'll take time in class to discuss this rubric and consider sample essays before you turn in WP1. AWA's are graded on a credit/no credit basis; so, if you complete all of them, you will automatically get 100% for this portion of your final grade—hooray! Here's the assignments percentage breakdown for our semester:

Participation	5%
Ancillary Writing Assignments	15%
Writing Project 1 (Due Fri 9/4)	10%
Writing Project 2 (Due Fri 9/25)	15%
Writing Project 3 (Due Fri 10/16)	20%
Final Portfolio, includes WP4 (Due Fri 11/13)	35%

Late Papers & Extensions
Late Papers: Writing projects are always due **by 5 p.m. Pacific Time on the designated date**. Late papers will be penalized one grade step (e.g. B, B-) for every day that they are late without an explanation. If you have an extenuating circumstance and need more time to complete an assignment, please contact me and we can work something out. I understand that life is uniquely stressful and unpredictable right now.

Extensions: You may each have a 1-week extension on one of your writing projects. No need to explain to me why you have chosen to use your extension, however, I do ask that you let me know **3 days in advance** of the writing project due date if you plan to use an extension. Note: grade deadlines make an extension impossible for Writing Project 4.

Participation
In Writing 150, we will write, discuss, work in groups, and learn important information; accordingly, participation maximizes both your grade and your growth as a writer. I recognize, however, that discussion over Zoom with people you have never met can feel intimidating, so I will be attentive to multiple forms of participation on your end:

Verbal: I encourage you to speak up at least once a week during class. This may be during discussions that involve our whole class, or during small breakout groups comprised of a few students, or even you and one other student.

Written: We will often generate ideas through brief in-class writing about an image, a video, a passage, a current event, or other material. Unlike AWAs, this writing will count towards your overall class participation rather than receiving its own credit/no credit grade.

Chat: During class sessions, the chat-box is a great place to ask a question if you don't feel comfortable speaking up or don't find an opportunity to do so.

Conferences: Your engagement in writing conferences with me contributes to your participation grade. Coming with questions or goals in mind will help you get the most out of our meetings.

Listening: Being an active listener is one of the most profound ways that you can engage in class. This means really paying attention to what other people say, rather than merely thinking about how you plan to respond to others' comments. It means that your comments in class need not always be ideas of your own. You might say to a peer, "Wow, what I hear you saying is … Thank you for sharing. That's fascinating, or challenging, or encouraging and gives me something to think about."

Attendance
Because this class is primarily a workshop, your learning depends in large part upon your peers' generous, alert participation in class, just as their learning depends upon your active engagement. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Missing class hurts your grade simply because doing so deprives you of lessons designed to help you write better essays. In addition to that indirect penalty, students also face direct penalties for excessive absences. Since circumstances sometimes make it essential for people to miss class, you will not be directly penalized for one full week of absences (T/Th = 2 absences). Please email me, however, to let me know you will not be in attendance. Beyond that, your grade will be lowered 2% with each subsequent missed class. ***Any student with three weeks (6 classes) of absences will not pass this course.***

It is crucial that we begin class on time. Arriving late for class is disruptive and distracting, and two late arrivals (10 minutes late or more) will count as one class absence.

Online Policies & Etiquette
To the best of your ability, please attend class in a quiet, well-lit space where you can concentrate on the work or discussion at hand. I understand that interruptions will happen, and I am sure that my dog will bark more than once during class. However, we should all strive to put our best foot forward on this front!

It is helpful, in order to further discussion and camaraderie, for us to join in with video and audio. Having conversations with black boxes is much more difficult than conversing face-to-face. (I do recognize, however, that there are times when environmental or technical issues make this difficult, so it's okay to keep the video off sometimes.) Fear not! We will take breaks and have asynchronous portions of class.

Out of respect for our (virtual) classroom space, please use headphones if other people who are not in our class are nearby. This will make everyone feel safe and free to discuss, rather than feel wary that others outside our class are listening in.

Please avoid multitasking and distractions—mute or even turn off your phone during synchronous portions of class and try not to open other internet windows unless specifically asked to do so.

Class Ethics
Today's academic discourse community. which you as college writers are joining, values earnest debate on cultural, social, economic, and scientific topics. Accordingly, we as a class, and you in your writing, will consider current issues that are rife for discussion and do not lend themselves to simple right or wrong answers. I encourage you to push yourselves as critical thinkers and consider multiple sides of the issues at hand—an intellectual habit that will enable you to grow as compelling communicators. I by no means expect you to hold the same opinions as I do: this is a class about thinking for yourself and effectively conveying your ideas in writing.

That said, another crucial aspect of communication at the university level is respect for others' racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, and life experiences. Our differences are valuable, a source of vibrancy and creativity in our USC community, and I expect you to respect others in class discussion and in your written work. The various definitions of respect are useful here:

1. To pay attention to, look towards, or take notice of
2. To bear in mind, think of, or consider
3. To value, esteem, or honor
4. To uphold or maintain; to refrain from violating (a right, a privilege, etc.)
5. To resemble
(Source: Oxford English Dictionary)

Note that respect does not merely mean being polite or neutral. Respect involves paying attention to others, considering their intellectual position or life experiences, valuing and honoring them as human beings, upholding their rights and privileges (which at the least means not infringing upon them yourself), and finally resemblance—in other words, open-minded empathy, a willingness to grow and change in response to those around you.

The USC Writing Program is dedicated to anti-discrimination in and out of the classroom, standing wholeheartedly against racism, bigotry, sexism, dehumanization, oppression, colonization, xenophobia, and white supremacy. Our Writing 150 class will emphatically uphold this position. If you feel uncomfortable at any point because of something that transpired in class, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may address any concerns together.

Assignment Submission Formats
Please submit writing projects in Word doc (not PDF) format via Blackboard. Essays should be typed and double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, with 1" margins. Page numbers, along with your last name, go in the top right corner of every page. Please include the following information in the top-left corner of the first page: Your Name, Writing 150 and section number, My Name, Writing Project Number, and Date.

Format all essays and citations in Modern Language Association Style. MLA examples and resources are available in our *Writing 150 Coursebook* on pp. 111-120 and at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html.

The Writing Center
As a USC student you may take advantage of assistance offered by consultants at the Writing Center. This assistance is absolutely free, and the people working there can help you with all aspects of the writing process: analyzing the writing prompt, developing ideas for papers, constructing rough plans during prewriting, producing initial paragraphs during drafting, and polishing sentences and paragraphs during revision.

Visit The Writing Center website to learn more and book an appointment. This semester, consultants will be available for one-on-one, 25-minute online sessions between the hours of 9:00a.m.-9:00p.m. (Pacific Time) on M-Th and from 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. on Fridays.

Plagiarism
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.

Consequences for plagiarism include but are not limited to grade sanctions (e.g., "F" in course) and dismissal from the academic department. In addition, sanctions of suspension or expulsion from the university may be assessed through a review process when requested by the instructor, by the academic or administrative unit in which the violation occurred, or when indicated by university standards (such as the seriousness of the misconduct or the existence of previous academic violations by the student).

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or are feeling desperate enough to plagiarize, please feel free to contact me. I would much rather spend extra time with you and provide the help that you need than deal with the consequences of plagiarism.

Students with Disabilities
Please set up a Zoom meeting or email me to let me know if you require specific academic accommodations for this class. Students requesting such accommodations are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP, which is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Support Systems
USC offers an array of support systems for undergrads, grad students, and faculty. Remember that the Student Heath Center offers telehealth appointments for anyone located in the U.S. Beyond physical needs, below you'll find a list of resources you can turn to for mental, emotional, social, and financial support. Whether you are located in the U.S. or abroad, you can speak with a counselor through a new resource "Let's Talk…on Zoom!".

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