WRITING 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning, Fall 2020
Technology and Social Change

Instructor: **Professor Fenderson**
E-mail: lfenders@usc.edu
Zoom Meeting ID: 921 8523 0554
The classroom Zoom links can also be found on Blackboard.

Office Hours: TTh 2pm – 3pm pst
Office hours are scheduled by appointment only. To book, email the day prior, 24 hours in advance of the time.)

Sections/Times:
64645   TTh.   12:30 pst– 1:50 pst

This syllabus is a guide and is subject to change.****

Course Texts and Materials

- Writing 150 Course Book – purchase through USC Bookstore online – they will ship your access code for free
- Blackboard, and course readings posted therein
- Zoom

Course Objectives and Description

Goals: Writing 150 is designed to develop your ability to think critically, read actively, and communicate your ideas thoughtfully and effectively. You will do a significant amount of writing in this course, with a focus on writing as a process. You will learn strategies for invention, or generating ideas, for effectively arranging those ideas, and for developing your own unique style and techniques for revision.

Dialogic: This is a dialogic class and you will be expected to work with one another in groups or pairs, conference with me, and participate in class discussions. Our writing course will be run as a workshop, this is not a seminar or lecture. Instead, I hope to provide a structured online environment in which you will make your own intellectual discoveries and, by interacting with your peers, become the impetus for the flourishing of their intellectual revelations.

Thematic: Those discoveries and revelations will occur within the realm of our course thematic: "Technology and Social Change." Writing 150 is <u>not</u> a social science, history, or cultural studies class. It is a *writing* class, but one in which our discussions will be focused on our common topic. Our thematic will offer you an opportunity to improve your writing and critical reasoning abilities within the context of current technological and social change. In our

writing we will analyze claims about technological innovation and develop arguments about the promises, problems, ethics, and ideologies of this fundamental condition of current life. Areas for exploration include technological determinism, ethical challenges to technology, political responses to technology, and technology's impact on various social systems, ranging from health care to commerce to the family. Students will engage in formal writing projects and ancillary writing assignments designed to cultivate your appreciation of writing as an essential process and tool of thinking, of learning, of remembering, of inquiring, of persuading.

Statement on Fostering an Anti-Racist Classroom

Together, we will create a classroom environment that reflects diversity, equity, and justice. In service of this creation, all of us must speak out against bias and injustice when we encounter it in the classroom. This might happen when biased and unjust language emerges in the moment, or it might happen in an alternatively impactful manner: via an email to me, anonymous evaluation check-ins (conducted periodically throughout semester), or on the Google Classroom Stream. We will cover a tool for navigating microaggressions, which is attached at the end of the syllabus. We will strive to support each other and make it safe to be fully ourselves in class. I will implement instructional strategies that support diverse learning styles and strive to allow for deep exploration of identity and diversity, which requires awareness of, and attention to, structural racism as it marks the classroom space and our lives.

In regards to classroom conduct, respect for others' racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, nationalities, immigration statuses, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientations, and gender expressions is the norm and standard. This norm should be respected in your written work, as well as in class discussion. The WRIT 150 curriculum emphasizes hearing out and understanding all viewpoints *within an academic discourse community*. There is no room for disrespect of systemically marginalized populations in our academic discourse community.

In this class, "respect" will require that we do more than ignore race: we will confront racism, and its intersection with other systemic injustices, such as sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ableism. As such, you can expect that WRIT 150 will present moments that may feel uncomfortable. We will have to work together to allow discomfort to exist in the classroom, realizing that anti-racist work is uncomfortable for white people especially, because our culture typically prioritizes white comfort.

<u>Course Policies</u>

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 engagement. **<u>Although the class is online, attendance is mandatory</u>**. Missing class hurts your grade simply because doing so deprives you of lessons designed to help you write better essays. It also deprives the community of your intellectual input. In addition to that indirect penalty, students also face direct penalties for unexcused absences:

The absolute limit on absences is 3 weeks of class time. On our TTh schedule, that's 6 class sessions. This limit begins after the first two weeks of classes.

After that point, any student who misses more than 6 classes—for any reason—will be required to either drop the class or take a final grade of "F."

Absences for documented illness, religious holidays, or approved university-sponsored events are excused absences and generally do not count against your grades, up to that 20% mark. However, if you miss class for any of these reasons, you must still either contact me as soon as possible to explain and provide written verification (in the case of illness or emergency) or give me one week's advance notice along with written verification and arrange to make up any missed work (in the case of holidays and university-sponsored events). If you miss class you are responsible for getting the homework, the notes, and any handouts/materials by watching the Zoom recordings.

Logging in late: A student who arrives in the Zoom room after I have taken roll (aloud or silently) is considered tardy. In general, three tardies constitute one absence. I consider up to 15 minutes late, tardy – anything beyond that is an absence, even if you eventually show up.

* **If you are not currently residing in the US** and thus cannot attend synchronously on Zoom, you must watch the entirety of the Zoom recording (posted on Blackboard after each class). You must submit a paragraph summary of each class in order for you to be marked present. You will also be expected to actively contribute to the class Discussion Boards and any and all assignments.

Blackboard: In addition to Zoom, Blackboard is where we will share work (in class and homework). It's where you will complete your ancillary assignments. Think of it as a sort of base camp for writing materials.

Connectivity Issues: If you are normally able to participate synchronously but are having issues logging on to Zoom, you may do an asynchronous participation day like that listed above for international students abroad. There will be a cap of 3 times that this option is available to you, so take care of connectivity issues as soon as you can.

Late papers: Late papers will be penalized one grade step (i.e., from a B+ to a B) for each class session that they are past due. That is, if the paper is due on Tuesday and you don't submit it until the following Tuesday, the final grade will be lowered two grade steps. Please note that I will not accept an essay handed in more than a week after the due date unless you discuss the matter with me before the due date passes. Finally, failure to hand in any essay will result in an F for that assignment, and students may not hand in the final portfolio if any of the major writing projects are missing. Thus, if you miss one major writing project, you should drop the class. This is also the extension policy – you can turn in your work up to a week late, but there are penalties, so don't choose to do so lightly. Also, pre-work and process assignments will be required for submission of the final papers.

Participation: To succeed in a college classroom, you must be willing and prepared to engage with the class: the entire group and with your peers in smaller group discussions. Your ability to show up to conferences and peer writing workshops with the required amount of work done is key to participation. It's worth 5% of your course grade. When you're in breakout rooms, I'll periodically drop in just to make sure we stay relatively on task and to take note of participation.

Online Etiquette: Your presence, your energy, and your engagement on Zoom will be an important part of all of our learning experiences. You are a part of a community. As a community member you must conduct yourself in an appropriate manner, meaning:
- Sign into Zoom through your USC account, rather than a personal account. Do not change your Zoom name to something other than what you've asked me to call you in class. It's important that I recognize who you are when you show up into the room.
- You need to be "presentable," and shouldn't show up to class shirtless, or wrapped in a blanket, laying down in bed, etc. If you wouldn't show up in person that way, don't show up on Zoom that way.
- Keep your video on. If you're unable to do so, you still must have your audio unmuted to speak during class. If you're unable to find a quiet place in your home to Zoom, you may mute yourself to keep background noise to a minimum, but you should expect to unmute to chime in or to answer if I call on you.
- If video and audio muting are unavoidable, you should plan on being very engaged, asking questions and making comments, in the chat. That's the only way to participate without video and audio.
- If you want to use a Zoom background, that is perfectly fine.
- Utilize the "ask for help" feature when you're in your breakout rooms if you need my assistance.

E-mail assistance: I am happy to answer <u>specific</u> questions about your papers over email. I will not accept entire drafts over email. If you wish to receive feedback on small sections of a draft (e.g., a thesis or a paragraph), that's best done during office hours. I hold office hours each week, in addition to conferences for each paper. There are plenty of opportunities for you to work with me one on one – plan ahead and utilize them, rather than holding out for email assistance, which I find less effective. I only accept and answer email M-F between the hours of 10am and 3pm. Once I receive your email, I will respond as soon as I can, usually within twenty-four hours, unless you email me Friday at 3pm, in which case I'll respond on Monday.

Grading: Before the first essay is due, we will review the Writing 150 rubric together in class. Course assignments are weighted as follows:

Writing Project 1   5% (becomes portfolio at end of class)
Writing Project 2   15%
Writing Project 3   25%
Writing Project 4   25%
Portfolio   10%
Ancillary Work   15%
Participation   5%

Writing Projects

Writing Projects are critical, persuasive essays. You will be asked to complete four of them during the course of the semester. The Writing Projects are sequenced so that each subsequent essay can build upon the critical reasoning, reading, and writing done in earlier Projects. Writing Projects constitute the main determinate of your grade. A specific prompt, writing guidelines, and schedule of relevant readings and assignments for each essay will be distributed.

Tentative Due Dates for Writing Projects:

WP1: Friday, September 4
WP2: Wednesday, September 23
WP3: Wednesday, October 21
WP4: Friday, November 13
Portfolio: Wednesday, November 18

The Writing Project sequence this semester will work as follows:

WP1: Thesis-Driven Essay This essay is about inventive analysis, evaluative argumentation, your own critical insight. You will analyze and offer a thesis claim, substantiated by evidence from that analysis.

WP2: Textual Analysis and Entering a Debate You will continue with analysis, this time you will enter a debate on the use of technology in specific areas of our lives. This essay will allow you to choose your own topic on which to work.

The two latter assignments will be topically connected:

WP3: Researched Essay This is a meta-assignment/proposal where you will need to write convincingly about why this topic should be researched and why a paper about it is a necessary addition to the discussion. WP4 is that paper. You will choose a topic within the realm of technology and *social change* to research, with a focus on learning what others

have said so that you might offer your own insight into the issue. The essay will also serve as the base level of research for your WP4. Essentially, WP3 is a paper convincing us that your topic for WP4 is innovative, necessary, and salient.

WP4: Scholarly Narrative You will combine academic scholarship with forward looking proposals and strategies. How can, and will, you, your communities, or communities about which you care deeply or that you've identified as a historically protected class, be positively or negatively affected by our technological reliance/innovations?

While our schedule does not accommodate extensive feedback at the draft stage of any writing project, the conferences we hold are meant to be used as feedback sessions, as are our in-class peer workshops.

Conferences: We will have four sets of conferences, during which we will meet in either individual or small group settings to discuss your writing. Conferences provide an opportunity to receive highly targeted feedback on your writing prior to submitting a paper. Before scheduling a conference, be sure that you do not have any time conflicts: **a missed conference as an absence.** All conferences will be held in PST. Check your email on a daily basis – conferences are announced via email and you sign up electronically. You cannot, under any circumstances, make up or re-schedule a conference that you scheduled and missed or canceled day of. On the weeks when we have conferences, I will not hold office hours, as I will be conferencing with students for the duration of these days.

Ancillary Assignments: Ancillary assignments are sometimes creative writing exercises and sometimes benchmarks in the writing process, depending on what we need as a class at that time. They will not receive feedback, and are graded credit/no credit.

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 (all of which have been moved to online format):

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

DSP: Please 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 STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

The Writing Center: 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. You may sign up in advance for a

thirty-minute, virtual one-on-one consultation. In order to maximize your meeting with a Writing Center consultant, be prepared with a copy of your assignment, all drafts and prewriting, and specific questions. Make an appointment here: http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/