



USC University of Southern California

Writing 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning Technology & Social Change (Section 64925) Fall 2020

Instructor: Lindsey Skillen (she/her/hers); lskillen@usc.edu
PhD Candidate in Creative Writing (Fiction) & Literature

Zoom: Mondays & Wednesdays; 3:30pm-4:50pm (Los Angeles Time)

Topic: 20203:64925:WRIT-150 Writing and Critical Reasoning--Thematic Approaches

Time: 03:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

[Every week on Mon, Wed, until Nov 11, 2020, 25 occurrence\(s\)](#)

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 965 1888 3655

Passcode: HbI0wpJr7P

[Blackboard](#)

Required Texts:

Writing 150 Course Book, 2020-2021 (available [online](#) for a \$16 access code)

Assigned readings, posted on Blackboard

Laptop or tablet for in-class drafting, revision, and Zoom participation

About the Course

Writing 150 is designed to develop your ability to think critically, read actively, and communicate your ideas persuasively. Most importantly, this course serves as an introduction to the genre of academic writing. We will focus on writing as a process, and you will learn strategies for invention (or generating ideas); for effectively arranging those ideas; for crafting your own arguments; and for revising your work. By the end of the semester you will know how to critique arguments through analysis, and will have refined your own style and voice.

Class will be run as a workshop, meaning we will regularly participate in class discussions, group work, and in-class writing.

Themed around “Technology and Social Change,” your writing and our discussions will continually draw inspiration from our personal engagements with technology, as well as from larger societal shifts resulting from technological advancements. Instruction will focus on writing and critical thinking, and we will use the theme as a jumping-off point for prompts and exercises, as well as an entry point for your essays.

Course Components and Grade Breakdown

Workshops

In order to make the process of writing more apparent to ourselves and others, you will be sharing works-in-progress with myself and fellow classmates. Submitting any kind of work for others to read can leave us feeling vulnerable, so when you’re drafting think about what you would and wouldn’t be comfortable sharing with others. My hope is that our class will be an open space for collaboration where everyone treats each other with care and respect.

Conferences

Throughout the semester you’ll be meeting with me one-on-one via Zoom to discuss your progress in the course and what you’re working on. We will be setting aside some classes to devote to individual conferences, and missing meetings—or never scheduling one with me—counts as an absence.

The Work of the Course

Writing Project 1	4-5 page essay (1,250 words)	Due: 09/02/2020	10%
Writing Project 2	5-6 page essay (1,500 words)	Due: 09/23/2020	15%
Writing Project 3	6-7 page essay (1,750 words)	Due: 10/14/2020	20%
Writing Project 4 + Final Portfolio	7-8 page essay (2,000 words)	Due: 11/11/2020	35%
Ancillary Writing + Asynchronous Work	Reading and Writing Practice and Process Work		15%
Participation	Active engagement in all synchronous class sessions; and completion of all asynchronous content		5%

Writing Projects Guidelines

Your Writing Projects and Final Portfolio will be evaluated according to the Writing Program's rubric (available on pages 134-139 of the Writing 150 Course Book). I will be collecting process work from you along the way, so be sure to keep up with your ancillary assignments. Neglecting to turn in your process work along the way will result in lower grades on final projects.

Please see [this doc](#) for a formatted template to use for your assignments. If appropriate, include a properly formatted MLA style works cited page.

In order to submit a portfolio for evaluation, you must not be failing the course before the final week of classes and must have turned in all of your previous assignments.

Ancillary Assignments

These smaller writing assignments will act as stepping stones as we build towards the longer essays. They will facilitate the pre-writing and drafting process by helping you create, shape, and refine your Writing Projects. Much of your ancillary work will be experimental and exploratory in nature, and will be counted for credit as follows:

- ✓ + = exceeded expectations (or) little to no revision necessary
thorough, insightful and reflective of your active participation
Excellent (A-level) work
- ✓ = met expectations (or) would benefit from revision
good, although might have been a little more thorough/insightful
Good (B-level) work.
- ✓ - = incomplete/did not meet expectations (or) requires revision
acceptable, but could be more thorough, insightful, or reflective of active participation
Acceptable (C-level) work.
- 0 = No Credit: Not submitted or Unacceptable/Incomplete work.

Individual Consultations

[The Writing Center](#) 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. You are encouraged to use the WC resources throughout the semester for additional guidance on the assignments for this course, or for any other course (but keep in mind that they're not just a proofreading service).

Late Work

You are expected to submit all coursework by the assigned deadlines. For each class period that a Writing Project is late, you lose a third of a grade (B+ to B, for example). After two weeks or the last day of class, assignments (including ancillaries) can no longer be turned in.

To ensure consistency within the grading procedures in the Writing Program, your final Writing Project will be read by another instructor as well as by me. Due to this, no late portfolios can be accepted.

A Good Participant Will Do All of the Following Things:

- prep for class by completing all the readings and assignments and come ready with questions and comments
- contribute to the workshop discussion and show enthusiasm when responding to others
- maintain proper decorum during our Zoom sessions (see [here](#))
- turn in asynchronous work, ancillary assignments, and writing projects in a timely manner
- approach coursework with a positive, go-get-'em attitude
- respect other members of the class and their viewpoints

Attendance

Writing 150 is a workshop-based class in which discussion and interaction are vital. Missing class deprives you of the opportunity to learn from your peers, and also deprives your peers of the opportunity to work with you. Workshops are reciprocal in nature, and I expect everyone to be present for every class so all students receive their fair share of feedback.

Taking into account that uncontrollable circumstances do arise, every student is allowed two absences without repercussions. Further absences will impact your grade in the course. Writing Program policy stipulates that any student who misses three or more weeks of class—for any reason—will be required to either drop the class or accept an “F” as a final grade.

Regardless of whether your absence would be excused or unexcused, always contact me as soon as you know you will miss class. After letting me know, arrange for a classmate to take notes for you.

2 absences (1 week of class missed)	No Penalty
3 absences	2% docked from participation grade
4 absences (2 weeks of class missed)	3% docked from participation grade
5 absences	4% docked from participation grade

6 absences (3 weeks of class missed)	Withdraw or Fail
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Partial Absences

As a general rule, I count three tardies as the equivalent of one absence. “Tardiness” entails all of the following behaviors:

- joining the call more than ten minutes late
- leaving the call more than ten minutes early
- ghosting somewhere in the middle for an extended period of time
- turning off your video without communicating a reason to me

That being said, it is always better to attend a portion of the class than miss it entirely—therefore partial absences will be treated with more leniency than skipping class sessions altogether.

Academic Integrity

Privacy Concerns

In order for us to maintain a trustworthy collegiate relationship with one another, we all must agree not to share or discuss the work generated by students for this course outside of class. Also, we must agree to keep our class sessions to ourselves—this means not sharing course recordings or chats with others not enrolled in the course, or posting clips or screenshots. Everyone must abide by these two rules if we are to feel at ease during class discussions and free to express our ideas through our writing.

The repercussions: Course content, including recordings, is for your private, educational use only. Anyone modifying or re-posting course content on the Internet or social media will be referred to USC Student Judicial Affairs for violating the Student Code of Conduct.

If you believe someone in our course is posting course content online, please notify me (your report will be kept confidential).

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. Any form of unacknowledged or illegitimate assistance is not tolerated in the academic community and will result in serious penalties at both the Program and university levels. Turnitin, the software Blackboard uses, will scan each assignment for plagiarized passages when it is submitted. A plagiarized assignment will receive an “F” and may result in failure of the course. Review the policies regarding academic integrity in the Writing 150 Coursebook and the SCampus Student Guidebook (Part B, Section 11, “[Behavior Violating University Standards](#)”). Also see university policies on [scientific misconduct](#).

Plagiarism includes the following:

- unacknowledged and inappropriate use of ideas or wording of another writer
- submitting an essay written or obtained from someone else
- using an essay in more than one class (even if you wrote it) without the permission of the instructors involved
- allowing another student to sign their name to your work

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or are feeling so stressed or desperate about the work for our course that you even consider plagiarising, please reach out to me.

Safe Space

As we all come from diverse backgrounds, the classroom should be a safe space that uplifts the voices of its most vulnerable students. We should be mindful that the classroom will consist of students from different backgrounds across race, gender, sexuality, class, immigration status, disability and religion. As we will enter academic discussion of social and political issues, we may find ourselves in disagreement with one another. It is fine to engage in passionate debate, but we should always be mindful of how our speech and actions might minimize, generalize, or discriminate against our classmates. Please adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and strive to engage in discourse with good faith and openness. If you are made to feel uncomfortable at any point, you are welcome to speak with me.

This classroom respects everyone's pronouns, gender identity and gender expression. Please defer to your classmate when it comes to such terms regarding their identity.

Student Resources and Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health

(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)

(213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

[Office of Equity and Diversity \(OED\)](#)

(213) 740-5086

[Title IX](#)

(213) 821-8298

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#)

(213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Disability Services and Programs](#)

(213) 740-0776

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*Please let me know if you require specific academic accommodations for this class—I am more than happy to work with you.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#)

(213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity at USC](#)

(213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) | dps.usc.edu

UPC: (213) 740-4321 – 24/7 on call

HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#)

UPC: (213) 740-6000 – 24/7 on call

HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

USC Student Health: "[Ways to Stay Well During Stressful Times](#)"



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