

## **WRITING 340 – Advanced Critical Thinking and Writing for the Visual and Performing Arts**

SECTION 65385D  
TTH 3:30 - 4:50 pm, THH online  
rwaller@usc.edu  
213-821-6489

Robert Waller  
Office: JEF 115  
Office hours: TTH 10am-12:00pm  
and by appointment

### **REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

-- All course readings will be available electronically as PDFs. No text needs to be purchased.  
-- If you would like a writing handbook, I can recommend Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*. I also suggest *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser available at the Amazon and elsewhere. Both of these texts are optional.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome. This course proposes to teach advanced writing to students of the arts through the rich rhetorical models of critical writing by artists who have theorized their own aesthetics. We will consider the way creative work may lead to academic, public, and professional writing by developing analogies between artistic practice and the writing process.

Your chief task in Writing 340 is to improve your ability to produce clear, thoughtful, and effective academic writing; closely allied to this is the need to become more familiar with the expectations and commitments of diverse, specific discourse communities. In this class we will work together to refine your expertise in writing for the sake of upper-division course work, graduate study, and career paths that you might take in the arts or elsewhere.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

You will be assigned three full length essays as well as several shorter writing assignments during the semester. The specific requirements for each essay will be detailed on an assignment sheet. All drafts and final papers must be typed, stapled, double-spaced, paginated, set off by one-inch margins, and must meet the page requirement set forth in the assignment. The font used must be size 12 in standard fonts. Be sure to include all pertinent information in your heading; i.e., your name, my name, the assignment number, and the date. Always be sure to keep a personal copy of drafts and final papers. Late papers may be penalized.

WRIT 340 students are also required to submit prewriting materials (any plans, notes, brainstorming) as well as rough drafts. You may also be required to submit copies of or links to secondary sources referenced in your essays.

You will also be asked to complement your written work with in-class presentations. Along with quizzes and homework assignments, this component constitutes part of your final grade.

## **PLAGIARISM AND ILLEGITIMATE ASSISTANCE**

Plagiarism is a major problem in universities around the country and here at USC. It usually occurs when a writer does not credit authors for their quotes or specific ideas. We will discuss proper citation methods throughout the semester. Illegitimate assistance involves submitting someone else's work (such as a bought or borrowed paper) as your own.

You should be aware that the penalty for plagiarism and illegitimate assistance in any course at USC is the same: it is grounds for a failing grade and expulsion from the University. Do not risk your entire academic career by failing to cite your sources or submitting a paper that you did not write.

## **DOCUMENTING YOUR WRITING PROCESS**

Because plagiarism is such a problem, you will often be required to provide evidence documenting each stage of your writing process. A key component of each assignment is the writing process. If you cannot show the process involved in writing your essay (notes, rough drafts, sources), you may not receive credit for the essay.

## **PORTFOLIO**

At the end of the term you will choose two essays to revise. These will be submitted to me as your final portfolio.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Each student will have one of their papers workshopped by the class. A week in advance of the scheduled workshop the author will email a draft to the class. Students will complete a one-page response and then we will discuss the paper in class. We will go around the room with each student contributing their constructive criticism. Often, we will engage in a discussion of the topic, debating ideas, generating potential areas for development in order to help the author clarify and expand upon his or her paper.

## **CONFERENCES**

You will have the opportunity to meet with me one-on-one to discuss each assignment. These meetings are designed to help improve the writing and thinking you are doing and to catch potential problems before they end up in a final draft submitted for a grade. As a result, I recommend that you come to conferences prepared with questions and a rough draft.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

The Writing Program departmental policy regarding attendance remains in place during remote learning. You may miss no more than 20% of class (five or more classes) and still pass the course. I will expect that you may have valid reasons for missing the occasional class. Please let me know ahead of time or as soon as possible after missing class. This class is built around thoughtfully engaging in discussions. An attendance and participation grade, based on how well you meet this requirement, will be counted as 10% of your final grade. Missing class or scheduled conferences can impact this grade.

In terms of attendance in the remote learning era, the university now uses two terms: synchronous & asynchronous learning.

“Synchronous” learning = online teaching/learning which happens in real time. That is, online class held, via Zoom, during our normally scheduled class day/time.

“Asynchronous” learning = learning online without real-time interaction. For example, viewing a video-recorded class at a later day/time from our normally scheduled class day/time.

You will be expected to engage in “synchronous” learning—attending the class online during its normally scheduled day and time. Exceptions will be made for:

(a) Documented excuses which you have presented to me. Should you need to miss class, you can watch the recorded class or view the transcript. Missed class will be excused if you (1) inform me of the need to miss and provide documentation of the need to miss; (2) you watch the recorded class/read the transcript and/or keep pace with the class.

(b) Those students learning in a time zone different from PST, a time zone which would make attending during our normal day/time in that student’s current time zone impractical. I will try to make arrangements individually in these cases, so that you can watch the recorded class/read the transcripts and keep pace with the class.

### **CLASS VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Each regularly scheduled class will be automatically recorded and provided in transcript form by ITS, via Blackboard. Viewing the recording rather than being present during the online, regularly scheduled class DOES NOT COUNT as having “attended.” Again, there will be exceptions to this (see above), exceptions that I will work out with individual students on a private, individual basis.

### **CAMERA USE**

I would prefer that all students use their cameras during class. This will help in creating the energy vital to classroom interaction. It will also help in that I will often be “calling” on you to participate in class discussions, read portions of sample papers, etc. And it will help during presentations, so that those presenting can *see* their classmates. That said, I am aware that using your camera may cause anxiety or create technical, bandwidth issues. You can contact me with any reasonable requests to not use your camera on a given day and I will be glad to discuss exceptions and accommodations.

*For further information on attendance, etc, see “Policy and Guidelines for Asynchronous Learning”:* <https://www.provost.usc.edu/policy-and-guidelines-for-asynchronous-learning/>

USC Covid Hotline (213 740 6291) [covid19@usc.edu](mailto:covid19@usc.edu) or [coronavirus.usc.edu](https://coronavirus.usc.edu)

TrojanCheck (<https://we-are.usc.edu/health-and-safety/trojan-check/>)

Digital Campus Student Toolkit (<https://keepteaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/>)

## THE WRITING CENTER

Now located online, the Writing Center is available to offer individual help on specific writing problems or skills you wish to develop. In addition to individual consultations on writing from WRIT 120 to doctoral dissertations, it offers workshops on specific grammatical and stylistic issues throughout the semester. Contact them to make an appointment for an individual session or reserve a seat in one of the workshops: 213-740-3691. More information can be obtained at <https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>

## GRADING

The following is the breakdown of how your grade will be determined this semester:

<i>Essays 1 (Narrative)</i>	15.0%
<i>Essay 2 (Analysis)</i>	15.0%
<i>Essay 3 (Interview)</i>	5.0%
<i>Essay 4 (Review)</i>	15.0%
<i>(subtotal)</i>	<i>(50%)</i>
<i>Attendance and Participation</i>	10%
<i>Presentation, Quizzes, Short Assignments, Workshops</i>	15%
<i>Final Portfolio</i>	25%

## ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. Located in the STU 301, DSP is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is (213) 740-0776.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

In regard to classroom conduct, respect for others' racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, nationalities, immigration statuses, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientations, and gender expressions is expected as the norm and standard. Together, we will create a classroom environment that reflects diversity, equity, and justice. We will strive to support each other and make it safe to be fully ourselves in class.

## FINANCIAL & TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE FOR USC STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

### [USC Support Funds for Students and Employees](#)

- “Eligible students can apply for assistance from the COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund and the USC Student Basic Needs Department, and eligible employees can apply for assistance from the USC Employee Support fund. USC received funds under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide emergency grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19. These expenses included food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.”

### [USC Student Basic Needs Department](#)

- “Our vision is to ensure student wellbeing through food, housing, and economic justice. You will find resources and services on- and off-campus that you may utilize for staff, faculty, and students, and be up-to date on new initiatives and events around campus addressing how USC is striving for a basic needs secure community.”
- Includes information about technology assistance, food insecurity, housing insecurity, financial insecurity, and COVID-19 resources.

### [Basic Needs Department: COVID-19 Resources](#)

- Includes information about the Trojan Food Pantry, virtual CalFresh appointments, technology rentals, internet services, Zoom consultations with Basic Needs staff, Emergency Relief Funding, additional food instability resources, clinics, screenings, childcare, and shelters & home insecurity.

### [Technology Assistance Request](#)

- “We realize attending classes online and performing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students may possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the University’s equipment rental program. To apply, fill out a form and a Student Basic Needs team will partner with you to evaluate your options.”

### [Undergraduate Living-at-Home Grant](#)

- “We recognize that students living at home may still have significant living expenses. To alleviate some of these costs, the Financial Aid Office will automatically award an Undergraduate Living-at-Home Grant in the amount of \$4,000 for the fall semester and \$4,000 for the spring semester to students who qualify.”

### [Notify the Financial Aid Office of undergraduate student housing plans](#)

- Information about receiving financial aid for undergraduates who lived in USC housing but then moved “home” due to COVID-19; undergraduates who would have lived off campus in non-USC housing but now live at “home”; undergraduates who still plan to live in USC housing; and undergraduates who still plan to live in off-campus non-USC housing.

### [Reimbursements for USC Employees, Students, and Guests](#)

- “University community members incur various types of expenses as they perform tasks and duties that support the operations of the university and further its mission. USC reimburses employees, students, and guests for necessary and reasonable approved expenses they incur in the conduct of university business.”

### [Financial Information for Employees](#)

- Includes answers to FAQ about the financial situation of USC, financial assistance for employees, and food, economic, and housing insecurity.

## DTS Equipment Loans

- Employees can make requests to borrow a laptop, tablet, or project from DTS. Due to COVID-19, the loaner equipment will be mailed to either home or campus addresses. Undergraduates are not eligible for a loan through DTS.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FALL 2020**

*Many of these dates may change. This Tentative Schedule is given only for general planning purposes. Please double check all dates on actual assignment sheets as well as against day-to-day class announcements and do not rely on this document alone.*

### **Week One**

- 8/18 Introduction to course. Read Tolstoy. Discuss "Anna Karenina" excerpt.  
**HW:** Complete Diagnostic Assignment. Read "The Art of Failure" & "The Chosen One."
- 8/20 Collect & Discuss Diagnostics. Discuss "Art of Failure" and "The Chosen One." Begin "What Makes Good Writing Good?" Discussion. Imitations Part One.  
**HW:** Complete Imitation Exercise. Bring in a sample of "good writing". Read Ono, Lewitt and Smith.

### **Week Two**

- 8/25 Introductory Questions. Discuss Ono, Lewitt and Smith. Continue "Good Writing" discussions. Imitations Part Two. **Introduction of Assignment #1 (Narrative).** **HW:** "Autobiographical Statement" by John Cage, "In Praise of Boredom" by Brodsky, and "Serpents of Paradise" by Abbey.
- 8/27 Listen to Cage. Discuss Cage, Abbey, Brodsky. Goldberg exercise. Readings Questions. Whole class workshop sign-up.  
**HW:** Read "The Turning Point of My Life" by Mark Twain. Work on rough drafts.

### **Week Three**

- 9/1 In-class Peer Review and Troubleshooting. **Rough Draft Due.** Discuss Twain. Sign-up for conferences. Discuss Workshop guidelines and schedule. **HW:** Continue work on drafts.
- 9/3 **Class Canceled for Conferences.** **HW:** Prep for Workshop.

### **Week Four**

- 9/8 **Whole Class Workshop #1.** Peer Critiques Due: One for Author, One for Me. **Presentation sign-up.** **HW:** Final Drafts
- 9/10 **Assignment #1(Narrative) Due. Introduce Assignment 2 (Analysis).** **HW:** Read Orwell.

**Week Five**

9/15 Discuss Orwell. Orwell Quiz. Sample Essays. **Introduce Interview Assignment.**  
**HW:** Read Simplicity and Clutter handout

9/17 Presentations. **HW:** Read Kerouac interview.

**Week Six**

9/22 Presentations. Transitions. Introduce Economy and Vigor. **HW:** Read "Spiral Jetty" by Smithson.

9/24 Presentations. **HW:** "Against Interpretation" by Susan Sontag

**Week Seven**

9/29 Presentations. **HW:** "The US is still segregated – but is out democracy up to the challenge?" by Wynton Marsalis. Complete Interview Assignment

10/1 Presentations. **Interview Assignment Due.**

**Week Eight**

10/6 Finish Presentations.

10/8 **Analysis Rough Drafts due.** Peer Review.

**Week Nine**

10/13 **Whole Class Workshop #2.** Peer Critiques Due: One for author, one for me.

10/15 **Class Canceled for Conferences.**

**Week Ten**

10/20 **Analysis Assignment Due. Introduce Review Assignment.**

10/22 Sample Reviews Discussion. Finding Sources, MLA Citation. Sentence Revision. Conference Sign up.

**Week Eleven**

10/27 Paragraphing. Transitions. Peer Review for **Review Assignment.** 5 page Rough Draft due.

10/29 **Class Canceled for Conferences for Review Assignment.**

**Week Twelve**

11/3 **Whole Class Workshop #3.** Peer Critiques Due: One for author, one for me.

11/5 **Review Assignment due. HW:** Bring in a clean copy of one the essays you plan to use for portfolio.

**Week Thirteen**

11/10      **Whole Class Workshop #4.** Peer Critiques Due: One for author, one for me.

11/12      **Whole Class Workshop #5.** Peer Critiques Due. One for author, one for me.  
LAST DAY OF CLASS. Course Evaluations.

11/17      **Portfolio Due by 5 pm.**