



Writing 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning, Thematic Approaches Issues in Sustainability

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Section 64480—MWF 12:00-1:00
(818)515-7325—Texts Only, please. For emergencies
Office: Online

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Writing 150 is the initial course in the composition sequence, and is intended to provide students with a rich and challenging intellectual experience during their first year at the university. The course develops sound practices of writing and reasoning, encouraging students to apply academic concepts while exploring relevant issues.

The Issues in Sustainability thematic, like all the 150 courses, promotes the development of the thinking and writing skills necessary for success in general education and major courses while inviting students to join the on-going academic and cultural conversation regarding salient issues. Toward this end, the course fosters the development of active, self-directed learners who comprehend the acquisition of information and ideas not simply as material for examinations but as “equipment for living” in both the academic context and beyond.

Be aware that, as the title of the course indicates, this is a class in writing AND critical reasoning. As part of the practice of critical reasoning, students will be expected to complete all readings and be prepared to discuss in class. The midterm, administered after the 3rd writing project, will primarily test engagement with the readings and discussion.

OBJECTIVES: Writing 150 can be understood in terms of its five pedagogical and rhetorical principles:

1. Critical reasoning, analysis, and argumentation
2. Invention
3. Arrangement
4. Style
5. Revision



The instructional approach stresses dialogue between and among students and instructor. We use the writing workshop as the principal mode of instruction and include individual and group writing conferences to practice and develop writing and critical reasoning skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RESOURCES:

- USC Writing Program *Course Book*—Online—purchase access key/code from bookstore via link (in Blackboard).
- Readings will be posted on Blackboard for each assignment.

COMMUNICATION: E-mail policy--please feel free to e-mail if you have a question or concern. Be aware that, while sometimes I may be able to respond fairly quickly, I cannot reasonably be expected to respond instantaneously on a regular basis. Generally expect between a 12-24 hour turnaround time for responses. It's a good idea to start a new e-mail with a clear subject line (e.g., “Question about Visions & Voices” or “Links

for Readings aren't working") rather than replying to one of my emails. I don't generally send responses to emails notifying of absences unless a specific question needs addressing.

Also—take a moment to check this syllabus, the assignment sheet, or Blackboard first to see if the answer to your question is there.

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Connectivity

This is occasionally a problem with Zoom classes. If my Zoom crashes, wait a few minutes—grab a cup of coffee or a snack. If it does not come back on within about 5 minutes, check your email for instructions on completing the day's work. If yours crashes, try to get back gone as soon as you can. Email me if you're unable to reconnect.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students with disabilities--Please let me know if you require specific academic accommodations for this class. Students requiring such accommodations will register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP, which is open 8:30-5:00 M-F. Call (213) 740-0776 for more information.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Tentative dates for all assignments will be listed in Blackboard by the 2nd week of classes. Specific deadlines with times will be included on each assignment sheet.



Writing Project 1.....	P/NP (Rev)
Writing Project 2.....	P/NP (Rev)
Writing Project 3.....	25 %
Writing Project 4:	
Revision—Choose from WP1 or WP 2	10%
Final Essay	25%
Online Writing Response Journal.....	15%
Impromptu Essay	10%
Participation/Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Explanation of Categories

Assignment Submission

Drafts must be in shareable form for peer review days (email documents or share Google docs) and submitted in the draft portals on Blackboard by the end of class after peer review.

Submit final essays on the appropriate Blackboard Turnitin portal by the due date/time.

Submission Portals (“Assignments” and “Turnitin”) will be available under the Blackboard tab for that assignment’s materials.



The Online Writing Reflection and Response Journal will be composed online throughout the semester, with brief prompts for responses given with each Writing Project. Final grading of the Journal will take place at the end of the semester. Final grading of the Journal will take place at the end of the semester. Blogger.com seems to be the easiest platform, but Wordpress offers a wider variety of formats. Whichever platform you choose, you will need to make commenting available and easy to access. We’ll make sure

everyone has a blog set up by the 2nd week of classes. Blog addresses will be posted in Blackboard for classmates to review and comment.

Rough Drafts:

Since this class emphasizes the process of writing, it is important that you participate in class activities/assignments that will help you produce the finished product, the final papers. Students who fail to have a workable rough draft for class workshop on the assigned days will lose 1/3 grade from the final grade and that paper and will be marked NP for attendance. Essays cannot be accepted for grading and will receive a “0” if the conference and drafting workshops for that assignment are missed and no drafts have been submitted.

Ancillary Writing:

Primarily in-class written assignments. These will not be graded as finished essay, but by the engagement with the topics.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

You are expected to attend all classes and conferences. This is a workshop class; sessions cannot be summarized afterwards for those who have missed class. Students who do not bring a workable rough draft (typed, required length) to peer editing sessions or required homework to workshoping sessions will be marked NP for that day. Students will also be expected to comment on posts in other students’ blogs on a regular basis as part of the participation grade.

Absence Penalties—from a 100 pt. starting score:

- 2nd absence—Minor 5 pt deduction.
- 3rd absence: Deduct 7 additional pts from participation grade.
- 4th absence and subsequent absences: Deduct 8 additional pts. from participation grade
- Excused absences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will generally require documentation.
- Each NP (lack of response, disappearing from class, etc)—Deduct 5 pts from participation grade, regardless of absences.

A student who has 5 absences, then, will start with a 72, or C, in participation.

Students who have added late or who have excused absences—doctor's notes, for example—will not be penalized for any of those missed classes, but will not have any “minor” absences to spend.

- Tardiness--3 tardies = 1 absence.
- Students who miss a substantial portion of a class meeting will be given a double tardy.
- If you arrive after work groups have been arranged, be prepared to work alone to catch up.
- Students who accumulate a total of 3 weeks of absences may be asked to drop the class

If you are absent for any reason--excused or unexcused--be sure to consult Blackboard and other students if necessary to complete any homework assignments or readings handed out in class. Do not ever ask the instructor--any instructor--“Did I miss anything?” Do not expect the instructor to summarize the class in an e-mail.

Participation—Fulfilled by responding in class discussion, contributing during peer editing and other breakout groups, and by completing and submitting any short in-class writing prompts on Blackboard (all of these will go under the “In-class Work” tab on Blackboard)

Conferences: We will schedule several conference times during the semester. A link to the sign-up sheet for the conferences will be made available on Blackboard a few days beforehand. Class and office hour times will be cancelled to make enough conference slots available for everyone. A CONFERENCE COUNTS AS A CLASS MEETING, and missed conferences will be treated as absences. Essays will not be accepted for grading and will receive a “0” if both the conference and the drafting workshop for that assignment are missed and I have not seen a draft version of the paper.

LATE WORK: Papers will lose .3 grade points for the first calendar day late, and .2 points for each day after that. For example, a paper due on a Tuesday would lose .3 points if turned in Wednesday, .5 points if turned in Thursday, and 1.3 points (1-1/3 grade) if turned in the following Monday. A B+ (3.3) would become a 2.8 if submitted 2 days late, and a 2.6 if submitted 3 days late.



PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC OFFENSES: Plagiarism: do not try to pass off others' work as your own. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com. If your paper is copied in whole or in part from another source, or from a paper submitted to another class, you will receive a "0" on the paper and may be referred to the dean.

OTHER Policies:

- Non-class materials--do not read or work on non-class materials (homework or reading for other classes, Sudoku puzzles, etc.) at any time during class. Since students cannot participate in this class while working on outside activities, these activities will result in a marking of "NP" for that day. If you don't find the class stimulating enough to engage your full attention, change the situation by adding your voice to the discussion.
- Students are welcome to discuss and clarify grades received on any assignment in office hours (not by email), but are required to wait 24 hours after essays are returned before asking about their essay grades. Any grade appeals for individual essays need to be accompanied by a written analysis that breaks down, ranks, and discusses the essay according to the six rubric elements described in the 150 Course Book.
- Emailed drafts--We will work on drafts during conferences and office hours; per department policy, I cannot respond to full drafts via e-mail. You may email me a small portion (a thesis statement, a paragraph), and request feedback on a specific issue.
- Video/audio recordings--please be aware that recording classroom activity or sharing a Zoom recording without the permission of all involved is not permitted. This could be considered a serious privacy violation for other students and may be referred for disciplinary action.



The Writing Center

213 740-3691

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>

The Writing Center offers ½ hour individual tutoring sessions available to all USC students. Sessions for this semester, of course, will be online, but you will still be able to access tutoring services.

You will need to [register online](#) with your USC userid and a password to begin setting up appointments.

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 or walk in for a thirty-minute one-on-one consultation. In order to maximize your meeting with a Writing Center consultant, come prepared with a copy of your assignment, all drafts and prewriting, and specific questions.

