

# Empathy, Monsters, and Redemption

## College Writing: Spring 2022

### WRIT 150 64335

M/W/F 10:00 am - 10:50 am – GFS 216

Professor Maddox K. Pennington

(they/them or he/him)

### WRIT 150 64520

M/W/F 12:00 - 12:50 pm – GFS 213

Maddox.Pennington@usc.edu

Lecturer

Office: JEF 102F

### WRIT 150 64685

M/W/F 1:00-1:50 pm – GFS 213/hybrid

[Student Office Hours](#)

Tuesdays 12-3 pm (via Zoom)

*Empathy isn't just remembering to say "that must be really hard" –it's figuring out how to bring difficulty into the light so it can be seen at all. Empathy isn't just listening, it's asking the questions whose answers need to be listened to. Empathy requires inquiry as much as imagination. Empathy requires knowing you know nothing. Empathy means acknowledging a horizon of context that extends perpetually beyond what you can see. . . Empathy means realizing no trauma has discrete edges. . . Empathy demands another kind of porousness in response. . . . Empathy comes from the Greek empatheia—em (into) and pathos (feeling). . . It suggests you enter into another person's pain as you'd enter another country, through immigration and customs, border crossing by way of query. What grows where you are? What are the laws? What animals graze there?*

– Leslie Jamison

The Writing 150 **Human Values** thematic promotes the development of strong writing and critical reasoning skills by providing students an opportunity to examine the values, belief systems, and ideologies that affect every dimension of our lives, whether personal, social, professional, or civic.

We will approach writing as a recursive process of engaged reading, invention, arrangement, revision, and editing. The texts we produce will demonstrate respect for the needs of readers and will exemplify the kind of ethical rhetoric that has the potential to engage with and influence the world's values and belief systems in positive ways. This means citing sources, attributing ideas, and providing relevant context for our contributions to the public conversation.

## FAQ

Please review the Class Miro, check [Blackboard](#) or consult a classmate before emailing your professor about due dates, formatting, or other housekeeping issues. Always include the basic components of correspondence when you write--a salutation, a message, and your name.

Under no circumstances should you write me the words “did I miss anything in class today?”



### Student Office Hours:

**Tuesdays 12 - 3 PM (via Zoom)**

[Schedule a 15 minute meeting with me](#) when you have questions or concerns about assignments or your progress in the course. When you schedule your appointment, you'll receive a Zoom link in the confirmation. Student Office Hour appointments are a great way to ask for verbal feedback on a draft.

## Classes and Assessment

- **In-Person Classes: Masks are mandatory.** On-campus classes this semester are made possible by vaccinations, collective responsibility, and mutual respect. Please support one another's efforts and do your part to social distance, wash your hands regularly, complete Trojan Checks, and mask up. Repeated mask negligence will affect your class citizenship performance.
- **Virtual Synchronous Access: Please do not come to class if you are sick.** No explanation is necessary, but you should email me to document excused absences. Every class session will be streamed on Zoom; camera use is encouraged.
- **Virtual Asynchronous Access:** Every session of Section 64685 (1-1:50 pm) will be recorded and posted to Blackboard. If you have to miss class, watch the recording, and email me if you need additional support.
- **Conferences:** You'll have four required conferences with me during the semester. If you must miss a meeting, email me as soon as you can and [schedule a make-up appointment during my next available office hour](#). You'll have a 5 minute grace period before I consider it a “no show” (which counts as a class absence).

## Writing 150 Grading Contract

This class uses a “grading contract” rather than a set of graded assignments to calculate your grade. Under the terms of this contract, students are guaranteed a semester grade of “B” provided that they meet the following terms:

**1. Attendance:** It is the policy of the Writing Program that missing more than 3 weeks of classes irreparably compromises your full participation in the course. College Writing is interactive, and you need to be present (in person or virtually, synchronously or not) to benefit from it. That said, we’re all still coming to school amidst a pandemic, and a disability-informed teaching praxis is one of my core values. Therefore, you can miss one week’s worth of class (3 classes) without incurring a penalty (two weeks/6 classes if *all* of the absences are **excused**). Please let me know that you need to miss class, preferably 24 hours in advance.

An “**Excused Absence**” is related to university-sanctioned events (such as athletics or religious holidays), or for reasonable cases where you simply cannot attend class—this might include illness (mental or physical), environmental disruptions, accidents, or other unavoidable mishaps.

**2. Tardiness:** Arriving later than 5 minutes after our scheduled class time counts as a tardy; three tardies counts as one absence. You have 5 minutes of grace for scheduled appointments before I mark it as a “no show.” **Late work receives half credit.**

**3. Essays:** These four writing projects increase in complexity from a response essay to a provided text to a research essay where you are responsible for selecting all sources. They are designed to provide you with a variety of skills and tools. You must complete all four of the major essay assignments for class, and they must be handed in on time (generally 11:59 pm PT, with a 15 minute grace period). For each essay, you’ll complete multiple ancillary preparation assignments before submitting a final draft. **Ancillary Assignments and Final Drafts must be submitted on Blackboard to receive credit.**

**4. Ancillary Assignments:** Individual assignments like reading responses, brainstorming, low-stakes research, and revision exercises contribute to your draft in progress. There will typically be one reading and one writing ancillary assignment each week.

**5. Class Citizenship:** You need to be an active participant in class. Your written work should meet the length requirements, and be carefully copyedited and proofread. Work that demonstrates insufficient attention or investment may only receive half credit. Being unprepared for class, conference, or peer workshops can affect your attendance.

**6. Extensions:** I will negotiate new deadlines on a case-by-case basis. Any new due dates must be **proposed and confirmed in writing** via email or you will be held to the original terms of our grading contract.

## Final Grades

- If you've **met the terms of the contract**, and you earn a B, B+, A-, or A on your Portfolio, then that will be your semester grade.
- If you've **met the terms of the contract**, you will still get a B as your semester grade, even if your portfolio grade is a B- or lower.
- If you've **violated the terms of the contract**, then your final grade will be lowered depending on how many violations you've accrued.

**Note:** you can have 3 Absences, 2 late Ancillary Assignments and 2 lapses in Class Citizenship without a grade penalty, *but* tardiness and late homework will add up.

**About Grade Steps:** A Grade Step is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter grade. If you violate the grading contract, those deductions come out of your final grade for the semester. So, even if your final portfolio received an A, if you had 4 unexcused absences, your semester grade would be lowered one step, from an A to an A-. If you earned a B+ on the final portfolio, but you had 2 late essays, your final grade would be lowered 4 steps, down to a C. **Deductions are calculated *cumulatively*.**

Grade Step Deductions	Total Absences	Late Essays	Late Ancillary Work	Lapses in Citizenship
None	3 or fewer (6 if excused)	None	2 or fewer	2 or fewer
1 step lower (B+ → B)	4		3	3
2 steps lower (B+ → B-)		1	4	4
3 steps lower (B+ → C+)	5		5	5
4 steps lower (B+ → C)		2	6	6
5 steps lower (B+ → C-)	6		7	7
6 steps lower (B+ → D+)		3	8	8
Automatic F	7	4	9	9

\*Any essay that remains unsubmitted on the last day of class will drop your grade at least 6 steps and may result in failure. Two unsubmitted essays lead to an automatic F for the semester.

# MIRO

Each section will be invited to a shared Miro Board where assignments and in-class work are collected and organized. Downloading the Desktop App for Miro may help your computer run more smoothly.

## Class Miro Links:

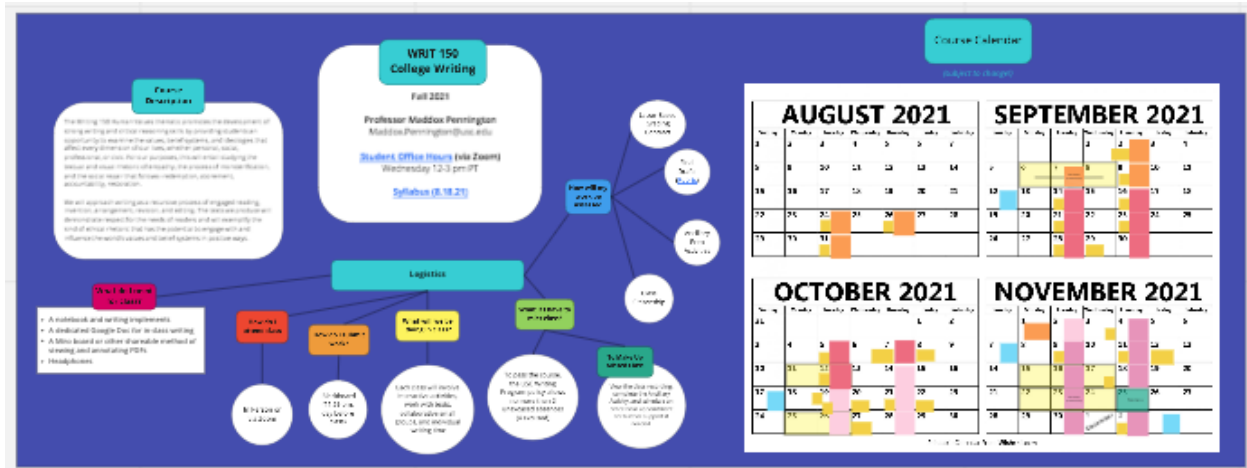
**WRIT 150 64335** [M/W/F 10:00 - 10:50 am](#) – GFS 216

**WRIT 150 64520** [M/W/F 12:00 - 12:50 pm](#) – GFS 213

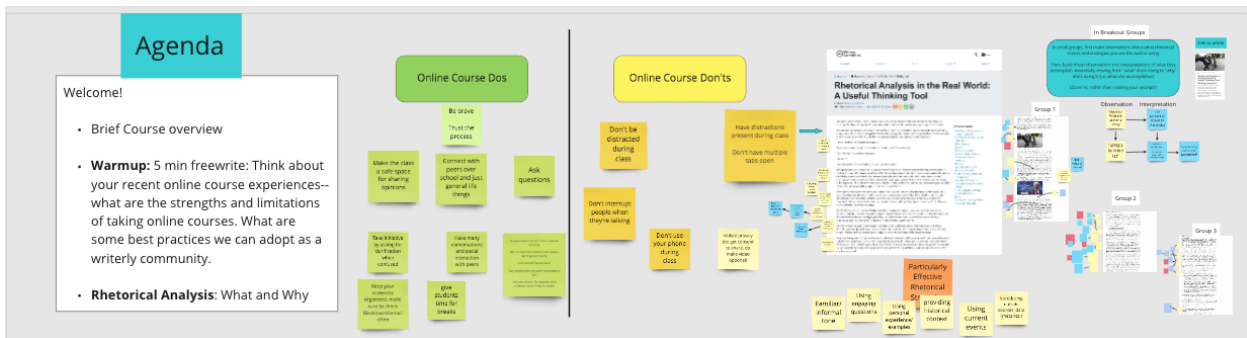
**WRIT 150 64685** [M/W/F 1:00 - 1:50 pm](#) – GFS 213 & online

## Miro Banner Resources

*Note the course calendar, FAQ and important links*



## Sample of Daily Miro Activities



# Student Support

[TrojansAlert](#): Sign up for these alerts to be notified of emergency situations on campus or in the immediately surrounding area. These texts and emails will notify you of what to do/where to go in the case of an emergency affecting campus, and will provide real-time updates.

**Writing Program main office number:** 213-740-1980

Put the **Office of Public Safety** numbers into your phone

**Emergency:** 213-740-4321

**Non-Emergency:** 213-740-6000

## On-campus resources

[The Writing Center](#): A valuable and free resource available to all students at USC. Experienced consultants will work with you on any stage of the writing process, from interpreting a prompt and creating a rough plan to citing sources and polishing your final draft. The consultants will *not* proofread or edit your paper, but they *will* help you to develop skills to revise your own work and act as a sounding board as needed. Come prepared with:

- A copy of your assignment prompt
- All drafts and prewriting
- Specific questions you'd like them to review with you

[Office of Student Accessibility Services](#): Assists with students with accommodations in the classroom

[Title IX](#): Responds to harassment or discrimination

[Office of Equity and Diversity](#): similar to Title IX

[RSVP](#): Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention

[Student Health](#): Crisis care as well as routine health appointments

[Trojans Care For Trojans](#): Resource for students who are concerned about other students on campus.

[Kortschak Center](#): Programs and workshops that support study habits and creativity

## Formatting

All writing you submit should conform to the following standards:

- Adhere to the formatting below and be a Word doc or PDF (**not Pages**)
- Be posted to Blackboard on time
- Email me a gif from *The Greatest Showman* for one free escape pass (redeemable in the event you need to erase an absence or a missed ancillary assignment)
- Contain a works cited page and follow MLA format for citations ([Purdue OWL](#))
- Have a unique and accurate filename:

Khan\_Kamala\_Assignment 1 Exploratory Draft\_8-27.doc

Jackman Hugh\_Assignment 2 Formal Draft\_9-22.docx

Tyler Rose\_Assignment 3 Workshop Feedback\_10-8.docx

P. T. Barnum

1

Pennington WRTG-101-09

Assignment 2 Formal Draft

9/22/2019

[Interesting Title]

Indented paragraphs! Double spaced! Times New Roman! Size 12! Page numbers!

Posted to Blackboard on time! Thoughtfully written, revised, proofread and printed.

[etc]

Works Cited

“MLA Formatting and Style Guide” , *Purdue OWL*,

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html); Accessed 8/21/2018

## Writing Project 1

# Response Essay

*There exists a circular relation between the infliction of pain and the problem of otherness. The difficulty of imagining others is both the cause of, and the problem displayed by, the act of injuring. The action of injuring occurs precisely because we have trouble believing in the reality of other persons. At the same time, the injury itself makes visible the fact that we cannot see the reality of other persons. It displays our perceptual disability. For if other persons stood clearly visible to us, the infliction of that injury would be impossible.*

-- Elaine Scarry

**Premises:** To explore the limits of our imagination in revising a social contract, in her essay [“The Difficulty of Imagining Other People.”](#) Elaine Scarry examines two potential solutions: “generous imaginings” and “constitutional design”. We engage in social contracts all the time—some formal and explicit, others less tangible, even unintentional. For this essay, you will examine a social problem that you’ve observed and determine what social contract is being breached, neglected or broken to create it. You’ll then consider how best to modify that social contract, taking all stakeholders’ needs into account.

Answer this question in a thesis-driven essay of 3-4 pages:

**How can we best revise a social contract to avoid injury?**

### Guiding Questions

- Where/how is “injury” defined?
- What are some situations in which you’ve observed injury?
- Who are the stakeholders in these situations?
- How might generous imaginings or constitutional design address the injury?

### Process Strategies:

- **Introduce, Cite, and Explain** Elaine Scarry’s work
- **Present** your own experience of a specific social problem
- **Identify** the social contract involved
- **Develop your own argument**, proposing “generous imaginings” or “constitutional design” as tools that may generate empathy and solve the social problem
- **Incorporate supporting evidence** that demonstrates your insight



## Writing Project 1 Calendar

Date	Prep	In Class
1/10 M	Read through the syllabus, come with questions about the course and assignments	<b>Intro:</b> Writing Project 1  <b>Into the Text:</b> Guiding Questions
1/12 W	<b>1A:</b> Read Elaine Scarry's " <a href="#">The Difficulty of Imagining Other People</a> " and complete a <b>single page of notes</b> (optional: use <a href="#">One Sheet template</a> )	<b>Identifying Relevant Experience</b>
1/14 F <i>no class M 1/17 MLK Day</i>	Re-read Scarry, <b>brainstorm</b> at least 3 social problems you might use for this assignment ( <b>not for Blackboard, just bring to class</b> )	Interpreting Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social Contracts</li> </ul> <b>I.C.E:</b> <a href="#">Introduce, Cite, Explain</a>
1/19 W	<b>1B:</b> Write 3 "introduce, cite, explain" gestures for quotes from Scarry's essay you think might be relevant to your work	<b>Argument</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reasoning               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evidence</li> <li>● Premise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1/21 F	Re-read Scarry, <b>pick ONE</b> of your outside experiences to focus on. Take a 20 minute walk and think about how generous imaginings or constitutional design might affect the problem.	<b>1C: Process Writing</b> in class  <a href="#">Schedule a Professor Conference</a> by adding a comment to your desired time slot
1/24 M	<b>1D:</b> Read Linda Flowers' " <a href="#">Writer-Based Prose</a> " and <b>identify 3 types of changes</b> to transform your writing	<b>Revision Tools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comb Theory</li> </ul>
1/26 W	Revise your draft	<b>Attend Conference</b> (via zoom)  <b>1E: Conference Reflection</b>
1/29 F	Continue revising	Activities TBD

**Writing Project 1 Final Draft: Due Sunday, 1/30 by 11:59 pm PT**

**Assignment Sheets for WP 2, 3 and 4 are in progress!**