

(W)RITES OF PASSAGE Fall 2023

Instructor and Course Information:

Susan C. Harris, Ph.D.
213-740-1830
scharris@usc.edu (preferred contact method)

FSEM 100 (34617R)
Thursdays 4:30-6:20pm
Location: DMC 204

Office Hours and location:

By appointment (in person or via Zoom)

JEP House
801 W. 34th St., Los Angeles, CA 90089

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is the result of a long-term partnership between the USC Joint Educational Project, the USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative and Foshay Learning Center. The seminar will explore the rite of passage that characterizes the transition from high school to college, particularly from a sociology of education perspective. It is designed to support college freshmen and high school seniors on either side of this “rite of passage,” and it offers a space for both groups of students to reflect on who they are, where they come from, and who they want to become—and the role of higher education in shaping this dynamic process.

As emphasized by the course title, writing plays a central role in the course; all USC students will serve as writing-mentors for college-bound high school students participating in USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) program at nearby Foshay Learning Center. The USC freshmen will draw on their own recent experiences to support the high school students through the college application process, focusing in particular on drafting the personal statement.

The first portion of most class sessions will be spent in discussion and activities related to the weekly topic; the second half will be dedicated to mentoring activities. See the schedule below for details.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Mode of Instruction

This is an unusual Freshman Seminar in that it includes high school students who are not officially enrolled in the course. It is both a program—which involves in-class activities to support (primarily) first generation college-bound students with the college application process—and a course, with assigned readings and analytical essays (the latter for the freshmen only) that are facilitated mostly online through Blackboard.

As of this writing (August 2023), the course will be held in person on the USC campus (exceptions highlighted in schedule below). This is subject to change if COVID rates worsen on campus and/or we receive guidance from Los Angeles County advising a shift to remote learning.

Communication

I rely heavily on email to communicate important updates and reminders about the class. Please check your email regularly and respond when prompted to do so.

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of this course, which involves working with the high school students on their college essays/applications during class time, your attendance is essential to the success of the seminar. Class sessions will start promptly at 4:30pm and students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and to engage with guest speakers and student presenters (e.g., active listening, asking questions, etc.). Tardiness, early departures and absences should be avoided and coordinated with the instructor and your mentee(s) prior to class.

Unexcused absences may result in a grade of NC (no credit) in the course.

Google Drive:

I have set up a folder in Google Drive with resources that is accessible to all USC and NAI students:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qD2Kw6qzb2ebSePTtXDpV4xVWFu_4vit?usp=sharing

Each USC FSEM student should create a separate folder (or a shortcut) within the [Essay Drafts folder](#) for EACH of their mentees to allow for collaborative work on the students' personal statements. Some important guidelines (PLEASE READ):

1. Give the folder a title that includes the mentee's name.

2. "Share" the folder and update the restrictions to allow editing by your mentee and me (scharris@usc.edu).

Ask your mentees to save their personal statement drafts in these Google folders (or add shortcuts there) so that they are easily accessible by you and me.

Google Drive will be used for other purposes throughout the semester, most of which are described below.

JEP Open Classroom Project

The Open Classroom Project provides an (optional) opportunity for high school students to attend USC courses on days that the university is open and LAUSD is closed. Unless limited by Covid protocols, the dates for Open Classroom this semester will be as follows:

- Monday September 25
 - *Same day as essay workshops with instructor*
- Friday November 10
- November 20 and 21 (Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving break).

Laptops and other devices

Please bring a laptop to class; if you do not have one, you can borrow one on a short-term basis from the USC Computing Center (<https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner/>). A laptop is essential for meeting with the NAI students with whom you will be working on college applications/essays.

Please do not use your laptop, phone, or any other mobile device during class time to check email, surf the web, text, etc. As a courtesy to all, please silence cell phones before coming to class. (If you have a situation that necessitates an exception to the cell phone policy, please discuss this with me in advance.)

Assigned Readings

We will read articles about contemporary issues in higher education, including the experiences of college students today. The assigned readings come from a wide range of sources: scholarly journals, newspapers, government agencies, think tanks, etc. All assigned readings will be available for free online; there are no books to purchase for this course.

However, I strongly encourage a subscription to the *New York Times*, which does a great job of covering higher education and from which many of the assigned readings are drawn. I have provided PDFs of articles in Blackboard but some have interactive components and are best experienced on the NYT website. Newspaper subscriptions are sometimes available for free to USC students through Undergraduate Student Government (<https://usg.usc.edu/>). The NYT is

available at a special student rate of \$1.50 per week through <https://www.nytimes.com/subscription/education/student?campaignId=6JQ7F>. The *NYT* is also available for free through the [USC Library](#) (requires login)

Most readings are noted/linked to in the schedule below; a few others may be added or updated as the semester progresses. Be sure to check Blackboard for the most up to date list of assignments.

“Reflective Essays”

“Reflective Essays” are brief, contemplative essays about the course readings and activities, your experiences mentoring and in school, and/or the connections between them. These essays are critically important as they facilitate the “learning” in this service-learning course, since much of the class time is dedicated to “service” (mentoring). While academic, reflective essays are less formal than other academic papers you may write; you are encouraged to think critically about experiences in your own life and in this course, and about how those experiences relate to the themes in the assigned readings.

The essay prompts are structured to help you to consider your experiences from a variety of vantage points. **The bold text indicates the crux of each assignment**; the additional questions and information are intended to help guide and supplement your response. You are not required to answer the un-bolded questions but doing so – including as a pre-writing thought exercise – will help you to develop your ideas, resulting in a better essay.

Essays are usually 2-3 pages, double-spaced—about the size of the essay for the Common App!) – and will be in response to specific prompts. Details about essays and other assignments are listed in the syllabus below. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due on Thursdays by class time via the “Assignments” tab in the Blackboard account for this course, accessible via blackboard.usc.edu.

I may include questions for you in my comments on your essays. Please address these questions at the end of your next essay. Since there is limited opportunity to discuss the assigned readings during class, these feedback loops via Blackboard serve an important purpose.

Grading

This is a 2-unit course, graded Credit/No Credit (C/NC).

All assignments will be graded with a ✓-, ✓, ✓+ system, scored as 0, 1 or 2 respectively in Blackboard/GradeMark, which requires numeric scores. (Please note: essays are not worth 2 points each; a score of “1” is not equivalent to 50%). Because most of the academic aspects of this course you must turn in all essays, review instructor comments, and earn a ✓ or ✓+ on each to be sure to pass the course. Re-writes will be possible for essays scoring a ✓-.

Safety Concerns

USC is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of minors who participate in USC-sponsored programs and events held on and off campus—including the NAI students participating in this class. **All USC students and employees who work with children (online or in person) must undergo a criminal background check, including fingerprinting.** Screenings will be available at the JEP House on the following dates:

- Thursday 8/24 10am – 2pm
- Friday 8/25 10am – 2pm
- Monday 8/28 10am – 2pm
- Wednesday, 8/30 10am – 2pm
- Friday, 9/1 10am – 2pm

You must complete this ASAP in order to continue in the course (deadline: Friday, September 1st). (Note: the paperwork requests a Social Security Number. If you do not have one, enter 111111111.)

By participating in this class, you agree to abide by JEP’s Code of Conduct:

(<https://dornsife.usc.edu/joint-educational-project/jep-protecting-minors-guidelines/>).

USC requires all faculty, staff, and students to report child abuse and neglect. If any concerns about child abuse or neglect arise throughout the semester, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or to the Office of Youth Protection and Programming for support. You may also file an anonymous “Notice of Concern” through the following (USC-monitored) link: <https://protectingminors.usc.edu/reporting/> Alternatively, you may call the USC Help & Hotline at 213-740-2500 or 800-348-7454 for additional guidance and support.

USC’s Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking). RSVP is a resource not only for individuals directly affected by sexual violence or similar issues, but also anyone who may be impacted by hearing about such issues (e.g., from a child who reveals sexual abuse in a tutoring/mentoring session). For more information visit the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services Website: <https://sites.usc.edu/clientservices/>.

For more information about USC’s policies on child abuse reporting, visit: <https://protectingminors.usc.edu/policies/>. Additional information about USC’s background check screening procedures and policies is available through USC’s Department of Human

Resources (background@usc.edu; 213-821-8000) or at <https://protectingminors.usc.edu/background-screening/>).

Academic Integrity

Understanding what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty is the responsibility of every USC student; USC's Integrity and Accountability Code is available here: <https://policy.usc.edu/code-of-ethics/>. If you are unsure or have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask me. In addition, the USC Library has a useful website and tutorial that explains USC's policy and provides tips for avoiding plagiarism (<https://libraries.usc.edu/tutorial/academic-dishonesty>).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations is required to register with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS): <https://osas.usc.edu/new-students/when-how-to-register/>. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in Grace Ford Salvatori Hall (GFS) 120 and is open 8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number is 213-740-0776.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

Week/Date	Topic / Class Activities	Assigned Readings/Media	<p style="text-align: center;">Assignments Due: <i>All assignments are due on Thursdays by 4:30pm unless otherwise indicated</i></p>
<p>Week 1 August 24</p>	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Writing-Mentoring</p> <p>USC students only</p>	<p>“Tears of Joy,” Pamela Johnson: http://news.usc.edu/-/article/26739/Tears-of-Joy</p> <p>“Lifting Kids to College,” Frank Bruni: https://nyti.ms/2q4a2Cs</p> <p>Optional: <i>College Bound</i>, Chapter 8, pp. 62-74 (sections on JEP and NAI, posted in Blackboard)</p>	<p>Personal Statement: Please upload a copy of your primary College Essay (e.g., for the Common App) using the “Assignments” link in the Blackboard account for the course. Be prepared to share in class. Due ASAP and no later than August 31 at 4:30pm.</p> <p>Mentor-Mentee Survey due SUNDAY August 27th: https://forms.gle/FgmAhsLDoLE7kYvs9.</p> <p>Register for JEP (FSEM 100): http://dornsife.usc.edu/jep-apply</p> <p>Register for Livescan fingerprinting and go to the JEP House for screening: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19DC2ccyB3z4myw_2EIIrDnkyUV-yLHZO/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113494438161786515061&rtpof=true&sd=true</p>
<p>Week 2 August 31</p>	<p>Getting to know U+SC</p> <p>Scavenger hunt!</p>	<p>“Are We Segregated and Satisfied? Segregation and Inequality in Southern California Schools,” <i>Urban Education</i>, Kucsera, Siegel-Hawley & Orfield.</p>	<p>Reflective Essay #1 due 8/31; see prompt below</p> <p>Register for JEP (FSEM 100): http://dornsife.usc.edu/jep-apply deadline Friday 9/1 at 5:00pm</p> <p>Register for Livescan fingerprinting and go to the JEP House for screening: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19DC2ccyB3z4myw_2EIIrDnkyUV-yLHZO/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113494438161786515061&rtpof=true&sd=true deadline Friday 9/1</p> <p>Commit to class (or drop) by Friday 9/1</p>

Prompt for Reflective Essay #1

This assignment is designed to hone your research and quantitative data analysis skills as well as to help you learn about the significance of *context and place* on education. The assignment has three parts – 1) researching information about Foshay Learning Center (the school attended by NAI students) and your home high school; 2) filling out the data table below with as much information as you can find (not all data will be available); and 3) writing a brief essay that analyzes your findings.

(Don't be daunted by the length of the assignment. Just follow the steps and you'll be able to complete this without much time or trouble!)

Part One: Research: Look up information the NAI students' home school, Foshay Learning Center, and the high school you attended:

Foshay:

- Go to the Los Angeles Unified School District's Open Data portal: <https://www.lausd.org/opendata>
- Click on the Open Data Dashboard link.
- Click the "School Profile-Dashboard" tile
- Select "Foshay Learning Center" from the "Select a School" menu at the top left
- Explore the various indicators available for the school, clicking the links to drill down into the data.

Your high school:

- If you attended a LAUSD high school, open another browser and repeat the steps above to complete the table with data from your school
- If you attended a non-LAUSD high school in California, go to the CA Department of Education's EdData site and explore the data available for your school: <https://www.ed-data.org/index> Select the "School" tab near the top right and enter information about the County, District and School to learn more about school demographics, graduation rates, etc.
- If you attended a school outside of California, explore the following sites to learn whatever you can about your school's performance. (Note: These sites may help you fill in the blanks for any missing data for Foshay, as well.)
 - National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>
 - Stanford Educational Opportunity Project: <https://edopportunity.org/explorer/#/map/none/districts/avg/ses/all/3.5/38/-97/> (grades 3-8)
 - Great Schools: greatschools.org
 - Niche: <https://www.niche.com/k12/search/best-schools/> (especially good for US private schools)
 - US Census Bureau: <https://data.census.gov/> (demographic data and educational attainment)
 - If all else fails (or you attended high school abroad), review your school's website or use Google to search for demographic and performance data about your high school or school district. See also the "Note" in the Essay Prompt, below.

Part Two: Document: Download a copy of the table below: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1--Zqi64YvNs2QIEGjn-us1L0PYMn2Ks/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113494438161786515061&rtpof=true&sd=true>. Review the data you collected and, based on what you were able to discover through your research, fill in as much of the table below as possible. (Not all data will be available at all levels.) Feel free to include other facts that you find relevant or interesting (e.g., number of Student

support staff, such as counselors, librarians, etc.), etc.) *Include the source(s) of the data you collected at the bottom of the table.*

School Data Table			
	Los Angeles Unified	Foshay Learning Center	Your High School (name and location of school)
Student Population (K12 Enrollment)	429,349		
Demographics: Black/African American	7.4%		
Demographics: Latino/Hispanic	77.5%		
Demographics: White	7.4%		
Demographics: Asian, Asian American, Filipino, Pacific Islander	5.2%		
Demographics: American Indian	0.1%		
Demographics: Multiracial	1.5%		
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	85.4%		
Students with disabilities	14.6%		
Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals	81.1%		
English Language Learners	21.2%		
Foster Youth	0.8%		
Homeless	1.3%		
% of students chronically absent (high school)	39.4%		
English Language Arts grade-level standards (11th grade)	17.4 points below standard		
Mathematics grade-level standards (11th grade)	114.3 points below standard		
% of students enrolled in at least one AP or honors course (high school)	38.6%		
Number of AP courses offered			
4 year drop out rate (high school)	8.5%		
High School graduation rate	86%		
% of graduates that are college-eligible (complete UC/CSU required courses)	50.5%		
College-Ready in English Language Arts	19.8%		
College-Ready in Mathematics	7.0%		
College-Going Rate (enrollment)	61%		
College persistence rate	49.8%		
College completion within 6 years	29.4%		
% credentialed teachers	92%		
Pupil-Teacher ratio	19.3		
Per pupil spending	\$26,272		
% students reporting being happy at school (high school)	67%		
% students who feel safe at school (high school)	62.7%		
Facilities in good repair	100%		
Other			
Other			
Other			

Part Three: Analyze: Paste a copy of the completed table into your essay document. In approximately 500 words, **compare and contrast the data from each of the different schools/levels.** First, briefly describe the school(s) you attended for high school (location, public/private, etc.). How does your school compare to Foshay and other schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District? How are they similar and different? What interests or surprises you about the data? What are the apparent strengths and challenges faced in each context? What do the data suggest about racial and ethnic inequality in the Los Angeles County public school system and elsewhere? **How does the Urban Education article inform what you discovered about Los Angeles-area schools (e.g., re: racial and socioeconomic segregation or integration, qualified teachers, college preparation, etc.)?** Be specific in connecting the article with your observations of the data.

DON'T FORGET TO PASTE THE COMPLETED TABLE IN YOUR ESSAY

Note: If you can't find any hard facts about your home school to complete the table, expand on your description of your high school in your essay, drawing on your memory and experiences. For example: What was the approximate enrollment (e.g., how many students were in your graduating class)? What were the demographics of the students who attended? Was the student population diverse or relatively homogeneous? Was there a mix of families from all socioeconomic strata or did families tend to be alike, in terms of race/ethnicity and social class? Did the demographics of the student population match that of the surrounding community?

<p>Week 3 September 7</p>	<p>Breaking Down the College Admissions Process</p> <p>First mentoring session</p>	<p>Mentoring Resources</p> <p>Protecting Minors Training Video (Required by USC, 30 minutes): https://usc.zoom.us/rec/share/D2KU_Y14FDWggv4StBVxssw9LrZdphpMws7V_4A5ed6pCh2-l2w44W2DJHwz6jG.gkkam8fRroJMfG3g (training begins at 1:27 and ends at 31:31.)</p>	<p>Reflective Essay #2 Due 9/7</p> <p>Set up Google Folders for collaborative work on your personal statement(s) and other application materials. Share an EDITABLE copy of all documents with scharris@usc.edu</p> <p>NAI Student Assignment: Begin working on your semester plan (see details below), due 9/15</p>
<p>Prompt for Reflective Essay #2:</p> <p>Peruse the materials in the Mentoring Resources folder in Blackboard (access via the “Course Resources” link Blackboard) and in approximately 500 words, reflect on the task ahead of you as a writing mentor and what you bring to the experience. What mentoring experiences have you had, either as a mentor or mentee? What strengths do you bring to this experience and what excites most about helping high school students through the college application process? What are some gaps in your knowledge or skill set that might limit your effectiveness as a mentor? Select 1 or 2 of the resources in the folder that you think will be particularly helpful to you as a mentor, given your particular strengths and areas for growth. Summarize the key “take-aways” in the resources, then reflect on some specific ways that you will use the information, advice, strategies, or perspectives in the resource(s) in your work with the NAI student(s). Based on your experience with applying for college, as well as what you’ve learned about the students with whom we’ll be working (e.g., from the previous assigned readings, class time), what do you hope to learn and gain from the mentoring process? What do you anticipate will be most challenging for you about the experience? Finally, comment on something you learned from watching the Protecting Minors training and/or any questions or concerns the video raised for you.</p>			
<p>Week 4 September 14</p>	<p>Choosing a college</p>	<p><i>There are no required readings this week but get a head start on the longer set of readings and assignment for next week.</i></p> <p>Optional: “How to Choose a College,” Frank Bruni https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/opinion/sunday/bruni-how-to-choose-a-college.html?smid=url-share</p> <p>Optional: “There’s Only One College Rankings List that Matters, Frank Bruni https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/opinion/problem-college-rankings.html</p>	<p>Info Sheet for College Guide Due 9/14, to be presented in class on 9/14</p> <p>NAI Student Assignment: Complete a Semester Plan: work with your mentee to develop a college list, determine application requirements, set goals, milestones, deadlines, etc.</p> <p>Semester Plans due Friday, September 15th: https://forms.gle/FmunRuEAoxnYyyEQ9</p> <p>In-Class Resources for developing a college list: “Build Your Own College Rankings,” Quoc Trung Bui and Jessica Ma https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/27/opinion/build-your-own-college-rankings.html</p> <p><i>This tool helps you to develop a college list based on your priorities for college (size, cost, safety, diversity, earning potential of graduates, etc.)</i></p> <p>Another tool to help you understand how your educational values might shape your decisions</p>

			<p>about college: https://schoolbuff.com/worksheets/college-match-self-survey-for-the-college-bound-simplified/</p> <p>Colleges as “Buyers and Sellers,” Jeff Selingo https://jeffselingo.com/which-colleges-are-really-buyers-and-which-are-sellers/ (requires free registration) or click here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hyP6aeDUvBeuFTGclzrl64jvU21i6E-H/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113494438161786515061&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p><i>This spreadsheet has data from ~175 colleges and universities about the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of applicants admitted 2. Yield rate (the percentage admitted who chose to enroll) 3. Percentage of institutional aid that is non-need-based <p><i>This has INCREDIBLY helpful information for identifying reach schools, safety schools, etc. (see various tabs)</i></p> <p>Equitable Value Explorer: https://equity.postsecondaryvalue.org/datatool</p> <p>This tool provides information about students’ post-graduation earnings for ~4000 U.S. colleges and universities.</p>
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FSEM College Guide

We will collectively develop a digital “college guide” for the seniors that provides personalized information about colleges and universities other than USC. Each student will develop an info sheet for one college or university to which they applied or considered applying to. To avoid duplication, and to ensure that the colleges are of interest to the NAI students, I will choose the schools for each student based on list provided in the Mentor-Mentee. I will notify you of your assigned school no later than Friday September 1st. If you prefer to highlight a different school than the one I choose for you, please see me for approval. Colleges must be pre-approved by the instructor.

- Design your college info sheet in [Google Slides](#); it should be 1-2 pages (more or less depending on the number of pictures); two pages max
- List some important facts about each college, including information about the school size, location, cost, type (public or private, liberal arts, professional school, etc.), deadlines for applying, and other pertinent information.
- Highlight a few unique features that specifically attracted you to the school. Write a paragraph or two describing why this college/university was a good fit for you, what appealed to you when you visited the

school (if you did), etc. If you didn't like something about the school, share that as well. In sum: describe your experience of researching the school and what you learned about its "fit" through that process.

- Make the info sheet visually appealing. Include images on the handout -- e.g., photographs of the school, a map, etc. ("Bonus points" for including pictures that you took yourself on a school visit!)

Think about your experiences as a freshman so far and what about USC has lived up to your expectations, what has let you down and/or what has come as a surprise. In addition, consider what you have learned since submitting your college applications that you wish you had known or considered during the application process. Use these insights to guide your contributions to the college guide. The point here is not to duplicate what students could easily find on College Board or a college website but to provide a personalized take on a school that was of interest to you, and to share what you learned – about the school and yourself – through the process. This will serve to introduce the seniors to a wider range of schools and to point out some important issues to consider -- about particular schools and how to select a college that is a good fit, as well as unexpected or unintuitive issues that shaped the decision-making process.

Please be prepared to present BRIEFLY on your assigned school in class on 9/14. This is not a formal presentation; just be prepared walk the class through your slide(s) and to discuss why the NAI students should (or should not) consider applying to the particular schools you researched.

Please post a link to your Info Sheet slides in this Google folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19k3RH_qvNL_8WMeXi5ynKN1Wh1z2GDDE?usp=sharing. You can create the slides in this folder or add a shortcut to the file.

<p>Week 5 September 21</p>	<p>Getting In and Staying In: Admissions and Retention</p>	<p>“Understanding Merit: Look at All the Bs,” <i>Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions</i>, Jeffrey Selingo</p> <p><i>Alternative or supplement to the Selingo chapter:</i> Future U Podcast: https://www.futureupodcast.com/episodes/who-gets-in-and-why/</p> <p>“The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students,” Anthony Abraham Jack, https://www-degruyter-com.libproxy1.usc.edu/document/doi/10.4159/9780674251656-020/pdf</p> <p>“Who Gets to Graduate?,” Paul Tough, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/18/magazine/who-gets-to-graduate.html?smid=url-share</p>	<p>Reflective Essay #2 due 9/16</p> <p>NAI Student Assignment: Draft of mentees’ essays (for review with FSEM instructor next week) due TODAY by 11:59pm. Please send link via email (or share via Google Docs)</p> <p>Schedule a 15-minute essay workshop next week with your mentor and the course instructor here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11gCoF2rYjnleoi5Q7aOHw-JdRcjpwyCaVI-UylwW2uk/edit?usp=sharing</p>
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<p>“For Most College Students, Affirmative Action Was Never Enough,” Richard Arum, Mitchell L. Stevens, and Quoc Trung Bui https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/07/03/opinion/for-most-college-students-affirmative-action-was-not-enough.html?smid=url-share</p> <p>Optional (but highly recommended): “What We Pack,” <i>My Time Among the Whites: Notes from an Unfinished Education</i>, Jennine Capó Crucet</p> <p>Optional: “Why Students Are Choosing H.B.C.U.s,” Erica L. Green, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/11/us/hbcu-enrollment-black-students.html?smid=url-share</p>

Prompt for Reflective Essay #3:

The articles for this week address the effect of race, context, culture, and especially social class on college admission, retention and graduation rates. To begin your essay (~500 words), first: **respond to the readings**. What resonated most with you? What surprised you? What worried you? Consider how your own high school prepared you (or not) for college and, in particular, your admission to an elite private university. For example, did your high school cultivate a college-going culture on campus, offer rigorous coursework, expose students to “elite” educational experiences, provide extensive college counseling services, etc.? Alternatively, if such supports were lacking at your school, what resources did you have access to outside of school? **What factors (in and outside of school) do you think were most important for your own success with the college admissions process? Compare and contrast your own experience with what you’ve learned thus far about the USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI).** What strategies does NAI use to support the predominantly first-generation, low income, college-bound students in its programs, and how do they compare to your own experiences? Once admitted, what can/should colleges and universities do to retain students and help to ensure that they graduate? **Drawing from your own experiences, identity, observations, etc. – as well what you’ve gleaned from the assigned readings -- what does (or should) USC in particular do to support underrepresented, low-income students and/or students of color?**

<p>Week 6 September 28</p>	<p>Paying for College</p> <p>Open Classroom: M 9/27</p> <p>Essay Workshops with Instructor 9/25-27</p>	<p>National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), “Loans for Undergraduate Students and Debt for Bachelor’s Degree Recipients” https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/2023/cub_508.pdf</p> <p>National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), “Price of Attending an Undergraduate Institution” https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/2023/cua_508.pdf</p> <p>“Is College Worth It? Recent Analysis Says Yes,” Jessica Blake https://www.insidehighered.com/news/business/financial-health/2023/06/22/college-worth-it-recent-analysis-says-yes</p> <p>Optional: https://www.futureupodcast.com/episodes/the-continuing-debate-over-student-debt/</p>	<p>Assignment (see below) Complete in class on 9/28</p> <p>In-Class Resources</p>
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In-Class Assignment

Review the assigned articles and discuss them with your mentee. Questions to consider/share: What are your concerns about college debt, financial aid, career planning, etc. and what are those of your mentee? How are decisions about majors, career paths, etc., shaped by the cost of higher education? What resources are available, given your unique experiences and those of your mentee (re: income, identity, background, major, etc.)? Spend some time during class searching the web for scholarships and other resources for students that address some of these concerns. In lieu of a written essay, **submit (to a shared google doc) a list of 4-5 financial resources (websites, scholarships, grants, organizations, etc.), annotated with information about the unique attributes or offerings of each resource (e.g., target population, deadlines, eligibility requirements, etc.).** Please review the list before posting new items to avoid duplication. This list will be shared with the entire class, including the NAI Seniors.

Google Doc link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/125tpmkJhF8VJlgbWXq8HDpuZ5KOfecY53j4tRUy1Dyo/edit?usp=sharing>

<p>Week 7 October 5</p>	<p>Embracing Curiosity & Uncertainty in College and Beyond</p>	<p>How to Create Your Own Major in College — and Why You Should Consider It, Kimberly Villard https://www.teenvogue.com/story/create-own-major-college</p> <p>TBD</p>	<p>TBD</p>
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<p>Week 8 October 12</p>	<p>No Class USC Fall Recess</p>		
<p>Week 9 October 19</p>	<p>Managing Stress</p>	<p>USC Well-being Collective: Results on the Student Wellbeing Key Performance Indicators: https://sites.usc.edu/studentwellbeing/files/2022/05/FY22_USC_Wellbeing_Collective_SWIS_Report_2021.pdf</p> <p>Trends in college student mental health and help-seeking by race/ethnicity: Findings from the national healthy minds study, 2013–2021, <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> (PDF on Blackboard; focus on the Results and Discussion sections)</p> <p>USC University Mental Health Services: https://issuu.com/uscedu/docs/description_of_services_usc_university_mental_health_services</p> <p>Optional: “Why are More American Teenagers than Ever Suffering from Anxiety?”, Denizet-Lewis, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/magazine/why-are-more-american-teenagers-than-ever-suffering-from-severe-anxiety.html</p> <p>Optional: “Teens in America,” Trent & Guskin, https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/interactive/2021/teen-poll-racism-covid-politics/</p>	<p>Reflective Essay #4 Due October 21</p> <p>NAI Student Assignment: Work with your mentee(s) get a near-final draft ready to distribute to USC WRIT Instructors for workshops next week. Due SUNDAY October 22 by 11:59pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Prompt for Reflective Essay #4:</p> <p>In approximately 500 words, reflect on the findings in the USC Wellbeing Collective report and the <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> article, as well as the analyses NYT and Washington Post articles, if you chose to read them. What is the main “take home message” about the stressors faced by young adults and the prevalence of mental health concerns among college students? Which of the findings are most surprising, distressing and/or reassuring to you? How does this play out at USC? Have you observed or personally experienced any of the issues identified in the reports? In general, what have you observed about the stress levels and coping mechanisms of students at USC, and – drawing from the “USC University Mental Health Services” resource, as well as your experiences to date – how do support systems on USC’s campus compare to that at your high school? How has COVID complicated matters? Use examples, relating specific examples from the article(s) to your observations on campus.</p>			

Week 10 October 26	WRIT Program Faculty Workshops	No assigned readings	Meetings with USC Writing Program faculty on Thursday 10/26 during class time (details TBD)
Week 11 November 2	Final In-Person class Mock Interviews (optional)	If you wish to do a mock interview with your mentee, review the interview protocol used by USC alumni to award scholarships to continuing USC students (in Blackboard Assigned Readings folder).	Reflective Essay #5 Due November 2 <i>USC application due to NAI on 11/1</i> Last (in-class) chance to work with mentors on application materials. Mentors and mentees are invited, but not required, to sign up for a final review of essays with instructor prior to application deadlines. Please email scharris@usc.edu to schedule a day/time.
Prompt for Reflective Essay #5:			
In ~500 words, reflect on what you have learned in this freshman seminar—about yourself, about the community, about mentoring, about the transition to college, about inequalities in K12 and higher education, etc. Have your experiences in this class changed your perceptions of the neighborhood in which USC is located and/or USC’s role in the community? How have your understandings of the issues we have addressed – e.g., college access, first generation college students, higher education, social inequality, mental health issues, etc. – changed, if at all?			
Week 12 November 9	Writing- Mentoring (optional, via Zoom) Open Classroom: F 11/10	For the remainder of the semester, I will open the Class Zoom Room and create breakout rooms for mentors and mentees to meet virtually to work on applications. I am also happy to schedule optional conferences to review essays, etc. Please email me to arrange: scharris@usc.edu)	
Week 13 November 16	Writing- Mentoring (optional, via Zoom)		
Week 14 November 23	No Class (USC and LAUSD) Open Classroom: 11/21-22		<i>Happy Thanksgiving!</i>

<p>Week 15 November 30</p>	<p>Writing- Mentoring (optional, via Zoom)</p> <p>Last week of USC semester</p>		<p>Please evaluate FSEM 100 when prompted (via email) by USC Course Evaluations</p> <p><i>UC Applications due November 30</i> <i>USC applications officially due December 1</i></p> <p>Good luck with your final exams! Happy holidays!</p>
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