

Writing 340—Fall 2024
Advanced Writing for the Visual & Performing Arts

65000 MW 8:30 GFS 111

65260 MW 2:00 GFS 213

65335 MW 3:30 GFS 213

Prof. Scott Andrew Smith	Office:	JEF 113
	Email:	scottsmi@usc.edu
	Hours:	MW 12:30—1:45; and by appt.

Texts

Readings provided via physical hand-outs and on Brightspace.

Written Assignments

PERSONAL MANIFESTO

A Personal Manifesto of your artistic intent(ions), ideas and ideology, attitudes and preferences. The Manifesto is an exclamation and exhortation, a declaration of what matters to you—what is **true** for you—in your art or in art in general, a statement of principles, written with a confident, firm voice.

LIVING LIKE WEASELS

We will read an essay by Annie Dillard, “Living Like Weasels,” using that essay as impetus to write a similar essay, replacing the word/idea “weasel” with “artist, painter, animator, stage manager, etc.” Essentially you will be write a short, philosophical treatise (based on an analogy) which suggests what *living* as a particular type of artist would be like in the same way that Dillard suggests what *living* as a weasel would be like for a human being.

The idea is to identify something **true** about the type of artist (the stand-in for the “weasel” of Dillard’s piece) you are writing about, considering that truth and then applying it to life in general.

HOW ESSAY

A personal narrative in which you tell the story of a particular painting you painted, song you wrote, game you designed, role you performed, etc., using that story to teach the reader something **true** about that type of artistic pursuit—or, perhaps, some **truth** you learned about yourself as that type of artist during the process. The essay will not just describe how something was put together, prepared, accomplished but what that process has to teach about that type of art or what the process taught you about yourself, as that type of artist.

The core idea is that the essay will tell a story but a story built around a truth—something that is **true** about this type of art/artistic practice, or, perhaps, something **true** about yourself, as that type of artist.

This essay will involve a brief presentation of your idea for the assignment.

WHAT/WHERE

You will have two options for this assignment: (1) working with an image of someone (**not yourself, nor a colleague/friend**) doing the artistic work you do/would like to do, using that image to explore what this particular type of artist is, what she must be in order to do the work, what is required of this type of artist, etc.—what is **true** about this type of artist, based on your analysis of the image; (2) working with an image of a physical space/environment where the type artistic work you do is done (**not an image of a space you work in/have worked in artistically**), using a discussion of that space/environment to suggest a **truth** about that work, what its nature is, what it means, what it is made of, what it offers, what it requires of the artist, etc.

This essay will involve a brief presentation of your idea for the assignment.

Grades

Personal Manifesto	5 %
Living Like Weasels Essay	10 %
Presentation of Idea (How)	5 %
How Essay	25 %
Presentation of Idea (What/Where)	5 %
What/Where Essay	25 %
Portfolio (How & What/Where Revisions)	25 %

Grades are assigned according to the USC system of pluses/minuses (that is, “A minus—A—B plus—B—B minus, etc”), with the following numerical values: “A = 4.0; A minus = 3.7; B plus = 3.3; B = 3.0; B minus = 2.7, etc.”

Grades will then be calculated according to their percentage of the total weight of the final grade (see percentages above), so that by course’s end there will be 40 total points, or a total possible 4.0 grade average. (See table at top of next page.)

Percentage/Point Value	5%	10%	25%
A	2.0	4.0	10.0
A minus	1.85	3.7	9.25
B plus	1.65	3.3	8.25
B	1.5	3.0	7.5
B minus	1.35	2.7	6.75
C plus	1.15	2.3	5.75
C	1.0	2.0	5
C minus	0.85	1.7	4.25

40	4.0	A
37	3.7	A minus
33	3.3	B plus
30	3.0	B
27	2.7	B minus
23	2.3	C plus
20	2.0	C
17	1.7	C minus

Participation

In addition to your written work you will be expected to:

- * **Be present.** That is, not looking at your laptop or phone during class, **maintaining eye contact** with whomever is speaking in class (be it myself or a classmate), being responsive and engaged when asked a question or when reading aloud. *This is the single most important element of Participation for this class. Meaning: you do not necessarily have to speak up and often, though that is appreciated. What I expect is presence, being present for the material, for others.*
- * **Read aloud.** (We will read sample essays and readings aloud in class.)
- * **Comment on** our readings and sample essays and classmates' ideas/writing.

Attendance

You may miss no more than 20% of *physical (here, in the room)* class (5 or more classes, without excuse/explanation) and still pass.

I will expect that you may have valid reasons for missing the occasional class. I ask simply that you keep me informed as to your reason for missing class and when you plan to return. *I will not be recording classes via Zoom* but will gladly meet with you, via Zoom or in-person, if you have missed class and would like to get caught up via a conversation with me.

If you must miss class and expect that absence to count as “Excused,” please provide me with documentation which would explain the need to be elsewhere during class time. “Excused” absences *might* also be considered if you simply let me know ahead of time should you not be feeling well, etc.

If I feel the reason is valid and I am **excusing** the absence, I will write, “Thank you for letting me know. I will mark your absence as Excused.” If I feel the absence is **“Unexcused,”** I will simply write, “Thank you for letting me know.”

Resources

USC Covid Hotline (213 740 6291); covid19@usc.edu; coronavirus.usc.edu; TrojanCheck (<https://we-are.usc.edu/health-and-safety/trojan-check/>)

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. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.*

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call. Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. OSASFrontDesk@usc.edu 213 740 0776

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>