



ALI 225-10104: Academic and Professional Writing Skills I
Spring 2025
2 Units

Course Info: 2 pm - 3:20 pm

Location: WPH 104

Instructor: Kimberley Briesch Sumner, M.A.

Office: Royal Street Structure Suite 106

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom or in person.

Contact Info: kbriesum@usc.edu

Course Description

ALI 225 is a Level I writing course for both undergraduate and graduate international students. This course explores aspects of written language in the American university setting including skills in reading comprehension and fluency, vocabulary building, writing, and written grammar.

Learning Objectives

The goal of this course is to help improve various aspects of written communication of American English to help facilitate and meet the needs of university-level academic coursework. Your professor will focus on various language and communication topics to support your maximum development as learners and participants at this university.

Students will develop reading fluency and comprehension and will gain vocabulary strategies to improve vocabulary knowledge. Students will also learn to communicate their ideas in written English using academic forms. Review of key written grammar forms with an emphasis on error identification is also included in course study. Students are expected to complete all assignments. Students should expect to develop autonomous and collaborative skills both in and outside of the classroom.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- There will be times when I will require classroom use of an electronic device with a keyboard such as a laptop or tablet. A smaller handheld device such as an iPhone will not be appropriate. If you need assistance acquiring this equipment, please use the following link to obtain a loaner: [USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#).
- In addition, I will ask you to type written work using an application such as MS Word (.docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). Please work to ensure you have this software available on your device.
- Brightspace will be used as our Learning Management System (LMS) for the course and Zoom may be used for one-on-one student meetings and office hours. Be sure you are familiar with these programs and have access to them throughout the semester. Keep in mind that using Zoom will require a webcam, microphone, and stable internet connection. Here are some additional resources you may find useful for software support and availability: [Zoom information for students](#), [Brightspace help for students](#), [Software available to USC Campus](#).

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- **Great Writing 3, 5th Ed.** (2020). by Keith S. Folse, Elena Vestri, and David Clabeaux. National Geographic Learning Publishers.
- College ruled standard 8.5" x 11" loose-leaf notebook paper (no miniature paper please) for classroom exercises (in-class work).

Optional Recommended Materials:

- College ruled standard 8.5" x 11" notebook for taking notes and vocabulary work.
- 2-pocket folder: Handouts will be made available in class or on Brightspace. All handouts should be brought to class as if they were part of your textbook. We will frequently refer to previous handouts as needed throughout the course, so be prepared!

Major Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown

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|---|-----|
| • In class Assignments, Attendance, and Class Participation | 25% |
| • Homework Completion/Class Preparation and Writing Assignments | 25% |
| • Mid-semester Assessment | 25% |
| • End-of-Semester Writing Assessment | 25% |

To receive credit for this class, students must:

- Attend classes regularly and arrive on time.
- Participate actively. Active participation consists of daily attendance and interaction with the professor/classmates on all group work in the classroom and out in English. In order to earn full participation points, you must communicate in English. If the professor needs to ask you repeatedly to speak in English, you will not receive a passing participation grade.
- Complete ALL course requirements successfully (a course average of less than 70% will result in a grade of NC). A successfully completed assignment is finished on time, is thorough, and is of high quality.

ALI 225 is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, which means that you will not receive a final letter grade (A/B/C/F) on your USC transcript. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your academic writing skills, your proficiency at the end of the course determines whether you will need an additional class or not. Therefore, it is in your own interest to do your best to participate fully in every assignment.

Upon completion of ALI 225, many students have not achieved a release level of English mastery and will be required to take an additional writing course (typically ALI 235 Academic and Professional Writing Skills II) for more skill development and practice. Moreover, students who show minimal improvement in their writing skills may be required to retake ALI 225. In other words, even if you receive credit for ALI 225 for doing all the assignments, you may be required to take ALI 225 again or take an additional writing skills class if your writing level does not meet ALI's standards for the next level or for release. Do not expect your writing ability to improve simply by coming to class and putting minimum effort into your assignments. It will take diligent effort on your part. **As you probably know, very few students make significant progress if they don't work to improve their skills.**

You will have access to your course grade throughout the semester via Brightspace “My Grades.” We will also discuss your course progress at mid-semester, but please feel free to discuss your grades with me at any time throughout the semester.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments are given to prepare for and practice material that is covered in your textbook and in class. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your academic writing skills, your proficiency at the end of the course determines whether you will need an additional class or not. Therefore, it is in your own interest to do your best to participate fully in every assignment.

- All homework assignments should be submitted on or before the due date. Some major course projects will be completed in stages and will require regular homework to be handed in on time to demonstrate progress.
- If you need more time to complete a homework assignment, please contact me ASAP (as soon as possible) to request an extension. Reasonable accommodation can be made for these requests made in advance of class. **Do not make a request during class on the day the work is due.** Bear in mind that frequent requests for extensions (more than 2 or 3 times during the semester) will not be granted.
- In the event that a homework assignment is handed in late, it can still be evaluated by the instructor and graded, but will NOT receive full credit. A reduction in points equivalent to one letter grade can be given for each day the assignment is late. Do not let this occur on a regular basis as it will quickly affect your ability to receive “credit” in this class; it can result in a “No Credit” and requirement to repeat the class next semester.
- If you are unable to attend a class, you are still responsible to submit any homework due on the day you are absent and should arrange to submit your work via a classmate, Brightspace, or e-mail submission.
- Exams and assessments are also very important. There are no make-up days for assessments/exams. This includes scheduling conflicts caused by other professors who schedule meetings, project presentations, and/or exams during our class time. In the rare yet possible occasion when this occurs, **it will be your responsibility to inform me and your other professor of the class conflict** as soon as the conflict is evident so that some accommodation can be worked out. In the event of any extreme emergency prior to an exam, please contact me as soon as possible.

Attendance and Tardiness (Being late to class):

- To the extent that you are in good health, all students should attend every class and be punctual.
- If you have been absent for 3 hours of class time (2 class periods), I am required to report those absences to the ALI student advisor.
- **More than 6 hours** of absence will result in a course grade of **NC (no credit)**.
- Absence is counted for *any* reason, including illness, emergencies, conference attendance, and when other professors schedule meetings, project presentations, and exams during our class time.
- A written excuse for absence due to sports or academic competitions or conferences must be filed with the professor and ALI Student Advisor prior to travel as soon as travel dates are known.
- In addition, attending class on time is important since tardiness is an inconvenience to your classmates and professor. Coming to class late will also count towards the number of hours missed. Students who come to class more than 10 minutes late will also be marked absent rounded up to the next 30 minutes. Students consistently arriving more than a couple minutes late to class may also be marked absent for the time missed.

Classroom Norms and Etiquette:

It is my sincere hope that you will always feel welcome to participate during whole class presentation and discussion. In this way you are welcome to and in fact encouraged and expected to ask questions or comment on classroom material being presented. If the professor asks a question, the expectation is that all attendees respond in some way. Ways to respond may be verbally (in this case unmute yourself) or non-verbally with a shake or nod of the head. Smiling and eye contact with the screen during the class also indicates attentiveness and interest in the class and is a valued cultural norm in the United States.

With this being said, in small group activities be sure that you balance your listening time with speaking time. If you tend to speak less in group activities, really work to speak up more frequently to help balance the interaction with others. Listening is an important value in conversation, but giving your opinion or expressing your thoughts is very important as well. Similarly, if you tend to offer your opinion or speak more than others, be aware of this tendency and encourage others to offer their opinion more frequently. Work to listen with interest to what other participants contribute.

As a courtesy to your classmates and professor, please refrain from chatting with classmates when others are talking. Since this is an English class, the focus will be on communicating in English. Please always use English as your mode of communication while in the classroom. Also, while it is understandably easier to speak your native language to others from your home country, this can be uncomfortable to others in the class who don't speak your language and certainly defeats the purpose of being in an English class, so please use English only in the classroom.

Use of electronic devices during class can be distracting. To promote a learning environment conducive to discussions and focused practice with your professor and classmates, please do not use cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc. during class unless instructed to do so. Reserve time to check your e-mail, surf the web, text message, etc. for before/after class.

If you have a question or concern about your ability to follow any course policy, please send me an email prior to class, so we can discuss expectations and make any appropriate accommodations needed.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended

to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Policy for the use of AI Generators and Grammar Assistance Software in this course

This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, most assignments should be prepared and submitted by the student after working individually or in groups without the assistance of AI Generators such as ChatGPT or Grammar Assistance Software such as Grammarly. Students may not have another person, software, or other entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong personal competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is largely prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

In this course, I may sometimes encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs in an exploratory fashion on selected in-class or homework assignments. If allowed, this will be very clear. Otherwise, use of AI programs will not be permitted. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. (See [USC Libraries Citing Generative AI](#).) Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

Please ask me if you are unsure about what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution. If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, or in the course.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The university will provide instructions on how to evaluate this course near the end of the semester.

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

ALI 225 Course Calendar** (TTR) SPRING SEMESTER

Week and Date	Course Units and Important Dates
Week 1 1/14, 1/16	Course and student introductions; Diagnostic Writings
Week 2 1/21, 1/23	GGW Unit 10: Writing Simple and Compound Sentences
Week 3 1/28, 1/30	GW Unit 1: Paragraphs; Sentences vs. Fragments GGW Unit 10: Writing Simple and Compound Sentences
Week 4 2/4, 2/6	GW Unit 1: Paragraphs; Count and Non-Count Nouns GGW Unit 1: Writing about the Present
Week 5 2/11, 2/13	GW Unit 2: Features of Good Writing; Clear Pronoun Reference GGW Unit 2: Writing about the Past
Week 6 2/18, 2/20	GW Unit 2: Features of Good Writing GGW Unit 3: Writing with the Present Perfect
Week 7 2/25, 2/27	2/27: Mid-Semester Assessment
Week 8 3/4, 3/6	GW Unit 3: Types of Paragraphs; Subject-Verb Agreement in the Simple Pres.
Week 9 3/11, 3/13	GW Unit 3: Types of Paragraphs; Word Forms GGW Unit 15: Using Connectors for Better Writing
Week 10 3/25, 3/27	GW Unit 4: Classification Essays: Moving from Paragraph to Essay; Subject Adjective Clauses
Week 11 4/1, 4/3	GW Unit 4: Classification Essays: Moving from Paragraph to Essay
Week 12 4/8, 4/10	GW Unit 5: Cause-Effect Essays; Expressing Past Events GGW Unit 8: Adverb Clauses; GW Unit 7: Adverb Clauses
Week 13 4/15, 4/17	GW Unit 5: Cause-Effect Essays; Noun + Preposition Combinations GGW Unit 11: Using Parallel Structure
Week 14 4/22, 4/24	GW Unit 7: Problem-Solution Essays; Course Review
Week 15 4/29	4/29: LAST DAY OF CLASS: End-of-Semester Assessment 5/1: ALI Faculty Workday (No Class)

**Professor may alter chapters and topics depending on individual course section needs.