

**WRIT 150: WRITING AND CRITICAL REASONING: THEMATIC APPROACHES
IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY**

Syllabus and Course Guidelines

Fall 2016 Section #64265/64465/64585

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

9:00 a.m.-9:50 a.m./11:00 a.m.-11:50 a.m./12:00 p.m.-12:50 p.m.

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and by appointment

The best way to contact me is through email, and I will respond to email messages as soon as possible. If you email me on weekends, I may not respond until Monday.

Course Description and Objectives

Most people write to do something—to enter into the “conversations” of a variety of communities, and to share ideas and perspectives that may shape or change what is already known. In WRIT 150, we will analyze and practice the different skills and strategies that writers use to fulfill such writing goals in different contexts. Instead of focusing only on final texts, we will focus on exploring and using the processes of writing, including how to find and develop new ideas that might be of interest and value to certain communities (invention strategies, research strategies, and audience analysis); how to explore the many perspectives and approaches to a particular topic (prewriting); how to explore these ideas and “write to learn,” experimenting with a variety of writing features and techniques (drafting); how to adjust or change our drafts and ideas based on others’ responses to our texts (revision); and how to present our ideas in the forms that our readers expect and value (style, documentation, editing and proofreading). We will discuss and practice each practice and explore how such processes overlap and double back and repeat.

In addition to developing writing skills and process, this course also focuses on the ways in which we conduct critical analysis. As part of a university academic community, we are challenged to delve deep into the issues that we encounter in the world. We will use a variety of approaches for developing critical reasoning skills in this class, including participating in scholarly conversations with multiple sources and perspectives in order to make new knowledge.

Identity and Diversity

The thematic for this course focuses on the ways that identity and diversity are discussed in contemporary settings. We will approach this thematic from the perspective that identity and diversity are able to be understood through systems of social construction and discourse. That

is, while we will discuss the physical markers of “diversity,” we will also focus on the ways in which social factors play a role in how we approach and understand diversity. In particular, this course is built around the theme of identity and diversity as understood through [hashtags](#) and [social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.](#) However, this is not a social media course. The real work of the class will focus on issues of identity and diversity, but you can expect some discussion of how these concepts might be understood or discussed through social media.

Safe Spaces

Because this course is focused on issues of identity and diversity, and we may represent a broad spectrum of identities, I endeavor to make my classroom a safe space for students of all gender and sexual identities, all ages and life experiences, and all cultural, religious and social backgrounds. I welcome our returning veterans to the USC community. While I deeply value open and earnest debate, I require all students to closely adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and maintain respectful, civil modes of discourse. Our differences are valuable, and they are a source of vibrancy and creativity in our USC community. If a student feels uncomfortable, they should contact me privately as soon as possible that we may address any concerns together. I will ask any student to leave the classroom who does not heed my call for respect.

Public Nature of Writing and Discussions

Please consider every piece of writing you do for this class to be “public.” Remember that you will often be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about things that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny, or things you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effect(s) on others. This course may contain content (assigned readings, in-class discussions, etc.) deemed offensive by some students. If you have concerns about any course content, please bring these concerns to my attention.

Required Books and Materials

Writing 150 Course Book, 2016-2017 (available in the bookstore)

Assigned readings, posted on **Blackboard (Bb)**

Evaluation

All formal written assignments will be evaluated in terms of the “Writing Program General Evaluation Rubric” provided in the *Writing 150 Course Book*.

The final semester mark will be determined by six components:

- 5%** **Class Participation**
- 15%** **Ancillary Work** – smaller writing assignments throughout the semester that relate to the Writing Project or the thematic
- 10%** **Writing Project 1** (4-6 page essay)

- 15% Writing Project 2 (5-7 page essay)
- 20% Writing Project 3 (5-7 page essay)
- 35% Writing Project 4 and Final Portfolio (6-8 page essay and additional portfolio assignments)

24-Hour Rule

I welcome the opportunity to discuss your work with you at any stage of the writing process. However, I maintain a 24-hour rule after you have received my grade on your final drafts. This means that you should NOT contact me to discuss your grade for a FULL 24 HOURS after you have received your grade. Instead, use that time to consider my comments carefully. If after 24 hours you would still like to discuss your grade, please contact me during my regular office hours or via email to schedule an appointment to discuss your work.

Class Participation

As active members of a writing community, it is important to be involved and active during every class period. As a responsible member of the classroom community, it is necessary that you complete all assigned homework and come prepared to discuss all topics in class. Please note that some course content may be sensitive. As we engage in critical thinking about course topics, we will often entertain many different opinions about a topic or text or perspective; please be considerate of others' contributions and viewpoints. An environment of respect will allow all of us the opportunity to participate and learn.

Because this course is a writing workshop, and we will be looking at multiple drafts and process elements of your work, **I will not accept papers with which I have had no involvement in the writing process.**

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Because this course incorporates frequent small- and large-group activities into lessons, students who are absent affect not only their own learning, but that of their fellow students. I expect you to attend all classes and to arrive on time, prepared to participate in the course discussions and tasks.

Attendance does not equal participation. But if you do not attend class, you will not have an opportunity to earn points for participation. **If you miss more than three (3) classes**, I will begin to deduct points from your participation grade. Being 5-10 minutes late to class meetings will count as a tardy; three (3) tardies will equal one absence, so be sure to arrive on time. Finally, missing more than 10 minutes of class will count as an absence against you, although you may still earn participation credit if you arrive after that time.

Finally, be aware that any student accruing more than three weeks' absences (9) raises strong doubts regarding the question of whether they have derived benefit of the course, and **such students may be advised to withdraw in order to avoid a failing mark.**

Ancillary Writing Activities

You will be assigned multiple smaller tasks throughout the semester to facilitate the pedagogical goals of the course. These include the diagnostic essay; prewriting for your Writing Projects; analyses of relevant events; reflections on the thematic, your process, or readings; and other assignments as identified. You will be expected to post your homework assignments—both process writing and assignments related to the thematic—to Blackboard. All of these small individual assignments will be graded and will determine your final grade for Ancillary Work (15%).

Late Papers and Extensions

Writing assignments are due as outlined on the project assignment sheets. On the day the assignment is due, be sure to post your work to Blackboard by the specified time. If no time is specified on the assignment sheet, you should consider that work due at the beginning of class.

Late papers will be penalized one step (e.g., C+ to C) for each day they are late. You may choose to hand in one paper from Writing Projects 1-3 one week late, without penalty, only if you have completed a rough draft according to the class schedule. If you opt to submit your assignment late, please send me an email stating your intention. **Writing Project 4 cannot be submitted late.**

Conferences

Several times during the semester I will cancel classes to hold conferences. These conferences are an opportunity for us to meet and discuss your work in a more focused setting. If you miss your scheduled conference, you will be counted absent for the day that class was cancelled for your meetings.

Office Hours

My office is JEF 210A. My office hours are Mondays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. In addition, I am available to schedule appointments at other times if you are not able to meet during my office hours. If you have any questions about the class or if you are having difficulties with the assignment, please contact me before or after class, via email, or during office hours.

Academic Integrity

Students who present another writer's ideas or words as their own, or who turn in a paper they've used for another class, are guilty of plagiarism and will receive an F on the assignment and possibly an F in the class. In serious cases, the student will be referred to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS) for further action. We will discuss ways to avoid plagiarism in class. Please also review "Your Responsibilities" in the *Writing 150 Course Book*, and come to me with any questions you might have.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center (<http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>) is located on the second floor in Taper Hall on campus. The center is open to all students of the university and offers free consultations for any type of writing assignment. The Writing Center is a terrific resource. You are encouraged to visit the center throughout the semester for any additional guidance on the assignments for this course (or for any other course). To make an appointment, create an account through their online system: <https://usc.mywconline.com/>. Be sure to bring the relevant assignment sheet, paper, or prepared questions to your session.

Disability Services and Programs

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 their phone number is (213) 740-0776, and their email is ability@usc.edu.

Technological Distractions

Please refrain from any unauthorized usages of technology during our class sessions. In this usage, "unauthorized" means unrelated to the tangible learning activity or activities taking place during the class period. Please put all handheld electronic devices away. I will expect computers and laptops to be used for classroom activities only. Failure to abide by these guidelines may have a negative impact on your participation grade. Repeat offenders may be seen as disruptive and asked to leave class.

PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS DATES

A daily schedule will be provided with each major assignment sheet. The schedule below is subject to revision during the semester, but this may help you in tentatively planning your schedule.

Writing Project One

Wednesday, August 4	Introduce Writing Project One
Monday, September 5	Labor Day Holiday – No Class
Thursday, September 8 / Friday, September 9	First Draft Due; Individual conferences in my office
Monday, September 12	Revised Draft Due
Wednesday, September 14	Final Draft Due
Friday, September 16	Ancillary Writing Essay Due

Writing Project Two

Wednesday, September 14	Introduce Writing Project 2
Wednesday, September 28 / Thursday, September 29 /	First Draft Due; Individual conferences in my office

Friday, September 30	
Monday, October 3	Revised Draft Due
Friday, October 7	Final Draft Due; Ancillary Writing Essay Due

Writing Project Three

Monday, October 10	Introduce Writing Project 3
Monday, October 24 / Tuesday, October 25 / Wednesday, October 26	First Draft Due; Conferences in my office
Friday, October 28	Revised Draft Due
Monday, October 31	Final Draft Due
Friday, November 4	Ancillary Writing Essay Due

Writing Project Four and Portfolio

Monday, October 31	Introduce Writing Project 4
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11	LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF "W"
Monday, November 14 / Tuesday, November 15 / Wednesday, November 16	First Draft Due; Conferences in my office
Wednesday, November 23 – Friday, November 25	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes
Monday, November 28	Revised Draft Due
Friday, December 2	Final Portfolio Due