



WRIT 150: Writing and Critical Reasoning
Thematic Approaches
Issues in Law & Social Justice

Dr. Ryan Leack
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Class: MWF 1:00-1:50
Location: Zoom

Section: 64725
Office Location: Zoom
Office Hours: TTH 5-6
& by appointment

An Intro in Quotes

“The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.”—Paulo Freire, “The Banking Concept of Education”

“I ask the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. They are a kind of hero. But they are rare and how many (the majority) do not even begin to suspect the ‘work’ the system (which is bigger than they are and crushes them) forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness. . . . So little do they suspect it that their own devotion contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School.” —Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”

“In the law, rights are islands of empowerment. . . . Rights contain images of power, and manipulating those images, either visually or linguistically, is central in the making and maintenance of rights. In principle, therefore, the more dizzyingly diverse the images that are propagated, the more empowered we will be as a society.”—Patricia Williams, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*

“Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better.” —Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile*

~ Header Art by Paul Gilding, “Covid-19 and the Death of Market Fundamentalism” ~

Course Objectives

Writing 150 provides you with opportunities to develop a sound writing process appropriate to the argumentative and analytical nature of academic writing; to develop your analytic and critical thinking skills, to investigate and express personal values; and to present your ideas and beliefs in *rhetorically effective* and *responsible* ways. Successful writing results from close attention to the world and to your own thoughts and responses, as well as dedicated attention to your audience and emerging situations.

Yet, in order to write, we must have a subject. Even “Issues in Law & Social Justice” is too broad. We will narrow things down by looking at our thematic in relation to *neoliberalism* (or “free market fundamentalism”) and issues in *education*, broadly speaking, which we will connect more concretely to *class*, *race*, and *gender* with and through *rhetoric*. Each element will develop and sharpen our writing and reasoning in response to issues in this thematic.

Course Theme

Writing 150 is designed to provide an exceptional first-year learning experience for students to explore concepts and questions that have relevance to their lives. Toward this end, our section of Writing 150 will focus on questions pertaining to issues in law and social justice—a topic relevant for everyone on the planet.

Since issues in law and social justice have relevance for all fields, our examination of the topic will help you develop an important intellectual ability—the capacity to “collect and connect” ideas. This approach will yield knowledge and understanding that may be applied not only in a college paper, but also to your larger *personal*, *professional*, and *public* life.

Required Materials

- Writing 150 Course Book (E-Book)
- Journal or notebook to write in (preferably paper)
- Readings distributed in class or on Blackboard

You are not always required to bring a printed copy of your work, but must have an electronic copy. I will let you know which is appropriate. Failing to bring the assigned text will impact your ability to participate in class work and discussions, and may thus affect your final grade.

Course Writing Requirements

- **Essays:** You will write four thesis-driven papers. You will receive assignment guidelines for every essay that outlines my expectations for that particular writing project. Review the prompt and read your work carefully and continually throughout the writing process in order to engage deeply with the assignment. In addition, in class workshops

and drafting sessions will engage your peers in a collective writing process, making the writing of our essays less solitary endeavors. *Keep all of your prewriting drafts and notes* because they may often be collected as ancillary writing activities.

- **Ancillary Writing Activities:** Ancillary Writing Activities are short writing assignments intended to prepare you to participate in class discussion and to keep you on pace with your major Writing Projects. Some AWAs may be done in class, including reading quizzes, and some may be assigned as homework to be submitted in hard copy or posted to Blackboard. In general, you should count on spending between 20-30 minutes on these activities. AWAs will be graded as largely credit/no credit, or on a point value discussed in class, or on the grade contract, if applicable.
- **Portfolio:** Your fourth Writing Project will be submitted in a final portfolio at the end of the semester. The portfolio may also include ancillary writing and activities that altogether showcase your abilities as a college-level writer and thinker. The portfolios will be graded collaboratively by me and instructors from the Writing Program to ensure consistent grading across the various sections of WRIT 150.

<u>Assignment Weight</u>	<u>With Letter Grade (FYI)</u>	<u>On Grade Contract</u>	
Participation	5%		
Writing Project 1	10%		
Writing Project 2	15%		
Writing Project 3	20%		
Ancillary Writing Activities	15%	AWA4	15%
Writing Project 4 & Portfolio	35%	WP4	85%

Grading/Contract

The expectations for WRIT 150 are very challenging. It is common for students to receive *significantly lower grades* on their writing in WRIT 150 than they did on their high school writing because they are learning new methods of composing and because the requirements for academic writing are so strenuous. Because *this* class is on a **Grade Contract**, this point mainly goes to help you assess the amount of work and effort expected in this course.

Participation

Discussion is an essential part of this class as we investigate writing techniques and try to understand what makes for compelling writing. I realize that participation doesn't always mean speaking in class (it can mean asking questions, listening carefully, taking notes), but to really learn from our conversations, we need everyone to participate *vocally*. The more opinions and ideas we can talk about, the better chance we have of making sense for ourselves;

therefore your participation credit will directly reflect your willingness to vocalize your thoughts in class.

Format for Writing Projects

Writing projects must be typed, with one-inch margins in 12-pt Times New Roman. Please don't include a title page (a big waste of paper). Simply center your title on the first page. Include your name, date, and writing project # (such as "Writing Project #1") in the upper right corner. Do be sure to use an original title for each Writing Project.

Proofreading

I expect that the work you submit will have few, if any, typos. These mistakes distract from your ideas, and your audience doesn't want to be noticing typos or while reading about an issue. (You might also take this as a professional development opportunity, as most employers will not look favorably upon a cover letter/application full of typos.) I suggest printing out your paper, and then proofreading—it's much harder to catch mistakes on a screen. Having a friend read over your paper is also a good idea.

Paper Comments

If you ever have questions about my comments please come see me during office hours, mention them during our conference, or ask them after class so we can discuss your concerns. My comments are intended to help you with your writing, so it's important that we both understand what you're trying to accomplish and what I'm suggesting in my feedback.

Workshop

We will "workshop" certain assignments at times throughout the semester, which will allow you to encourage and challenge each other as writers, to learn from the work of your peers, and to develop a critical eye as you read (which will help you in assessing your own work as well). Sometimes we will workshop in small groups, and other times we may workshop together as a class. This means your classmates may read any assignment you turn in, so always put forth your best effort and never submit anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable having others read.

Late or Missing Writing Projects

This course will move quickly, and if you fall behind you will likely stay behind. This means you must turn in every writing project on time. See the **Grade Contract** for information regarding *late* or *missing* assignments and the like, which is accompanied by a full list of "Lapses in Professionalism" that affect your final grade and your ability to stay in agreement

with the terms of the Grade Contract. *Late or missing work* in particular dramatically affects your grade, even on the terms of the Grade Contract.

Attendance & Late Arrival

It is essential that you come to class because learning will depend on everyone's consistent attendance and active participation. If you know that you have to miss a class, please let me know in advance whenever possible. It is your responsibility to email me immediately to find out what you missed during your absence. It's also crucial that we begin class right on time. Arriving late for class is disruptive and distracting, and two late arrivals will count as one class absence. You are considered absent if you come to class more *than ten minutes late* or leave *more than ten minutes* before class ends.

You are allowed one full week of absences (missing a *class* or a *conference* meeting counts as an absence) without a penalty. Beyond one full week, additional absences begin to *dramatically* affect your final grade. See **Grade Contract**.

Conferences and Office Hours

One of the best aspects of Writing 150 (for me, and hopefully for you) is the chance to work with you several times throughout the semester to collaborate on the paper in progress, and to discuss any questions or issues you have. I will expect that you come to the conference fully prepared by having done all the required reading and completed any pre-writing or drafting activities so that our time together can be as useful as possible. See schedule for more details.

Please don't feel, however, that you have to wait until your conference to talk with me; I have regularly scheduled office hours each week, and you are encouraged to drop by. *Please speak with me if you are struggling with any aspect of this class. *Keep in mind that missing any scheduled conference counts as a class absence.**

Blackboard

You can access Blackboard at <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>. Please check on a regular basis for announcements and specific instructions. Each of your writing projects (#1- Portfolio) must be submitted via Blackboard (as a .doc or .docx file).

The Writing Center

The Writing Center staff can assist you at any stage in the writing process. I encourage you to take advantage of this free service throughout the semester, especially if you feel you could use extra help with grammar or mechanics issues. Visit the website to make an appointment. It's best to visit the Writing Center with a particular sense of what you would like to focus on during your 30-minute session. You should bring a clean copy of the paper you are working

on, and if you're getting help with a revision for the final portfolio you might also want to bring the original paper with my comments as well for the staff to read. For more information, please see the Writing Center website: <http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter>

216 Taper Hall of Humanities (THH)
(213) 740-3691

Useful Grammar Website

The website below provides information regarding the 20 most common grammar errors that student writers make in their work. It may be helpful to look over the list and do the accompanying exercises for any particular errors that you struggle with.
http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/everyday_writer3e/20errors/default.asp

Academic Conduct

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. Whether intentional or unintentional, including information, ideas, or analysis in your paper from other sources without proper citation is considered plagiarism. If in doubt, cite. 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>.

Anti-Bias Statement

As a class we will be dedicated to anti-bias in and out of the classroom. We stand against racism, dehumanization, oppression, colonization, xenophobia, and white supremacy.

As a writing class, we will actively engage in self-reflection to look inward and examine where our conscious and unconscious biases are rooted. We will encourage and support each other's journeys. We will cultivate voices that resonate with our backgrounds and experiences; interrogate our policies and practices; and commit to continually educating ourselves to provide an educational experience that is humanized, anti-bias, and celebrates entangled identities. Of course, we are never free of bias, but we will pursue this goal the best we can.

Support Systems

Campus Support and Intervention (213) 740-0411 - Connects with members of the USC community when they need support in achieving their academic, professional, and/or personal goals. Provides consultation, in person, or by Zoom.

<https://campussupport.usc.edu//>

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 micro-aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

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/>

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>

—Please see additional resources and support systems on the USC website—

WRIT 150: Issues in Law & Social Justice
Please Check Your USC Email Daily to Remain Current

CB = Coursebook / Bb = On Blackboard / I&Is = Insights & Inquiry / PSGs = Passages

Tentative Schedule for Writing Project 1

Week 1

Monday, August 23rd

In Class: course introduction; thematic approach; peer introductions (meet fellow human beings and stuff); learn about coffee and losing one's mind

Homework: review syllabus, schedule, grade contract, and pandemic policies; USC Writing Center Resources (Bb: Resources)

Wednesday, August 25th

In Class: review WP1; how to read tough texts; diagnostic response; finding a topic

Homework: start reading Althusser "State Apparatuses" (Bb); review course policies; review WP1 (Bb); Elbow "How to Get Power through Voice" (Bb: Supplementary)

Friday, August 27th

In Class: review AWA1, Insights & Inquiries, Passages, and any WP1 questions

Homework: finish reading Althusser "State Apparatuses" (Bb); Elbow "Writing Without Teachers" (Bb: Supplementary); two ideas for WP1

Week 2

Monday, August 30th

Due: Althusser "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (Bb)

In Class: discuss WP1 topics; discuss reading; in-class Passages

Homework: review "Conference Guidelines" (Bb); read *CB* pgs. xi-xviii; start reading Foucault "The Means of Correct Training" (Bb); type up *your* Foucault Passage; start reading, *selectively*, Jung "Definitions" (Bb)—pace yourself for these over the week

Wednesday, September 1st

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue Foucault "The Means of Correct Training"; continue Jung "Definitions" (Bb); complete AWA1

Friday, September 3rd

Due: AWA1 (Bb Turnitin)

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue Foucault "The Means of Correct Training" (Bb); continue Jung "Definitions" (Bb)

Week 3

Monday, September 6th

No Class: Labor Day

Homework: finish Foucault "The Means of Correct Training" (Bb); finish reading, *selectively*, Jung "Definitions" (Bb); finish WP1 draft for peer review

Wednesday, September 8th

Due: Foucault (Bb); *your* Foucault PSGs; in-class Althusser PSGs (from last class)

Due: Jung "Definitions" (Bb); 2-3 WP1 paragraphs

In Class: start discussing Foucault and Jung; peer review workshop

Homework: finish WP1; Bourdain "Advice to Aspiring Writers" (Bb: Supplementary)

Friday, September 10th

Due: WP1 (Bb Turnitin)

In Class: finish discussing Foucault and Jung; areas to develop in your final draft

Homework: read Kirby "Toward a Digimodernist Society" (Bb); review WP2; Asimov "Six Writing Tips" (Bb: Supplementary)

Tentative Schedule for Writing Project 2

Week 4

Monday, September 13th

Due: Kirby "Toward a Digimodernist Society" (Bb)

In Class: discuss and respond to reading; in-class Passages; discuss WP2

Homework: draft WP2 outline (1 page); review Conference Guidelines (Bb); read *CB* pgs. 37-74; start Heidegger "What Are Poets For?" for next regular class (Bb); I&Is; Bukowski "So You Want to Be a Writer" (Bb: Supplementary)

Wednesday, September 15th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: read *CB* pgs. 37-74; read Heidegger "What Are Poets For?" (Bb); *survive*; Bukowski "On Writing" (Bb: Supplementary)

Friday, September 17th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue Wednesday's homework; drink ungodly amounts of coffee; Lamott "Shitty First Drafts" (Bb: Supplementary)

Week 5

Monday, September 20th

Due: Heidegger "What Are Poets For?" (Bb); I&Is

In Class: discuss and respond to readings; survive Heidegger; in-class Passages

Homework: get a head start on Zizek *Pandemic* (Bb); start WP2 draft; King "On Writing" (Bb: Supplementary)

Wednesday, September 22nd

Due: Heidegger Passages (assigned last class)

In Class: finish Heidegger discussion; contextualize for thematic and WP2

Homework: finish draft of WP2; continue reading Zizek *Pandemic* (Bb); Sword "How Academics Survive the Writing Grind" (Bb: Supplementary)

Friday, September 24th

Due: 2-3 paragraphs of your essay draft

In Class: discuss AWA2; peer review workshop

Homework: continue reading Zizek *Pandemic* (Bb); pick *your* Zizek Passage; Staiman "Effective Academic Writing" (Bb: Supplementary)

Week 6

Monday, September 27th

In Class: discuss my WP1 feedback; edit WP1 final draft; apply feedback to WP2

Homework: finish Zizek *Pandemic* (Bb); Berkeley "Improve Your Style in Academic Writing" (Bb: Supplementary)

Wednesday, September 29th

Due: Zizek *Pandemic* (Bb); *your* Zizek Passage

In Class: discuss and respond to reading; starting points or topics for WP3

Homework: read CB pgs. 88-93; complete WP2 and AWA2; get a head start on Williams *Alchemy of Race & Rights* (Bb); Insights & Inquiry

Friday, October 1st

Due: WP2, AWA2

In Class: enumerate areas to develop in final draft; discuss CB reading

Homework: finish Williams *Alchemy of Race & Rights* (Bb); review WP3

Tentative Schedule for Writing Project 3

Week 7

Monday, October 4th

Due: Williams *Alchemy of Race & Rights* (Bb); I&Is

In Class: discuss reading; individual and collective identity; discuss WP3, AWA3

Homework: read Delgado and Stefancic *Critical Race Theory* (Bb); *your* Passage

Wednesday, October 6th

Due: Delgado and Stefancic *Critical Race Theory* (Bb); *your* Passage

In Class: discuss reading; issues of race in law and social justice

Homework: get a head start on Angela Davis *Women, Race & Class* (Bb); I&Is

Friday, October 8th

Due: Angela Davis *Women, Race & Class* (Bb); I&Is

In Class: continue reading; journal response

Homework: start reading Shapiro *The Authoritarian Moment* (Bb), and West *Race Matters* (Bb); one Insight for each, one Inquiry for either; prepare for conferences

Week 8

Monday, October 11th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue reading Shapiro and West (Bb); I&Is; work on WP3 draft

Wednesday, October 13th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue reading Shapiro and West (Bb); I&Is; work on WP3 draft

Friday, October 15th

No Class: Fall Recess (coffee heals *all* wounds: physical, mental, and spiritual)

Homework: be a thoughtful person on this planet

Week 9

Monday, October 18th

Due: 2-3 paragraphs of your essay draft

In Class: peer review workshop

Homework: continue reading Shapiro and West (Bb); I&Is

Wednesday, October 20th

In Class: discuss my WP2 feedback; edit WP2 final draft; apply feedback to WP3
Homework: finish reading Shapiro and West (Bb); I&Is

Friday, October 22nd

Due: Shapiro and West (Bb); I&Is (one Insight for each, one Inquiry for either)
In Class: discuss readings; share I&Is and relations to previous discussions
Homework: read Massumi “Concrete is as Concrete Doesn’t” (Bb); *your* Passage

Week 10

Monday, October 25th

Due: read Massumi “Concrete is as Concrete Doesn’t” (Bb); *your* Passage
In Class: discuss reading; response on “gridlocked” identity and uses of science
Homework: read Michelle Wright *Physics of Blackness* (Bb); *your* Passage

Wednesday, October 27th

Due: Michelle Wright *Physics of Blackness* (Bb); *your* Passage
In Class: discuss reading; journal response
Homework: complete AWA3, WP3; start Prescod-Weinstein (Bb); *your* Passage

Friday, October 29th

Due: AWA3, WP3
In Class: enumerate areas to develop in final drafts; discuss WP4 prompt and topics
Homework: finish Prescod-Weinstein *The Disordered Cosmos* (Bb)

Tentative Schedule for Writing Project 4

Week 11

Monday, November 1st

Due: Prescod-Weinstein *The Disordered Cosmos* (Bb); *your* Passage
In Class: discuss reading; autoethnography and the application of science to self; discuss Judith Butler “Rhetorical Dimension of Narrative” (in-class reading)
Homework: read Taleb *Antifragile: How Things Gain from Disorder* (Bb)

Wednesday, November 3rd

Due: Taleb *Antifragile: How Things Gain from Disorder* (Bb); no I&Is
In Class: in-class Passages; individual and/vs. collective responses to crises
Homework: read Taleb *Skin in the Game: Hidden Asymmetries in Daily Life* (Bb)

Friday, November 5th

Due: Taleb *Skin in the Game* (Bb); *your Passage*

In Class: discuss reading; causes, effects, and solutions to crises

Homework: read Lyon *Deliberative Acts: Democracy, Rhetoric, Rights* (Bb); I&Is

Week 12

Monday, November 8th

Due: Lyon *Deliberative Acts: Democracy, Rhetoric, Rights* (Bb); I&Is

In Class: discuss reading; review portfolio, grading, submission, rubric

Homework: work on WP4; bring remaining questions

Wednesday, November 10th

In Class: finish discussion of Lyon and questions on final portfolio process

Homework: start reading Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); *your Passage*

Friday, November 12th

No Class: PAMLA 2021 Conference (Las Vegas)

Homework: continue Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); work on WP4 draft

Week 13

Monday, November 15th

In Class: discuss my WP3 feedback; edit WP3 final draft; apply feedback to WP4

Homework: continue Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); finish WP4 draft

Wednesday, November 17th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); *your Passage*

Friday, November 19th

Conferences (Zoom): be prepared to discuss any of the following: general paper ideas, an outline of your paper, and/or a section of the paper you are struggling with

Homework: continue Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); *your Passage*

Week 14

Monday, November 22nd

Due: 2-3 paragraphs of your essay draft

In Class: peer review workshop

Homework: continue Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); work on AWA4 and WP4

Wednesday, November 24th

No Class: Thanksgiving

Homework: relax, if you remember what that means

Friday, November 26th

No Class: Thanksgiving

Homework: ~LOSE YOUR MIND~

Week 15

Monday, November 29th

Due: Zizek *Pandemic 2* (Bb); *your* Passage

In Class: discuss and respond to reading; synthesize of course content

Homework: read Crosswhite *Deep Rhetoric* (Bb); work on AWA4 & WP4

Wednesday, December 1st

Due: Crosswhite *Deep Rhetoric* (Bb); no I&Is or Passages

In Class: discuss and respond to reading; celebrate life and (in)sanity!

Homework: complete and submit AWA4 & WP4 on Bb by Friday 11:59pm PST

Friday, December 3rd

Due: AWA4 and WP4 (Bb Turnitin copies due by 11:59pm PST tonight)

In Class: synthesize course content; summarize areas to develop in final drafts

Homework: regain consciousness and sanity (just kidding...)