

*“Los Angeles, it should be understood, is not a mere city. On the contrary, it is, and has been since 1888, a commodity; something to be advertised and sold to the people of the United States like automobiles, cigarettes and mouth wash.” —Morrow Mayo, 1933*

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**Spring 2019 | Instructor: Anthony Carfello**

**SATURDAYS—starting January 19:**

**11:00 am—2:00 pm (with one special case of 11:00 am – 4:00 pm)**

**Locations around L.A. (first class at Raleigh Studios, Design Center #101-D)**

**Instructor Contact:**

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**Office Hours:**

By appointment

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the main economic drivers of Los Angeles is the continued sale and promotion of Los Angeles, both to newcomers and natives alike. From actual real estate transactions to the construction of the image of the city through film and television for the last century, the definition of L.A. often depends on who is currently selling the place to whom. With so many perspectives at work, how can one comprehend such a city?

This course demonstrates that specific, physical spaces can be entry points to understanding the larger culture, and emphasizes the work of writers who try to describe the whole of Los Angeles through its details.

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## OBJECTIVE

**This is a writing class** centering the history and formation of the City of Los Angeles.

**The objective of this course is to**

- 1) better understand Los Angeles through the buildings and physical places that make the city's ideas, ethics, and mentalities tangible  
*and*
- 2) better understand the roles that writing and language have played in the processes of the city's development.  
*and*
- 3) make you a better writer by slowing down and analyzing the writing process

There will be weekly writing assignments and two writing projects. (see below)

## READINGS

You will be assigned *WEEKLY* readings about L.A. history, culture, and landmarks.

**Readings and their corresponding writing prompts will be available on Canvas** and, if requested, available by emailed PDF.

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## WRITING-INTENSIVE

Because this course has been designed to meet the university's writing requirements, there is a strong emphasis on exercising and improving your writing skills. We will do this while focusing on four types of writing: analysis practiced by historians; criticism as found in popular newspapers and websites; personal essays; and some fiction.

The writing in this course will help you learn:

- how to use the Ladder of Abstraction to guide observations
- how to introduce places to readers who may not at all be familiar
- how to create a strong introductory statement/thesis
- how to structure convincing arguments that anticipate a reader's thoughts
- how to utilize research/experiential evidence to enrich a reader's understanding
- how to incorporate personal observation in ways that are meaningful to readers

Key to achieving these goals is a production and revision process that understands editing as part of improvement, and consists of:

- observation and writing exercises
  - instructor feedback and rewriting
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## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Consistent writing assignments in this class:**

**1) Responses to the reading assignments**—*for the assigned readings, you are REQUIRED to answer a question or complete a writing exercise. (600 words)*

*The writing exercises are essentially short, written opinions—we will focus on writing about L.A. as both informing AND as arguing, and I will ask you to respond to certain prompts as a way to practice specific writing techniques or to reflect on ideas about the city discussed in class.*

Your writings will be due at the beginning of EVERY class.

**There are two (2) writing projects you will develop, in parts, during the semester:**

**1) You will be writing an itinerary for a tour in Los Angeles**—based on models of other “introductions” to cities, your itinerary will guide a reader who is as unfamiliar with the city as you once were through a specific L.A. neighborhood. (further details to follow)

**2) You will profile a specific, physical place in Los Angeles** (building, park, freeway, etc.) and argue how it represents a particular culture of the city, now or from the era in which it was constructed. (further details to follow)

It is suggested that students bring a pad of paper and a pen for observational notes.

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## ASSISTANCE

The instructor will provide weekly feedback throughout the semester **VIA EMAIL**. Students also have the opportunity to request in-person meetings to discuss their writing.

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## GRADING

Grades for the course will be based on the following:

<b>Weekly Responses</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Two writing projects: drafts + final</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Class Participation</b> (attendance, punctuality, discussions, and assignments)	<b>25%</b>

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## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

**01. January 19, 2019—Introduction to Los Angeles: Missions & El Camino Real & Taco Bell**

- **LECTURE** at Raleigh Studios
- **READINGS FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
  - Josi Ward, “Dreams of Oriental Romance: Reinventing Chinatown in 1930s Los Angeles” (2013) & Carey McWilliams, “Los Angeles: A Very Special City” (1980)

**02. January 26, 2019—City of themes**

- **WALKING TOUR**  
Meet at: *Patsaouras Transit Plaza, 801 N Vignes St, L.A. 90012*

We will go from Union Station to Olvera Street to Chinatown.

- **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Roy Choi, Excerpts from *L.A. Son* (2013) & Victoria Bernal, “Vast Swaths of Southern California Once Belonged to Pío Pico” (2016)

\*\*\* [February 2, 2019](#) \*\*\*

[NO CLASS THIS SATURDAY]

[03. February 9, 2019—Figueroa Street / Institutional Space](#)

- **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Natural History Museum, 900 W Exposition Blvd, L.A. 90007*

We will go to the Natural History Museum, then to University of Southern California campus, and conclude at the Mercado la Paloma.

- **READINGS FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Katie Noonan “Venice West Cafe: A Lost Beat Landmark that Helped Shape Modern-Day Venice” (2015) & Joan Didion, “Los Angeles Notebook” (1968) & Kenneth David Hamm, “The Z-Girl in the Skateboard History Books” (2002)

[04. February 16, 2019—Venice Beach](#)

- **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Baja Cantina, 311 Washington Blvd, Marina Del Rey 90292*

We will explore the Venice canals, Abbot Kinney Blvd, Oakwood, and the boardwalk.

- **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Victor Jones, *(In)Formal L.A.: The Space of Politics* (2014) & Lynell George, “Walter Mosley’s Secret Stories” (1994) & Hadley Meares “When Central Avenue Swung: The Dunbar Hotel and the Golden Age of L.A.’s ‘Little Harlem’” (2015)

- **FIRST WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 1**

[05. February 23, 2019—Zoning](#)

- **WALKING (and DRIVING) TOUR**

Meet at: *Watts Towers, 1727 E 107th St, L.A. 90002*

We will visit the Watts Towers and then drive to Art + Practice in Leimert Park.

- **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- John Fante, Excerpts from *Ask the Dust* (1939) & Norman Klein, Excerpts from *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory* (1997)

- **FIRST WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 2**

06. March 2, 2019—Competition for Definition

• **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S Grand Ave, L.A. 90012*

We will explore what is/was Bunker Hill, and end at the Grand Central Market.

• **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Alan Hess, “The Origins of McDonald’s Golden Arches” (1986) & Nate Jackson, “Long Beach’s Legendary World Famous VIP Records Launches a Center for the Streets” (2018)

• **FIRST WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 3**

\*\*\* March 9, 2019 \*\*\*

[SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS THIS SATURDAY]

07. March 16, 2019—Sprawl (THIS WILL BE THE ONE LONGER CLASS)

• **DRIVING (and WALKING) TOUR**

Meet at: *McDonald’s, 10207 Lakewood Blvd, Downey 90240*

We will see two sites in Downey then drive to Long Beach. We’ll do a walking tour of downtown and Alamitos Beach, then drive to Ports O’ Call Village in San Pedro.

• **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Colin Marshall, “Our Car Culture Is Not a Problem” (2016) & Lynell George, Excerpts from *After/Image* (2018) & Marnie Sehayek, “The Ovarian Psychos Are Taking Back Boyle Heights One Ride at a Time” (2016)

• **FINAL DUE: FIRST WRITING PROJECT**

08. March 23, 2019—Designing lifestyle

• **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *VDL House, 2300 Silver Lake Blvd, L.A. 90039*

We will visit the Richard Neutra VDL House and walk around Silver Lake.

• **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Rubén Martínez, “Going Up In L.A.” (1989)

• **SECOND WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 1**

09. March 30, 2019—Scripting Place

• **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Café Gratitude, 300 S Santa Fe Ave, L.A. 90013*

We will explore the Arts District and the L.A. River area, then to Little Tokyo.

- **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Steven Flusty, “Building Paranoia” (1994) & Octavia E. Butler, Excerpts from *Mind of My Mind* (1977) & Raymond Chandler, Excerpts from *High Window* (1942)

- **SECOND WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 2**

10. April 6, 2019—This Southern California, not that one

- **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Armory Center for the Arts, 145 N Raymond Ave, Pasadena 91103*

We will explore Old Town Pasadena.

- **READINGS FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Sandra Tsing Loh, Excerpts from *Depth Takes a Holiday* (1996) & Wendy Cheng, Excerpts from *The Changs Next Door to the Díazes* (2013)

- **SECOND WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 3**

11. April 13, 2019—Valleys

- **DRIVING (and some WALKING) TOUR**

Meet at: *Mulholland Scenic Overlook, 8591 Mulholland Drive, L.A. 90046*

We will then head to City Walk at Universal City and make stops in North Hollywood, Burbank, CA, and then go to the L.A. County Arboretum in Arcadia, CA.

- **READINGS FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Jonathan Gold, Excerpts from *Counter Intelligence* (1999) & Llano del Rio Collective, “An Antagonist’s Guide to the Assholes of Los Angeles” (2013)

- **SECOND WRITING PROJECT: Development Assignment 4**

12. April 20, 2019—Monuments

- **WALKING (and DRIVING) TOUR**

Meet at: *Los Angeles County Art Museum, 5905 Wilshire Blvd, L.A. 90036*

We will visit the museum and discuss the role of monuments in L.A. We’ll then drive to Hollywood Blvd to conclude.

- **READING FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**

- Carolina Miranda, “How to Look at Los Angeles” (2015) & Anna Deavere Smith, Selections from *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (1994)

13. April 27, 2019—Representation

• **TOUR**

Meet at: *Document Coffee Bar, 3850 Wilshire Blvd, L.A. 90010*

We will explore Koreatown.

• **FINAL DUE: SECOND WRITING PROJECT**

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**COURSE POLICIES**

• **Attendance is REQUIRED.**

In addition to attending class, you will also be graded on your participation in class discussions.

Four (4) unexcused absences will result in course failure.

The only “excused absences” are for medical reasons with advance notification.

Even if you are absent, you are still responsible for that week’s homework. Accommodations can be negotiated, but only in advance.

• **NO PHONES. NO TEXTING.**

Please do not use your phone or toy with your Apple Watch during class. During tours, you may use phones and take pictures when we are not speaking.

• **Punctuality is expected.**

You are required to be at class on time. Points will be taken off your class participation grade for late arrivals.

Leave early enough to accommodate for traffic.

• **Due dates are strictly enforced.**

The grade for late project assignments will be reduced by one letter grade (from an A to a B, etc.) for each late day unless you have made arrangements with me before the due date.

Late weekly responses will not be accepted at all.

• **No guests** unless they are current students in the L.A. Study Away program.

• **Sources** used for your writing assignments must be properly cited. Guidelines for the citations will be given with each specific assignment. But above all, plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated, as per university policy:

*“Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development*

*of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.*

*Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. [...]*

*The penalty for academic dishonesty can vary from receiving a reprimand and a failing grade for a particular assignment, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or expulsion from the university. The penalty varies with the nature of the offense, the individual instructor, the department, and the school or college.”*

[Source: “Student Responsibilities,” Temple University Undergraduate Bulletin 2016-2017. Temple U., Office of the Provost, 2016, accessed 2017, [http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities\\_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm#honesty](http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm#honesty).]

**This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation.**

Temple University is committed to the inclusion of students with disabilities and provides accessible instruction, including accessible technology and instructional materials.

The process for requesting access and accommodations for this course is: 1) Advise the instructor of the need for access and accommodations; 2) Contact Disability Resources and Services (215-204-1280) to request accommodations; 3) DRS will consult with the instructor as needed about essential components of the program; 4) Present the instructor with a DRS accommodation letter.

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. Temple University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02), which can be accessed through the following URL: <http://policies.temple.edu/PDF/99.pdf>