

“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

Spring 2020 | Instructor: Anthony Carfello

SATURDAYS—starting January 18:

11:00 am—2:00 pm (PLUS SOME DAYS WITH OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS)

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

Instructor Contact:

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Office Hours:

By appointment

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 over 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.

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.

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; cultural criticism; personal essays; and 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 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 regular instructor feedback and rewriting. *As well, we will incorporate writing advice from the Los Angeles author Walter Mosley.*

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.*

Responses will be due at the beginning of EVERY class. Responses are graded emphasizing completion, effort, and attention to detail.

FOUR missing responses equals COURSE FAILURE.

There are two (2) writing projects you will develop during the semester:

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

2) You will be imagining a film originating in a specific neighborhood of Los Angeles and relating it to the history of local “classics”—*using a selection of different writing techniques, you will demonstrate the influence of place and reference examples from the L.A. canon (further details to follow)*

It is suggested that students bring paper/pen to class for observational notes, or cameras.

ASSISTANCE

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

GRADING

Grades for the course will be based on the following:

Weekly Responses	25%
Two writing projects: drafts + final	50%
Class Participation (attendance, punctuality, participation in discussions, paying attention during class lectures, completion of assignments on time)	25%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

01. January 18, 2020—Introduction to Los Angeles: Missions & El Camino Real

- **LECTURE** at Raleigh Studios
- **READINGS ASSIGNED 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 25, 2020—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.

- **READINGS ASSIGNED FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
- Lawrence Lipton, Excerpts from *The Holy Barbarians* (1959)

03. February 1, 2020—Venice as Microcosm

(THIS DAY WILL HAVE AN OPTIONAL AFTERNOON PART—further details to follow)

- **WALKING TOUR**

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

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

- **READINGS ASSIGNED 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)
- **WRITING PROJECT 1: Development Assignment 1 Due**

04. February 8, 2020—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.

- **READINGS ASSIGNED FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
- Joan Didion, “Los Angeles Notebook” (1968) & Walter Mosley, Selected work
- **WRITING PROJECT 1: Development Assignment 2 Due**

05. February 15, 2020—The Valley

- **Mostly DRIVING TOUR**

Meet at: *Valley Relics Museum, 7900 Balboa Blvd, Van Nuys 91406*

We will explore the Valley Relics Museum in Van Nuys, then stop at two locations in North Hollywood and conclude in Burbank.

- **READINGS ASSIGNED FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
- Lynell George, “State of Being: Envisioning California” (2017)
- **WRITING PROJECT 1: Development Assignment 3 Due**

06. February 22, 2020—Zones

• **DRIVING and WALKING TOUR**

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

We will visit the Watts Towers and then drive to Exposition Park to visit the California African American Museum.

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

- Jonathan Gold, Excerpts from *Counter Intelligence* (1999)

• **FIRST DRAFT of WRITING PROJECT 1 Due**

07. February 29, 2020—Designing Lifestyle

• **DRIVING and WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Lovell Health House, 4616 Dundee Dr, L.A. 90039*

We will visit the Modernist Lovell Health House and then drive to the VDL House, both masterpieces by the architect Richard Neutra

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

- Sandra Tsing Loh, Excerpts from *Depth Takes a Holiday* (1996) & Darnell Hunt, “Representing ‘Los Angeles’: Media, Space, and Place” (2002)

• **FINAL for WRITING PROJECT 1 Due**

*** [March 7, 2020](#) ***

[SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS THIS SATURDAY]

08. March 14, 2020—Into the sprawl

(THIS DAY WILL HAVE AN OPTIONAL AFTERNOON PART—further details to follow)

• **DRIVING (and WALKING) TOUR**

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

We will see the oldest operating McDonald’s then drive south to Long Beach, where we’ll have a walking tour of downtown and then head east to Alamitos Beach.

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

- Rubén Martínez, “Going Up In L.A.” (1989) & Dana Johnson, Excerpts from *In the Not Quite Dark* (2016)

• **WRITING PROJECT 2: Development Assignment 1 Due**

09. March 21, 2020—Competition for Definition, Part II

• **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 walk to Little Tokyo.

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

- Octavia E. Butler, Excerpts from *Mind of My Mind* (1977) & *Parable of the Sower* (1993)

• **WRITING PROJECT 2: Development Assignment 2 Due**

10. March 28, 2020—This SoCal, not that one

• **WALKING TOUR**

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

We will tour an art exhibition and then explore Old Town Pasadena.

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

- Wendy C. Ortiz, Excerpts from *Hollywood Notebook* (2015)

• **WRITING PROJECT 2: Development Assignment 3 Due**

11. April 4, 2020—Neighborhood vs. Stage Set

• **WALKING TOUR**

Meet at: *Papillon International Bakery, 5019 Hollywood Blvd, L.A. 90027*

We will explore Hollywood Blvd, from Thai Town to Hollywood & Highland.

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

- Anna Deavere Smith, Selections from *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (1994)

• **WRITING PROJECT 2: Development Assignment 4 Due**

12. April 11, 2020—City of “Angles”

• **TOUR**

Meet at: *Art + Practice, 3401 W 43rd Pl, L.A. 90008*

We will tour an art exhibition, explore the Leimert Park neighborhood, and then drive to the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Culver City.

- **READINGS ASSIGNED FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
- Sesshu Foster, Excerpts from *City of the Future* (2018) and *City Terrace Field Manual* (1996)
- **FIRST DRAFT of WRITING PROJECT 2 Due**

13. April 18, 2020—East Side Story

- **WALKING TOUR**
Meet at: *Mariachi Plaza, E 1st St, L.A. 90034*

We will have a guided tour of Boyle Heights.

- **READINGS ASSIGNED FOR NEXT CLASS (See writing prompt on Canvas):**
- Roy Choi, Excerpts from *L.A. Son* (2013)
- **SECOND DRAFT for WRITING PROJECT 2 Due**

14. April 25, 2020—Representation

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

We will explore Koreatown.

- **FINAL for WRITING PROJECT 2 Due**

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance is REQUIRED.**
In addition to attendance, you will 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. Otherwise, there are NO excused absences.

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 walking but **MUST** stop for discussions.

- **Punctuality is expected.**

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.

Weekly responses are due by the start of class at 11:00 AM. You will have TWO opportunities throughout the semester to request a one-day extension, if you ask me BEFORE Saturday's class.

- **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.]

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>