

CO150: COLLEGE COMPOSITION — Fall 2025

Instructor: Sean Waters

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00-2:00 pm and available by appointment.

Office Hours Location: Eddy 329

Meeting Times / Locations for Each Section

We will meet Face-To-Face during our designated times Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

- Section 042 will meet from 12:00 pm – 12:50 am in Education 105B
- Section 071 will meet from 3:00 pm - 3:50 am in Eddy 104
- Section 074 will meet from 4:00 pm - 4:50 pm in Eddy 109

Course Description

CO150 focuses on introducing you to writing, reading, research, and communicating practices that will prepare you for success as a university student, professional, and citizen. In this course, you will learn to critically read and respond to a variety of texts, to write for a variety of rhetorical situations and audiences, to dialogue about different experiences and perspectives, and to develop and apply effective writing practices.

This semester's CO150 course theme is *Writing our Worlds: College Composition and Rhetoric in Context*. In the course, we will explore how writing is shaped by our experience and the experiences of others. Because writing is relational—meaning that when we write, we are in communication with ourselves and with others—it is important to explore writing from a personal, public, and participatory perspective. In this course, we will read writing by academics and students, public figures and popular writers. As a class, we will discuss, analyze, and evaluate the writing choices writers make, so we can better understand the agency we have as writers to make decisions about topics, idea development and organization, examples and research, writing style, and rhetorical techniques, among other writing-focused topics. We will talk about writing and rhetoric topics, such as the rhetorical situation (audience awareness, context, authorial purpose, and genre), the writing process, library and popular research, information literacy, collaboration through peer review, a writer's agency, and developing a writerly community, among other topics.

Every class period is an opportunity for you to grow as a writer and to support your classmates' growth as writers. And in every class period, you will learn skills and strategies that will be valuable beyond the CO150 classroom and CSU. I look forward to getting to know you and supporting your growth as a writer.

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved CO150 for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the [GT-2] category. For transferring students,

successful completion with a minimum C– grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to <http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html>.

CO150 addresses the Following Competency and Content Criteria, as approved by the State of Colorado.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY—CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

Competency in written communication is a student’s ability to write and express ideas across a variety of genres and styles. Written communication abilities develop over time through layered, interactive, and continual processes and experiences across the curriculum.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs):

Students should be able to:

1. Employ Rhetorical Knowledge

a. Exhibit a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, genre, and context that is responsive to the situation.

2. Develop Content

a. Create and develop ideas within the context of the situation and the assigned task(s).

3. Apply Genre and Disciplinary Conventions

a. Apply formal and informal conventions of writing, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices, in particular forms and/or fields.

4. Use Sources and Evidence

a. Critically read, evaluate, apply, and synthesize evidence and/or sources in support of a claim.
b. Follow an appropriate documentation system.

5. Control Syntax and Mechanics

a. Demonstrate proficiency with conventions, including spellings, grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to the writing task.

CO2 CONTENT CRITERIA:

Deepen Rhetorical Knowledge

- a. Focus on rhetorical situation, audience, and purpose.
- b. Use voice, tone, format, and structure appropriately, deepening understanding of relationships between form and content in writing.
- c. Write and read texts written in several genres, for specified discourse communities. These communities may include professional or disciplinary discourse communities.

Deepen Experience in Writing

- a. Develop recursive strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading for extensive, in-depth, and/or collaborative projects.
- b. Critique one's own and other's work.
- c. Practice reflective strategies.

Deepen Critical and Creative Thinking

- a. Evaluate the relevance of context.
- b. Synthesize other points of view within one's own position.
- c. Reflect on the implications and consequences of the stated conclusion.

Use Sources and Evidence

- a. Select and evaluate appropriate sources and evidence.
- b. Evaluate the relevance of sources to the research question.

Deepen Application of Composing Conventions

- a. Apply genre conventions including structure, paragraphing, tone, mechanics, syntax, and style to more extensive or in-depth writing projects.
- b. Use specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation appropriately.

Course Materials

- **Reader:** *Rams Write – Norton Composition Package* (Day One Access).
- Access to our CO150 class page at [Canvas](https://canvas.colostate.edu) (canvas.colostate.edu).
- A notebook for in-class work, homework, and handouts.

Assignments and Grading

In addition to the 150 minutes we spend together in class each week, you will be expected to spend a minimum of six hours outside of class time per week on this course. Please plan your schedule accordingly, so you can get the most from the course.

Course Assignments	Percentage
A1: Writing Communities and Conversations: Targeted Cover Letter	10%
A2: Academic Inquiry and Research: Research Blogs and PPT	10%
A3: Academic Writing: Academic Argument Essay	10%
A4: Metacognition and Revision: Reflection Portfolio (due finals week)	10%
Process Work: Reading Notes, Discussions, Peer Review, Weekly Process Letters and Contract-Based Self-Scoring	60%

Grades

Grades will be assigned at the end of the semester, according to the following grading scale:
97-100 = **A+**; 93-96 = **A**; 90-92 = **A-**; 87-89 = **B+**; 83-86 = **B**; 80-82 = **B-**; 77-79 = **C+**; 70-76 = **C**; 60-69 = **D**; 0-59 = **F**

You will need a D to pass the course, unless your major requires a grade higher than a D. Check with your major advisor early on in the semester, so that you know what your major requires of you. Excessive absences may override these assessment components. There are no C-, D+, or D- in final grades and incompletes will not be given.

Composition Program Participation and Absences Policy

Since learning to write effectively in college (and the world) depends upon regular interaction with other writers, the Composition Program expects your active participation in all class sessions, small group and individual meetings, and with online work. Missing more than two weeks of our course will make successful completion difficult. Students who miss more than three weeks of class are strongly encouraged to take composition during an alternate semester. In line with University policies, [university-sanctioned events](#) and religious holidays are considered excused absences; please speak with me in advance about your participation in these events. If you need religious holiday accommodations, please read the [CSU policy](#) well in advance and complete the [Religious Accommodation Request Form](#) in at least seven days in advance of your request. If you have concerns about your ability to regularly attend class due to mental or physical well-being, please contact [Student Case Management](#). I value your contributions to our class learning environment and look forward to our time together.

Coming to Class Prepared (whether face to face, hybrid, or remote)

Our Composition classes thrive on interaction between writers; for you to thrive in this learning environment, you will need to participate to the fullest—whether that is in small group discussion or in shared Google document. Whether your class meets virtually or in person, you will have opportunities to participate synchronously and at your own pace through discussion, collaborative writing, and small group work. We are in this learning together, and your presence matters. Being prepared not only positively affects the classroom community, but it allows you to encourage, support, and learn from each other. Being prepared means that you have completed the assigned reading for the day, you bring rough drafts when required, you bring completed worksheets or homework when required, and you're ready to talk. If you are not prepared to work, you cannot participate to the fullest, learn to the fullest, or contribute to the fullest.

Visit the [Composition Program's policy page](#) for more information about our program FAQs, policies, and resources.

Canvas and Class Communication

You will find our course materials on Canvas. This includes the syllabus, calendar, assignment prompts, campus resources, and additional readings. I recommend that you check Canvas every day to ensure you are prepared for class. All assignments, including homework, will be submitted and graded electronically through Canvas.

I will be using campus email to communicate with you throughout the semester, so be sure to check your CSU email frequently. I will answer brief, clarifying questions via email on Monday-Friday from 8:30 AM-5:30 PM. Questions that require discussion or a lengthy response should be asked in class or during office hours. Please allow 24 hours for an email response. Your email should include a specific subject line, an opening salutation ("Dear Ms. Smith"), context for your email, and a closing with your name ("Thank You, James"). Email is a genre with specific genre conventions. It is also a rhetorical situation. I expect you to use the conventions as part of your practice in written communication and rhetorical techniques.

Expectations for Your Process Work

The CSU Composition Program believes learning effective writing skills and strategies requires learning about writing as a process and not only as a final product. Research shows that the more people write, even 10 minutes every day, significantly benefits how people organize their thoughts, communicate their ideas, and revise their writing. Because writers grow by experiencing the writing process—just as musicians and athletes improve through everyday practice—CO150 is designed to value this practice and process. **60% of your course grade is determined by process work and workshopping**, which includes reading notes, discussion forums, peer review processes, revisions to your work, and writing your weekly reflection and self-assessment letters. To do well in this course, it is vital that you engage thoroughly and thoughtfully with writing as a process, and I will do the same in providing feedback on your writing. In most cases, major writing assignments may not be graded without the required process work and in-class participation.

We will be using a labor-based, co-intentional grading standard in this course, which means I will be using your weekly reflections, self-assessments, and self-scoring as the basis of your grades. In other words, you will be responsible for scoring your own work, considering the quality of your weekly processes and products. I will provide feedback on your process, products and self-scoring to further empower your daily reading, writing, and thinking practices. To do well in this course, it is vital that you engage with reading and writing as interdependent processes.

Expectations for Your Weekly Reading Notes

They may be handwritten or typed. To get full credit on each reading notes entry, please date and title your notes, and show me that you've spent *at least* one hour of focused reading and note-taking that helps you **summarize key findings, provide, cite and explain key quotes** that support those key findings, **provide creative, critical rhetorical analysis** and **ask generative discussion questions for our conversations**. At least 450 words of your own writing and

thinking. You may lose points if your notes are incomplete, highly selective, or do not show evidence of careful reading and thoughtful response to the entirety of the reading.

Expectations for Your Weekly Discussion Forums

To get full credit on each discussion forum: Make all four posts on time. You are submitting one original post (~450 words), two peer-comments (100 words each), and a revision of your original post. Meet all requirements outlined in the prompt. Demonstrate an understanding of rhetorical knowledge covered in class materials and readings. Original posts incorporate at least three cited examples and references to class materials and readings. Your two Peer Reviews are generous and careful, with the goal of helping your peers improve their writing skills. You include (1) a brief point of specific praise, (2) a specific area in need of improvement, and (3) an open-ended question to promote critical thinking and revision. Your Revision Post documents the time you've spent clarifying, developing, or making your writing more concise.

Expectations for Your Weekly Process Letters

To get full credit on each weekly process letter, you'll address a personalized letter to your instructor, your TA, and a future version of yourself. This letter will be in your own voice, talking about your process and products for the week, providing a metacognitive reflection about how your reading and writing practices helped you make progress towards your chosen PACT goals. In your brief reflection, you consider what you did well, what you could improve, considering your reading and writing quality. Based on this reflection of your labor, you score yourself for the week.

Expectations for Workshop and Peer Review

In the spirit of valuing writing as a process, CO302 is designed to teach students how to workshop, brainstorm, and peer review together. Just as musicians and athletes cannot simply practice with only themselves, so, too, do writers need to work together to improve their writing. You will have the opportunity to develop as a writer by discussing ideas, brainstorming, helping others troubleshoot their writing, and peer review classmates' drafts. Workshopping and generous peer-reviewing helps you improve your own writing, but, more importantly, helps you sharpen your human skills of building constructive and collaborative relationships. 20% of your weekly score is determined by participation in workshops and generative peer-reviews.

Expectations for Workshop and Peer Review

In the spirit of valuing writing as a process, CO150 is designed to teach students how to workshop, brainstorm, and peer review together. Just as musicians and athletes cannot simply practice with only themselves, so, too, do writers need to work together to improve their writing. You will have the opportunity to develop as a writer by discussing ideas, brainstorming, helping others troubleshoot their writing, and peer review classmates' drafts. Workshopping and peer reviewing work together not only gives you ideas for how to improve your own writing, but it also teaches you how to communicate clear solutions and recommendations to your peers. Therefore, 15% of your course grade is determined by workshop and peer review, which includes conferences with your instructor. Your grade will be determined by whether or

not you've come prepared for that day and participated to the fullest extent. See the calendar for requirements regarding draft length, homework, or preparation requirements.

Writing Resource: The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a resource that you can use at any time during your studies at CSU. When you visit the Writing Center—in person or virtually—you will work with peer consultants whose goal is to help you grow as a writer. Peer consultants can work with you at all stages of your writing process, including but not limited to brainstorming, researching, working with sources, planning, drafting, and addressing the demands of writing assignments. Visit [the Writing Center](#) website to learn more and to schedule a consultation.

Late Work

Because we use labor-based and co-intentional grading, I'll ask you to consider the impacts of submitting work late and adjust your self-scoring to apply a standard **grade deduction on any submitted late work: 10% for each day late**. This includes your reading notes, discussion forum posts, peer-comments, revisions, process letters, and major assignments. If you anticipate difficulty turning in an assignment on time because of university-sanctioned events, excessive course-load in your other courses, religious observations, documented illness, or other personal reasons, please communicate with me in advance. You will find that I care about your well-being. I will accommodate your learning needs while holding you to a standard of personal excellence. If you are participating in a university-sanctioned event or religious holiday or observance, complete work in advance or arrange an extension.

Classroom Expectations

The CSU Principles of Community are **inclusion, integrity, respect, service, and social justice**; these principles undergird the University's mission, and I believe they should guide the interactions of all students, faculty, and staff—inside and outside the classroom. To that end, please:

- **Be inclusive** by welcoming all your peers of all identities, talents, and abilities as members of the CSU community.
- **Have integrity** by being accountable for your actions and acting ethically and honestly.
- **Be respectful** of all members of the CSU community by contributing to an environment where freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge are valued.
- **Engage in service** by giving your time, talents, and resources to promote one another's well-being.
- **Support social justice** by treating others with fairness and equity and challenging prejudice.

The content of this course involves the exchange of ideas around being in a healthy state—and some of those ideas are sensitive and hotly contested. It is quite possible that at some point you will disagree with your classmates or me. Should a topic of conversation arise in which you want to express your disagreement, practice using reasons, evidence, and experience to support your statement.

To meet CSU's Principles of Community, we must avoid shutting other people down, harassing language or body language, bullying or mobbing, or making disparaging remarks toward another's culture, ethnic group, race, age, disability, gender identity, religion, and/or sexual orientation. See the [Student Code of Conduct](#) for more explanation about the university's expectations for behavior.

Academic Integrity

We take academic integrity seriously. Academic integrity means that no one will use another's work as their own, including some else's ideas, someone else's words, or someone else's graphics. The course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. The Student Code of Conduct defines plagiarism this way:

“Plagiarism includes the copying of language, structure, images, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgement; the failure to cite sources properly; sources must always be appropriately referenced, whether the source is printed, electronic, or spoken.”

If you plagiarize in your work, you could lose credit for the plagiarized work, fail the assignment, or fail the course. Plagiarism could result in expulsion from the university. Each instance of plagiarism, classroom cheating, and other types of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the principles in the CSU General Catalog page explaining [Students' Responsibilities](#).

In cases of suspected academic dishonesty, all instructors at CSU are required to forward documentary evidence to the Director of Composition and the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services. The Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services will ensure due process and advise instructors regarding appropriate disposition of the case. The bottom line: If at any point you're uncertain whether or not you're incorporating the ideas and language of others correctly, ask me.

Classroom Technology Policy and AI Policy

To keep our classroom as dedicated to our collective well-being as possible, **please help me keep our classroom a distraction-device-free zone**. Please stow your phones and keep your tablets and computers in airplane mode. **If you work from a computer in class, please sit so others are not distracted by your screen.** Active engagement makes the course better for all of us, and easier for you outside of class.

A Note on AI

This class is specifically a space for learning and practicing invaluable writing and researching processes that cannot be replicated by generative artificial intelligence (AI). We're in a liminal, exciting time where the ever-changing (and exciting!) new developments with AI are finding their place in our workforces and personal lives and educations. Generative AI has been shown to atrophy our critical thinking ability, and with regard to writing specifically, these technologies can counteract learning. The use of AI diminishes opportunities to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this AI simply cannot do that learning for us. Just like you wouldn't take a forklift to the gym, don't take an LLM to do thinking for you in a college writing class. Academic integrity plays a vital role in the learning that takes place in CO 150. **Submitting work as your own that was generated by AI is plagiarism.** If you choose to use generative AI in any of your writing processes, including but not limited to brainstorming, outlining, writing, and revising, you are required to disclose the help you received as you would disclose information drawn from another source through citation. Include the following statement at the bottom of any assignment you sought help from AI for: "I have received help from [NAME TOOL HERE] for this project to [INSERT WHAT YOU USED IT TO HELP YOU DO]." Please note you will need to put in additional work before and after working with any AI generator to help your writing meet the expectations set forth by class rubrics.

Honor Code Statement

Academic integrity means more than just avoiding plagiarism. It also involves doing your own reading and studying. It includes regular class attendance, careful consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your fellow students.

Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, we will ask you to write or type the CSU Honor Pledge ("I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance.") at the top of each major writing assignment.

CSU's Student Sexual Harassment, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation Policy

CSU's Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation policy designates faculty and employees of the University as "Responsible Employees." This designation is consistent with federal law and guidance, and requires faculty to report information regarding students who may have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation. This includes information shared with faculty in person, electronic communications or in class assignments. As "Responsible Employees," faculty may refer students to campus resources (see below), together with informing the Office of Support and Safety Assessment to help ensure student safety and welfare. Information regarding sexual

harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking and retaliation is treated with the greatest degree of confidentiality possible while also ensuring student and campus safety.

Any student who may be the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation is encouraged to report to CSU through one or more of the following resources:

- Emergency Response 911
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Office of Support and Safety Assessment (970) 491-1350
- Colorado State University Police Department (non-emergency) (970) 491-6425

For counseling support and assistance, please see the [CSU Health Network](#) (970-491-7121), which includes a variety of counseling, medical, and support services. The [Sexual Assault Victim Assistance \(SAVA\) Team](#) (970-472-4200) is a 24-hour confidential student resource that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault.

Learning Support and Accommodations

Students with learning challenges who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the [Student Disability Center](#) (970-491-6385) as soon as possible to ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. I can only make accommodations once I receive the SDC accommodation letter.

Free Printing On Campus

Free printing is available in the Eddy Computer Lab on the third floor. Non-Liberal Arts Majors get 125 pages of printing credits a semester, and Liberal Arts Majors get 550 pages of printing credits a semester.

Some Useful Resources

Printing: Printing is available in Eddy 300. Non-Liberal Arts majors have 125 printing credits. Liberal Arts majors have 550 printing credits. You also have access to printing through the lab for your college and/or major. You may also print in the Morgan Library.

The Writing Center: The Writing Center in Eddy 23 provides free one-on-one instruction to all Colorado State University students and members of the community who wish to receive help with any writing project. Because there are many of you and only one of me, I highly encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center for assistance on your papers. Many students find this resource extremely helpful and continue to use the Writing Center throughout their college careers. The Writing Center primarily takes walk-in appointments, but you can also schedule by visiting their website at: <https://writingcenter.colostate.edu>

The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University has a great resource for writers. The OWL has information about MLA citation, grammar, genres of writing, research and much more! I encourage you to check it out: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Citation Help: We will be using several different citation styles in this class. The information for these styles of citation can be found on Canvas, as well as on the OWL at Purdue website.

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (TILT) also has some great resources for academic success. They offer workshops on organization, studying, stress relief and more! Visit their website at: <https://tilt.colostate.edu/learning/>

The CSU Counseling Services is a great place to go if you're having a hard time, feeling stressed or missing home. For more information go to: <https://health.colostate.edu>

Rams Against Hunger

The goal of Rams Against Hunger at Colorado State University is to serve as emergency food relief for Colorado State University undergraduate students experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity broadly defined is “the state of being without reliable access to sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.” Resources for students include meal swipes, mobile food pantry, access to SNAP resources, pocket pantries, food recovery program, and more. See [their website](#) for information on how to apply and when the mobile food pantries are available. Call (970) 689-2175 for more information

Resources

This [link](#) will take you to a list of resources at CSU, from Student Affairs to Counseling Services, and many stops in between.

This [link](#) will help you make a report if you have any concerns about your own or someone else's mental or physical well-being.

This [link](#) will help make you an appointment at the Writing Center.

Policy and Schedule Changes

Your decision to remain in this section of CO150 demonstrates your agreement to the policies stated above and also demonstrates your willingness to make a commitment to the class and your writing. If you have any questions or concerns, please email or talk with me. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus and class schedule as it best serves the class. Any changes will be announced in class and in writing on Canvas.