METHODS AND PRACTICE: REPORTING THE ARTS

Class code  V54.9202.001

Instructor Details  MATT WOLF
Office hours by appointment
Phone number to be provided in class

Class Details  Fall 2013
  Mondays, 1 45 – 4 30 pm, 4 Bedford Sq. Room G04
  N.B.: Make-up class, Friday 4 Oct, 1 – 4 pm

Prerequisites  An enthusiasm for attending and thinking critically about live performance, starting, inevitably given the instructor’s own critical employment, with the theater and moving on to classical music/opera and both classical and contemporary dance. Also, where possible, film, television, and the visual arts as the common cultural parlance of our time.

Class Description  The course aims to provide the student with a full awareness of critical discourse across the spectrum, as it is practiced in the British press. Students will become acquainted with the full array of British arts journalism – reviews, interviews, features, blogs – and will get to do similar writing exercises themselves.

  Lectures coupled with discussions, guest speakers, and multiple trips to live performance.

  Various Thursday night performances have been booked for the entire class, encompassing theater, dance (both classical and modern), and classical music/opera. Additional group outings may well be added, and there will be one outing on a Wednesday for the simples reason that the ballet in question is not performed on a Thursday. Attendance at these is mandatory.

  Scheduled outings:

  Thurs 5 Sept, Matilda the Musical, 7 30 pm, Cambridge Theatre
  http://uk.matildathemusical.com/
  Thurs 12 Sept, The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas, 7 30 pm, Royal Court Theatre
  http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/the-ritual-slaughter-of-gorge-mastromas
  Thurs 19 Sept, Farragut North, 8 pm, Southwark Playhouse
  http://southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/the-large/farragut-north/
  Thurs 26 Sept, One Man, Two Guvnors, 7 30 pm, Theatre Royal, Haymarket
http://www.onemantwoguvnors.com

Thurs 3 Oct, outing tbc

Thurs 10 Oct, **Wayne McGregor: Random Dance – Atomos**, 7 30 pm, Sadlers Wells

Thurs 17 Oct, **The Light Princess**, 7 30 pm, Royal National Theatre/Lyttelton
http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/the-light-princess

Thurs 24 Oct, **no group outing** – you choose your own event for review

Thurs 31 Oct, **Philharmonia Orchestra**, 7 30 pm, Royal Festival Hall
http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/philharmonia-orchestra-71443

Thurs 14 Nov, **The Magic Flute**, 7 30 pm, English National Opera
http://www.eno.org/see-whats-on/productions/production-page.php?&itemid=2394

Wed Nov 20 (note **Wednesday** outing), **Royal Ballet mixed bill**, 7 30 pm, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
http://www.roh.org.uk/mixed-programmes/chroma-new-dawson-the-rite-of-spring

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**Desired Outcomes**

1. To broaden students’ exposure to live performance.
2. To broaden students’ exposure to writing on live performance.
3. To help develop a critical sensibility and voice.
4. To learn about writing on cultural issues and reportage, as well as reviews, interviews, and think pieces.

**Assessment Components**

Written work exclusive of final paper 50%, exam(s) 25%, class participation 15%, final paper/project 10%

There will be weekly writing assignments as well as various in-class quizzes/exams pertaining either to the week’s reading or to what has been discussed/covered to that point.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A**: All assignments handed in on time and to a near-publishable standard. Outstanding work.

**Grade B**: Solid, reasonable work.

**Grade C**: Perfunctory work.

**Grade D**: Slovenly work.

**Grade F**: Non-compliance with the requirements of the course.
NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.

Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL's staff.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester. See also section 11.1 - Make up days.

**Absence reporting for an absence due to illness**

1. On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) **0800 316 0469** (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.

2. Generally a doctor’s note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expeditiously at Gower Street.

3. At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at [http://bit.ly/NuCl5K](http://bit.ly/NuCl5K). You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.

4. Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.

Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

**Absence requests for non-illness reasons**

Absence requests for **non-illness** reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at academics@nyu.ac.uk.

**Further information regarding absences**

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early
departure.

Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in **person** to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during **office hours** (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Please note** end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

**Plagiarism**: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

**Electronic Submission**

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

1) Go onto the Turnitin website [http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
2) Click ‘Create Account’ in the top right hand corner
3) Select user type of ‘student’
4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these).
5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

1) Log in to the Turnitin website
2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the ‘submit’ icon
4) Enter the title of your piece of work
5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
6) Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class. NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Text(s)</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Session 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The British press in all its manifestations</td>
<td>Introduction to London’s cultural and journalistic scene. Overview.</td>
<td>(The precise order may change depending on availability of speakers etc. but these session headings cover the various disciplines that will be included.)</td>
<td>Critiquing the critics -- &amp; the Royal Court</td>
<td>Assessing the event 2: Off West End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment: interviews, choosing a critic.</td>
<td>Theater: assessing the event 1: the RSC meets the West End</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guest speaker tbc</td>
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<td>n.b: Theater outings begin Thursday with Matilda. see above for details.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment: from this week onwards, there will be critical pieces and/or analyses due every week, details to follow</td>
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Session 5  
Assessing the event 3: the National Theatre meets the West End  
Sept 30

Session 6  
NOTE: SPECIAL MAKE-UP CLASS  
Dance, classical and contemporary  
Oct 4  
Debra Craine, The Times + tour of Royal Opera House (note earlier start and finish, i.e. 1 – 4 pm)

Session 7  
Writing workshops/tutorials  
Midterm quiz  
Oct 7

Session 8  
Pop/rock (David Sinclair -- or Oct 28, depending on outings)  
Oct 14

Session 9  
The blogosphere (Mark Shenton)  
Oct 21

Session 10  
Classical music/opera (Edward Seckerson)  
Oct 28  
And possibly pop/rock (see above)

Session 11  
Other forms 1  
Nov 11

Session 12  
Other forms 2  
Nov 18

Session 13  
The editor (Helen Hawkins)  
Nov 25

Session 14  
Wrap-up/overview  
Dec 2

Session 15  
Exam week: project/essay submission  
Dec 9

Classroom Etiquette  
Eating is not permitted in any classrooms. Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities  
Students will be required to attend at least one live performance every week, and Thursday nights have been set aside for that purpose. Starting with week three, students must bring to class a considered written response to what they have seen. There will also be numerous assignments requiring students to circulate for general discussion review/s and/or feature/s pertinent to that week’s discipline and also asking students to function as editors and redactors of their colleagues’ work.

Suggested Co-curricular  
London has numerous special platform performances, culture-related talks etc that are worth attending, but they are generally announced much nearer the time. Given the flexible nature of the live arts,
students should be prepared for more last-minute suggestions/arrangements than might normally be the case.

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the midpoint of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

In addition, Stern School of Business classes adhere to the following Stern grading guidelines:

- There should be no more than
  - 25-35% A’s - awarded for excellent work
  - 50-70% B’s - awarded for good or very good work
  - 5-15% C’s or below - awarded for adequate or below work

A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Matt Wolf is London theater critic of The International Herald Tribune, which in fall, 2013 will change its name to The International New York Times (http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/w/matt_wolf/index.html). Prior to joining the New York Times Company, Prof Wolf was London theatre critic for Variety and spent more than 20 years as UK arts and theatre writer for the Associated Press. He teaches regularly on the NYU and Syracuse University London programs as well as an annual summer course on theatre for Cal Discoveries based in Berkeley, California. Prof Wolf freelances regularly across the UK press, most regularly for The Daily Telegraph and The Evening Standard, and reports on theatre and culture for Monocle 24, Tyler Brule’s radio station. He is the author of two books including Stepping Into Freedom, a chronicle of the
Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes’s years running the Donmar theatre. Prof Wolf was educated at Yale and moved to London immediately upon graduation.