

Writing I: Writing as Exploration

“Music in the District”

WREX-UF 9101

Instruction Mode: In-person

Fall 2021

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for NYU Washington, DC, please make sure that you have completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so that you are aware of site-specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact dc.academics@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on August 22, 2021

Lecturer Contact Information

TBA

Units earned

3

Course Details

- T/TR 9:30am to 10:45am
- All times are Eastern (ET) - US Time Zone (for calculating time zone conversions, please note that Eastern-US Daylight Savings Time ends on November 7, 2021).
- Location: TBD
- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Brightspace.
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Washington, DC community, we are closely following CDC and Washington, DC-specific guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being are our top priorities.
 - If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if

in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.

Course Description

Music is all around us almost all of the time on the radio, in the grocery store, and at the gas station. It ranges across class and place, from grand opera houses to hotel elevators. Because music exists fleetingly but meaningfully in the present, poets, artists, politicians, scholars, psychologists, and physicists alike have used music to express what can't be put into words. But how does one write about what is by nature indescribable? This course will imagine the many forms music takes once it is not a sound anymore. Throughout the semester, we will study musicians, venues, and musical legacies and controversies specific to the District of Columbia ranging from Shirley Horn and Duke Ellington's jazz origins to Go-Go music on the corner of 7th and Florida Ave NW and the hardcore punk scene, DC Hardcore, that took off in the '80s. We will read essays, poems, reviews, profiles, and philosophical texts about music to build a repertoire of approaches to our own writing.

Writing Sequence Description

The first in a two-course series, Writing I introduces students to the essay genre and complicates their understanding of its varied forms and functions. The course offers occasions to practice essay writing across disciplines and in several modes, including personal, critical, academic, and journalistic. It also exposes students to writing, reading, and critical thinking skills necessary for undergraduate work as well as writing beyond academic contexts, and introduces them to some of the interdisciplinary and theoretical bases for such practices. The course engages global issues and perspectives through its reading and writing assignments, as well as through the experiential learning it incorporates. By the end of the semester, new understandings of essay writing—and new skills to reflect these understandings—together give students a foundation for studying and practicing advanced approaches to reading, essay writing, and research in Writing II.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will have improved their ability to do the following:

- Ask critical questions, find unstated assumptions, assess arguments, and offer creative interpretations of foundational and contemporary works.
- Attend to correct language usage and the conventions of academic writing and reference.
- Synthesize material and articulate ideas clearly in essays of increasing depth and complexity.
- Use writing as a means to develop critical thinking and frame problems in comparative and historical contexts in both personal and analytical essays.
- Effectively articulate their ideas in class discussions and writing workshops.
- Craft fruitful, engaging topics for extended essays.
- Make use of the cultural resources and contemporary intellectual life of DC.
- Become more critical and self-aware members of a multicultural community.

Assessment Components

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS

All Written Assignments are due via NYU Classes by the beginning of class unless otherwise stated

Participation: 20%

This class aims to engage thoughtfully in the art of peer-review—that is, understanding, responding to, and giving constructive criticism to our colleagues in this class. This means respectfully adhering to writing workshop rules, reading and/or listening carefully before class and taking notes with intention so that we can come together in fruitful conversation, and completing in-class writing prompts in your notebook with intention and purpose.

Paragraphs: 20%

Students will write five 300-500-word assignments based on different styles of writing about music: personal and critical reflections as well as summaries of live performances, reviews of recordings, and program notes. Often, these function as rough drafts for your essays, and you can approach them as a low-stakes opportunity to try new ideas, push the boundaries of your writing, and get feedback before the stakes get higher. These are pass/fail.

Creative Project: 15%

Writing is an act that often produces results off the page—this project understands that writing gives us the foundation for many other communication modes. More information, including grading rubric, will be provided in class.

Essays: 45%

Students will write three exploratory essays building in length from 1,500 words to a final paper of 2,500 words. These essays should be clear, well organized, and thought-provoking (topic subject to approval). Further, these essays should demonstrate a level of introspection and show an understanding of rhetorical devices and grammar and be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch borders, with numbered pages, and a works cited page in MLA style.

POLICIES and RESOURCES

Late Assignments and Revision Policy:

I generally do not accept late assignments, but given the nature of the unprecedented realities we find ourselves facing at present, I will relax this policy with regard to one major rule: **if you feel you cannot meet a deadline, you must have a conversation with me to that effect before the due date.**

Additionally, I have an open-ended revision policy that allows students to revise and resubmit any of the Essay assignments until the following due date of the assignment in kind, so often it is better to submit something than nothing at all.

Text(s)

Required:

1. A hardcopy notebook which you will bring to every class
2. All texts noted on the schedule are available as a PDF under “Resources” at our class site on NYU Classes. **Print these and bring hardcopies to class.**

Recommended:

3. Strunk Jr., William, E.B. White, and Maira Kalman. *The Elements of Style (Illustrated)*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. **ISBN-13: 978-0143112723**

Grade Conversion

A = 94-100 or 4.0
A- = 90-93 or 3.7
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
B = 84-86 or 3.0
B- = 80-83 or 2.7
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
C = 74-76 or 2.0
C- = 70-73 or 1.7
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
D = 65-66 or 1.0
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Brightspace if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to dc.academics@nyu.edu to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, significant mental or physical discomfort, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance, or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note, a Wellness Counselor's note, or permission from an NYU-DC staff member or an onsite Residence Life Administrator as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff. Doctor's or other notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that

course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using *TurnItIn* or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer *and* NYU DC's Academics Office in writing via email one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the instructor will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments and can use the Academics Office for support as needed. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#).

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through dc.academics@nyu.edu.

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277

SCHEDULE

Subject to Change

Introduction

Thursday, September 2

- Introduction to the course and to one another
- What is the essay? What is worth writing about?

Essay Form, Rhetoric, and Technique, or How to Tell a Story

Tuesday, September 7

- Ralph Ellison, "Living with Music"

Thursday, September 9

- Workshop; **FIRST PARAGRAPH DUE**

Tuesday, September 14

- Reading for Dr. Tahira Mahdi's visit TBD
- [Go-go is making headlines again](#), by Fritz Hahn
- ['Where's my go-go music?'](#), by Marissa J. Lang

Thursday, September 16

- Workshop

Tuesday, September 21

- GUEST: Dr. Tahira Mahdi on Go-Go Music and Marginalized Communities

Thursday, September 23:

- Workshop; **FIRST ESSAY DUE**

Critical Essays, or How to Evaluate

Tuesday, September 28

- Reading for Mr. Bale's visit TBD

Thursday, September 30

- **NO CLASS/CONCERT ATTENDANCE;** [Sept 30, Mumbo Connection](#)

Tuesday, October 5

- GUEST: Mr. Tedd Bale on Music Criticism and the Review Genre

Thursday, October 7

- Workshop; **SECOND PARAGRAPH DUE**

Tuesday, October 12

- **Legislative Day, NO CLASS.** Monday Class Schedule

Thursday, October 14

- [“A Gathering of Orchestras in D.C.”](#), Alex Ross

Philosophical Essays, or How to Express an Idea

Tuesday, October 19

- Arthur Schopenhauer, “The Special Case of Music”

Thursday, October 21

- Workshop; **THIRD PARAGRAPH DUE**

Tuesday, October 26

- Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Case of Wagner”

Thursday, October 28

- Jacques Attali, “Listening” from *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*

Tuesday, November 2

- Workshop; **SECOND ESSAY DUE**

Thursday, November 4

- Listening Workshop: Meredith Monk

Profiles and Interviews, or How to Tell Someone Else’s Story

Tuesday, November 9

- [“Shirley Horn,”](#) John Fordham; **FOURTH PARAGRAPH DUE**

Thursday, November 11

- Individual Meetings, **NO CLASS**

Tuesday, November 16

- “Shirley Horn, Jazzing Up the Night: The Singer’s Hometown Gig,” Joe Brown
- “The Wonder of the Way she Sings”, Richard Harrington

Thursday, November 18

- Listening Workshop: Shirley Horn

Tuesday, November 23

- Workshop; **CREATIVE PROJECT DUE**

Thursday, November 25

- Happy holiday! **NO CLASS**

Liner and Program Notes, or How to Create a Guidebook

Tuesday, November 30 [*listening advisory*]

- [The State of D.C. Hardcore](#), Ron Knox
- [Pure Disgust Delivers Fury and Finesse on its Debut LP](#),” Dan Trombly

Thursday, December 2

- Workshop; **FIFTH PARAGRAPH DUE**

Tuesday, December 7

- Individual Meetings; **NO CLASS**

Thursday, December 9

- Individual Meetings; **NO CLASS**

Tuesday, December 14

- Workshop

Thursday, December 16

- Conclusions; **THIRD ESSAY DUE**