

Writing II – Section L02, (Writing as Critical Inquiry)

NYU London: Spring 2020

Instructor Information

- TBA

Course Information

- Mondays and Wednesdays, 1 – 2:15 PM
 - Room G01

Course Overview and Goals

In this class you will develop the key skills of academic essay writing. The course is divided into three sections, focusing on the close reading of primary texts, the use of secondary criticism, and the incorporation of scholarly theory into your own arguments. Each section will include writing workshops in which students present prepared material for review by their professor and peers.

Your written work will largely be based on the course's theme of London as a city of the modern imagination. We will explore the idea of 'modernity' in relation to London as one of the first metropolises of the nineteenth century. How did people imagine an urbanised centre that had never before existed on such a colossal scale? We will consider the rise of modernism as a set of artistic responses to nineteenth-century modernity, and conclude with contemporary representations of London as a multicultural, global city.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will have:

1. A firmer grasp of how to plan and execute a well-researched critical essay.
2. Greater confidence in producing ambitious, non-obvious arguments, which demonstrate complexity and originality of thought.
3. Improved lucidity and organization of your written composition.
4. An awareness of how secondary criticism and theory can be used to build an argument.
5. An understanding of London as a 'constructed' place, and its evolution within the cultural imagination.

Course Requirements

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to these assessment components:

Assignments/ Activities	Description of Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due
Portfolio	A collection of three short essays developed in the workshops.	30%	N/A
Midterm	A 1500-word essay focusing on the use of secondary criticism.	20%	April 6
Final Paper	A 2500-word research paper based on the subject matter studied during the semester.	40%	May 18
Class Preparation	Completing readings and coming prepared to discuss them; participating in seminars and workshops.	10%	N/A

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class

Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percent	Description
A	Example: 93.5% and higher	Excellent, sophisticated work that demonstrates lucid, original thinking, superior writing skills, and sustained critical engagement with the course concepts and requirements
B	Example: 82.5% - 87.49%	Solid work demonstrating some original thinking, and clear writing skills. A good deal of potential and clarity, but overall it may be less consistent or fully achieved.

Letter Grade	Percent	Description
C	Example: 72.5% - 77.49%	Satisfactory work demonstrating fair writing skills. An effort to sustain thinking and develop ideas will be evident, but will not be thoroughly executed. There may be omissions, mistakes, or inaccuracies. Writing may be stale and unfocused, or simply lack clarity.
D	Example: 62.5% - 67.49	Weak work with clear flaws and a lack of engagement with the course concepts and requirements. May lack structure and will be muddled, with confusions of language and ideas. Likely to be underdeveloped, with variable presentation. Grammar and punctuation is lacking.
F	Example: 59.99% and lower	Inadequate work with a lack of engagement with the course requirements. Fails to address the prompt, offers of little to no structure, and exhibits high levels of confusion or misunderstanding.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

Optional Textbooks & Materials

- Strunk, William and White, E.B., *The Elements of Style* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2000)
- Berg, Christian, Frank Durieux, and Geert Lernout, eds, *The Turn of the Century: Modernism and Modernity in literature and the arts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995)
- Çinar, Alev, and Thomas Bender, eds, *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007)

- Maxwell, Richard, *Mysteries of Paris and London* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992)
- Parsons, Deborah L., *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the city and modernity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Sennett, Richard, *Flesh and Stone: The body and the city in Western civilization* (London: Faber, 1994)
- Stansky, Peter, *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and its intimate world* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996)
- Wolfreys, Julian, *Writing London, Vol. 1* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998)
- ---, *Writing London, Vol. 2: Materiality, Memory, Spectrality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](http://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](http://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **NYUL Library Collection:** [Senate House Library](http://catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk) (catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](http://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](http://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Schedule

Session/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 1: Feb 3	Course introduction to critical inquiry	Distributed in class	
Session 2: Feb 5	Close-reading exercise	Nitsuh Abebe, 'Why the most ridiculous part of "The Irishman" actually works', <i>New York Times</i>	
Session 3: Feb 10	Part I: Constructing Modernity	Lynda Nead, <i>Victorian Babylon</i>	
Session 4: Feb 12	Group A Workshop		Group A Portfolio Draft
Session 5: Feb 17	Imagining street life	Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Man of the Crowd', Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life'	
Session 6: Feb 19	Group B Workshop		Group B Portfolio Draft / Group A Portfolio Final

Session/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 7: Feb 24	Modernity walk	Selected readings on the modern city	
Session 8: Feb 26	Modernity presentations		Group B Portfolio Final
Session 9: Mar 2	Part II – Modernism and Criticism Midterm Assigned	Eliot, Proust, Joyce excerpts	
Session 10: Mar 4	Group A Workshop		Group A Portfolio Draft
Session 11: Mar 9		Critical responses to the Bloomsbury Group	
Session 12: Mar 11	Group B Workshop		Group A Portfolio Final Group B Portfolio Draft (Final Due Mar 18)
Sessions 13 and 14: Mar 20	Visit to Charleston House/Lewes 7AM START	Janet Malcolm 'A House of One's Own'	
Session 15: Mar 23	Combining close reading and secondary criticism	Angus Calder, <i>The Myth of the Blitz</i> ; Elizabeth Bowen, 'Britain in Autumn'	
Session 16: Mar 25	Engaging with scholarship	Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Demon Lover' and 'Mysterious Kor'	
Session 17: Mar 30	Midterm Writing Clinic	Research for Midterm	
Session 18: Apr 1	Peer-review exercise	Research for Midterm	Draft of Midterm
Session 19: Apr 6	Part III – Theoretical Approaches to Late Modernity What is Theory?		Midterm Due
Session 20: Apr 8	Writing about film exercise. Screening: scenes from <i>London</i> (dir. Patrick Keiller).	Excerpt from Timothy Corrigan, <i>Film and Literature</i>	
Session 21: Apr 20	Applying Theory	Craig Taylor, <i>Londoners</i>	

Session/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Session 22: Apr 22	Visit from scholar of Queer Theory Final Essay assigned	To be assigned by guest co-lecturer	
Session 23: Apr 27	Visit from scholar of Post-colonial Theory	To be assigned by guest co-lecturer	
Session 24: Apr 29	Group A Workshop		Group A Portfolio Draft
Session 25: May 4	Reading from a Feminist perspective	Zadie Smith, <i>The Embassy of Cambodia</i>	
Session 26: May 6	Group B Workshop		Group B Portfolio Draft / Group A Portfolio Final
Session 27: May 11	Essay Presentations	Research for Final	
Session 28: May 13	Course reflection and review	Research for Final	Group B Portfolio Final
Final Essay: May 18			Final Essay

Co-Curricular Activities

- Required: Modernity Walk, Charleston House Trip
- Suggested: Evening events at the London Review Bookshop; 'The Forum' Philosophy Series at the London School of Economics
- Estimated travel costs: Refreshments at Charleston House / Lunch in Lewes.

Classroom Etiquette

Digital devices of any kind may not be used during class. Phones and laptops must be stored in your bag during workshops and seminars. Unless you have special academic accommodation that entitles you to take notes on a computer, please make notes with pen/pencil and paper.

Please avoid leaving class to visit the washroom. Eating is not permitted in class.

• NYUL Academic Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

- Key information on NYU London's absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found on our [website](http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html) (<http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html>)

Assignments, Plagiarism, and Late Work

- You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL [website](https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html) (<https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html>) and on [the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website](https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html) for students studying away at global sites (<https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html>).

Classroom Conduct

Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services. Please refer to the [NYU Disruptive Student Behavior Policy](#) for examples of disruptive behavior and guidelines for response and enforcement.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (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.

Instructor Bio

I am a writer, academic, and broadcaster. My essays and criticism have been published in the New York Times, Financial Times, New Yorker, New Statesman, Boston Globe, Guardian, WIRED, and the London Review of Books, among other publications. I can be heard regularly on BBC Radio 3 as a presenter of the arts and ideas programme *Free Thinking*.

My first book, *The Four-Dimensional Human: Ways of Being in the Digital World* (Penguin Random House, 2015 / W.W. Norton 2016) explores what it feels like to live in a networked environment, and was named WIRED magazine's 'Top 10 Non-Fiction Books of the Decade'. My second book, *Picnic Comma Lightning*, considers our experience of reality in the twenty-first century. I know intimately how exhilarating and frustrating the writing process can be. I teach this class as a fellow practitioner – when it comes to the craft of composing good sentences and paragraphs, we are all in this together!