
TOPICS: LITERARY JOURNALISM in Fall 2019 (CL2091)

Course Code	CL2091	Professor(s)	William Dow
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-110
Class Schedule	MR: 09:00-10:20 in G-002	Office Hours	Mondays and Thursdays, 12:00-13:00
Credits	4	Email	w Dow@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	854

Course Description

This course has been created to address the needs of students who wish to read, analyze, and write literary journalism, a narrative form that combines the reportorial and truth-telling covenants of traditional journalism with techniques most commonly associated with fiction. It is a genre that transcends the constrictions of daily journalism. Perhaps it is only with the license of literary journalism that one can hope to grasp the unimaginable moments that have become our everyday reality.

The course will introduce students to the major writers, publications, controversies and questions that have emerged in the 200-year history of American literary journalism. We will examine as models a multitude of writers, ranging from Walt Whitman to Stephen Crane, John Hersey, Agnes Smedley, Lillian Ross, Joan Didion, David Foster Wallace, Nicole Le Blanc, James Baldwin, Truman Capote and Claudia Rankine. Among other forms, we will study narratives, memoirs, profiles, prose poems, histories and personal essays, in subject areas as varied as science, politics, justice, travel, sports, food and popular culture. Throughout the course, we will explore the constant tensions between “factual evidence” and the writer’s imagination that conjures such evidence into a story. Asking how such stories work as narratives, as cultural critiques, and as entertainment, we will note how literary journalism can legitimately be credited with fostering modes of public reflection crucial to civic society and social justice. Evaluation will be based on class participation, several reflective and analytical essays, and a piece of literary journalism.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

This course fulfills one or more General Education requirement

Course Outline

September:

2: Introduction to course. Lee Siegel, "In a time of many questions, literary journalism provides an answer" (CP).

5: Selections from James Baldwin. Deep Reflection Sample Essay.

9: Defining, Reading, Writing literary journalism. "Salvador," Joan Didion (CP).

"Los Angeles Notebook," Joan Didion (AOF). "How to Tell a True War Story," Tim O'Brien (CP). *Literary Journalism Studies*. Essay Topics assigned. Oral Report topics assigned.

12: "Shipping Out," David Foster Wallace (CP). "Ticket to the Fair," David Foster Wallace (CP). "Trina and Trina," Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (CP).

16: "The Long Fall of One-Eleven Heavy," Michael Paterniti (CP). "James Foley:

The Falling Man," Tom Junod (CP).

19: First draft essay #1 due. "The First Hours," Timothy Townsend (CP). From *Specimen Days*, Walt Whitman (AOF). "When a Man Falls, a Crowd Gathers," Stephen Crane (AOF).

23: From *The People of the Abyss*, Jack London (AOF). "The Death of Rodriguez," Richard Harding Davis (AOF). "The Third Winter," Martha Gellhorn (AOF).

26: "I Was Marching," Meridel Le Sueur (CP). From *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee (AOF). "Havana Cruise," James Agee (CP). From "Portrait of Hemingway," Lillian Ross (CP). "Lethal Lightning," Jimmy Canon (AOF).

30: First draft of essay 1 due.

October:

3: Conferences on essay 1.

7: Conferences on essay 1.

10: Midterm Exam.

14: *Hiroshima*. Topics for Research Paper and literary journalism essay assigned.

17: *Hiroshima*. Literary War Journalism. Final Draft essay 1 due.

21: *In Cold Blood*.

24: *In Cold Blood*.

28: *In Cold Blood*. Film.

30 October-3 November Fall Break (no classes).

November:

4: *In Cold Blood*. Film. New Journalism. "The Girl of the Year," Tom Wolfe (AOF).

"The New Journalism and the Image-World," David Eason (CP).

7: From *Armies of the Night*, Norman Mailer (AOF). From *Dispatches*, Michael Herr

(AOF). "On Morality," Joan Didion (CP). First Draft Essay 2 due.

11 November-12 November (no classes)

14: Conferences on essay 2.

18: Conferences on essay 2.

21: From *Down at the Cross*, James Baldwin (CP). "The American Man at Age Ten," Susan Orlean (CP).

25: From *Boys in Zinc*, Svetlana Alexiyevich (AOF). "What is 'The New New Journalism,'" Robert S. Boynton (CP).

28: Contemporary forms of American literary journalism. American literary journalism and poetry. "Humility," Kathy Acker (CP). From *Citizen*, Claudia Rankine (CP). From *The Unwinding*, George Packer (CP). Final Draft Essay 2 due.

December

2: Conferences on Research Paper and literary journalism essay.

5: Conferences on Research Paper and literary journalism essay.

Last day of classes: Friday, Dec. 6.

Final Exam :

Monday, Dec. 16, 8:30. Final draft of Research Paper and creative project due.

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes.

A maximum of four (4) *excused* absences per semester may be requested for all 4-credit courses. Two (2) *excused* absences per semester per 1-credit course may be requested.

The French Department has its own attendance policy. Students are responsible for compliance.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

Student Affairs will *recommend* that a professor excuse an absence for the following reason only:

Involuntary absences due to illness or personal emergencies, upon presentation of documentary proof of illness or emergency.

Religious and National Holidays:

Due to the large number of nationalities and faiths represented at the University, religious and national holidays (other than those on the academic schedule) will not be excused by Student Affairs.

Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Lateness to course meetings:

If a student arrives at course meetings more than 10 minutes late without documentation for one of the above scenarios, it will be considered an *unexcused* absence.

All documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs within ONE WEEK following the first day of the absence.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence (excused or unexcused) is accepted or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive excused and unexcused absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend the withdrawal of a student whose absences from any course, **excused or not**, have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level. The professor may consult with Student Affairs for additional information.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and **especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods**.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

AOF= *Art of Fact*

CP= Course Packet

Grading Policy

GRADING

20% Two out-of-class essays and revisions.

20% One research paper or creative literary-journalistic piece.

20% Midterm exam

20% Final exam

20% Class participation and oral reports

Other
