

# Thompson Writing Program

## Duke University

### Fall 2018 Writing 101 Courses

#### TRAVELERS' TALES

Writing 101.01

Instructor: Jennifer C Woods

TuTh 3:05PM-4:20PM

From ancient stories of heroes embarking on epic voyages, to modern writers like Patrick Leigh Fermor and Paul Theroux who encapsulate in prose the sights, sounds, tastes, and experiences of foreign travel, human beings have always enjoyed exploring the world through the eyes and words of good writers and storytellers. While modern travel narratives promise authentic glimpses into unfamiliar cultures and contexts, historical narratives open windows onto worlds that no longer exist, and ways of traveling mostly superseded now by planes, trains, and automobiles.

This course will sample readings from a range of travel narratives including ancient epic, pilgrimage literature, travel journals, and guidebooks. Our focus will be travel to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, but there will be opportunity also in short in-class writing prompts, in your own travel journal assignment, and in the final research paper to write about other places that interest you.

The course includes three short, and three longer writing projects: a travel journal that you will use to reflect on your own memories of, or responses to place and movement between different environments (NB no actual travel is required: your daily commute can be enough!); a close reading of a text (750 words); short responses (each 500 words) to two scholarly studies of historical travel narratives; a synthesis essay, in which you present your own argument about a text, engaging with relevant secondary scholarship on it (1000-1250 words); and a research project, developed and revised over stages with a proposal and annotated bibliography. This will offer you the chance to delve deeper into a destination, a traveler, or travel narrative of your choice. (2000-2500 words).

In the course of the semester, all major assignments (except your personal travel journal) will be drafted and revised with feedback from peers and instructor.

## PREVENTING MOSQUITO B. DISEASE

Writing 101.02

Instructor: Cary Moskovitz

TuTh 10:05AM-11:20AM

Malaria, a mosquito-borne disease, is estimated by the World Health Organization to kill over one million people each year, mostly young African children. Mosquitoes are also responsible for transmitting dengue hemorrhagic fever, the most rapidly spreading vector borne disease with 50 million infections now occurring annually. And in the past few years, mosquitoes have been rapidly spreading yet another disease—the Zika virus—which causes microcephaly, a devastating condition in which a newborn's brain and skull are severely underdeveloped. Given the need for better repellents, new approaches such as clip-on repellent devices, spatial repellent devices, and permethrin-treated clothing are enticing, and researchers are trying to determine just how effective these novel repellents are at keeping mosquitos at bay.

In this section of Writing 101, students will study the scientific literature on the latest developments in mosquito repellents as they develop their skills in academic reading, writing and research. We will begin with an emphasis on library research skills, learning how to locate the most relevant and useful sources for a scientifically-oriented academic project. Then, working from select principles of health science research and some basic statistics, students will practice careful reading, effective summary, and careful, skeptical analysis as they draft, give and receive feedback, and revise reviews of recent experimental research reports on mosquito repellents. Building on their own work and that of their classmates from the first half of the term, students will then write scientific essays discussing some aspect of the current science of mosquito repellants. Audiences for student writing will include both classmates and health-science professionals. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the Duke Reader Project ([dukereaderprojet.org](http://dukereaderprojet.org)); those who elect to participate will be matched with a Duke alum or employee in a health science field who will provide feedback on drafts of one or more writing assignments. Note: this course involves a considerable amount of collaborative work; students should have schedules and attitudes that will allow them to work extensively with classmates outside of class time. Prior coursework in statistics is useful but not required.

## THE END(S) OF WORK

Writing 101.03-101.04

Instructor: Michael Dimpfl

TuTh 1:25PM-2:40PM- TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

What is work and how does it produce value? What is the wage? What are the connections between work and identity? What happens to everyday life when work is the dominant organizing structure of modern existence?

In this seminar, students will develop strong analytical writing practices by thinking about the problems presented by work as an economic, cultural, political and historical structure. We will explore the birth of the wage, the origins and effects of the gendered division of labor, and the notion of a “work ethic.” We will situate the history of and persistent connection between free and slave labor. We will examine labor organizing, anti-work politics, the debates about universal basic income, and the failure of technology to remediate the drudgery of the 9-to-5.

We will begin with foundational texts, situating the importance of critical feminist thinkers -- Sylvia Federici, Marie Mies, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cindy Katz, Angela Davis, and others – in theorizing the potential and pitfalls of work as a concept and important site of resistance. In addition to theoretical and scholarly work, we will read narrative fiction, journalism, poetry, and watch a series of documentary and narrative films to organize our thinking and writing. Films may include: *Harlan County, USA*; *9 to 5*; *Working Girl*; *Norma Rae*; *Matewan*; *Two Days, One Night*; *Potiche*; *Wall-E*; and others.

Over the course of the semester, students will work through multiple sequenced series of short (300-500 word) and medium-length (750-1000 word) papers. These will hone particular writing practices and engage with specific aspects of course content. We will practice effective reading and annotation, summarizing and synthesizing theory, and effective and evidence-based argumentation. The seminar begins with the notion that writing is a practice that demands generous engagement. Throughout the semester, you will work together with your peers during writing workshop and respond to draft material in service of improving your skills.

## WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO THINK

Writing 101.05-101.07

Instructor: Elise Wang

MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM- MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM- MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM

### **“That’s What They Want You to Think”: Conspiracy Theories in America**

A 2013 poll found that 28% of Americans believe that, at this very moment, a clandestine global elite is conspiring to establish an authoritarian world government, or New World Order. The same poll showed that fewer people support funding NASA than believe that a UFO really did crash at Roswell in 1947. Conspiracy theories predictably surface at moments of social crisis, but their comfort is dubious; they thrive on fear and usually prefer complication to simplicity,

malevolence to benevolence. So why do we create, propagate, and believe in them? Specifically, what is it about a secretive truth that makes for a story that just won't die?

In this course, we will use analytical and creative writing assignments to delve into some of American history and fiction's most popular political conspiracy theories, including the Kennedy assassination, the moon landing, "The Manchurian Candidate," and 9/11's "Loose Change." We will also study the ways that conspiracy theories make their way in the world, including social media, bots, forums, and pundits. As historians, we will skeptically ask how these theories come to be, and what they say about our experience of power and authority. As writers, we will admiringly ask why they are so good at what they do, and what they can teach us about constructing durable arguments. After briefly surveying a few historical and psychological theories of conspiracy narratives, students will use one of these texts to illuminate an aspect of a conspiracy narrative in a short (5 page) essay. At mid-semester, we will explore a signature of this genre – its collaborative argumentation – by creating original conspiracy theories, posting them to a class wiki, and inviting everyone to anonymously embellish each other's entries. Throughout the course, we will use imitation exercises to help us uncover the conspiratorial style and collaboratively build a class website to practice writing about historical documents, essays, films, and newspaper articles. A final research essay (10-12 pages) will build on what we have learned to develop an original argument about a conspiracy narrative and what it can tell us about how we deal with authority and knowledge.

## COMMUNICATING SCIENCE

Writing 101.08-10

Instructor: Miranda Welsh

MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM-MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM-MW 4:40PM - 5:55PM

### Communicating science in sickness and in health

Several recent outbreaks of infectious disease (ex., Ebola, Zika, SARS) demonstrate the importance of effective communication in times of crisis. Rumors and misinformation spread faster than disease itself, and successful control efforts depend on replacing these narratives with accurate information. To this end, public health communicators emphasize the importance of trust: to change beliefs and behaviors, new information needs to come from trusted sources, and those sources need to be socially, culturally, and politically appropriate. As such, public health communicators often work with anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, community leaders/organizations, and local/national media outlets to design communication strategies for specific individuals, groups, communities, and populations.

Can we use what public health communicators have learned in times of crisis to improve science communication in calmer times? For example, efforts to reduce vaccine hesitancy and climate change denial have largely assumed that the scientific evidence will speak for itself. Could these efforts benefit from a better understanding of the forces that shape public trust and opinion? Should doctors and climate scientists consider collaborating with social scientists, community organizations, and media outlets to design better communication strategies?

In the first third of our course, we will use a series of guided readings and case studies to examine the social, cultural, and political factors that public health communicators consider in times of crisis, and how they use these factors to design effective communication strategies. You will summarize two of these guided readings independently (1 page each), and compose a written analysis of one of them (2 pages).

In the second two-thirds of the course, you will use your developing interests to form a 4-person research team. Each team will work to consider a topic of current debate (ex., climate change, vaccination, GM foods, renewable energy, cloning, addiction). With me, each team will design a review and synthesis paper that explores: 1) scientific understandings of their topic, and 2) how social, cultural, or political factors (ex., norms, beliefs, stigmas, class, policy) affect popular understandings of their topic. Each team member will be responsible for independently researching and writing one sub-section of this paper (2-3 pages each). Next, team members will work collaboratively to craft an introduction and conclusion to their paper (~5 additional pages). The introduction will frame the individual sub-sections in the context of science communication, and the conclusion will make specific recommendations that follow from our exploration of public health communication in the first third of the course. Most of your grade for this paper will be based on your individual sub-section, and your grade for the collaborative portion will be partially based on team member evaluations.

Throughout the course, we will use guided workshops and small-group discussions to revise our writing, and you will be expected to consider and incorporate the feedback of your peers before submitting a final product. As you work on the review and synthesis paper, you will also be expected to meet with me, both individually and with your research team, and to incorporate my suggestions and feedback.

## WRITING AND MINDFULNESS

Writing 101.11

Denise Comer

TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM

Mindfulness, often described as the practice of being fully present, has a long history, but has also gained considerable traction over the past decade. From Wall Street and health care to business and education, many different people are lauding the benefits of mindfulness. How is mindfulness defined and practiced across these contexts? For what purposes? And, most central to this course, how does writing intersect with mindfulness? This course will investigate the many types of writing that define, reflect on, critique, research, and sponsor mindfulness, including blogs, self-help texts, and science writing. As we explore these varied forms of writing, we will consider the roles writing serves, as well as the diverse writing features of these forms, noting intersections and divergences, advantages and limitations.

As we take up this inquiry, though, your writing will be our main focus. Several brief responses (400-words each) will ask you to engage with short texts from across varying contexts. Your first major writing project will be a close reading (750-1000 words) of a text on mindfulness. Your

second and final major writing project (2000-2500 words) will offer you the opportunity to expand your thinking by choosing a subset of texts to argue a larger point about mindfulness within a particular context. This final project will be developed through stages, including a proposal, an annotated bibliography, and several drafts and revisions. Across the course, you will also have the opportunity to practice mindfulness and write about these experiences, synthesizing them into a capstone reflection narrative (750-1000 words) at the end of the course. All writing throughout the course will be drafted and revised with feedback from peers and instructor.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Writing 101.12-101.13

Instructor: Amanda Wetsel

TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM-TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Anthropology is the study of people and societies and is particularly concerned with issues of difference, power and inequality. This course asks how have anthropologists engaged with photography. How have anthropologists treated photography as a research tool, as evidence, as art, and as an object of study? How have anthropologists combined text and image to share their ideas with their readers? How are anthropologists' engagements with photographs related to their theoretical and political commitments? In this course we will think about how anthropologists and photographers have represented themselves, places, processes and other people. We will also consider how photography helped to generate social theory. Class readings will include both classic and contemporary anthropological works, ranging from Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's 1942 work in Bali to Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg's recent work in San Francisco. In addition to looking at examples of anthropological works that engage with photography, we will use our own writing and photography to think through these questions.

To develop skills of visual analysis and summarizing and evaluating arguments you will write 1-2 page reading responses during the first weeks of the quarter. In addition to these short written assignments, you will regularly respond to our assigned texts by taking photographs. These photographs will visually represent, extend, challenge, or update a theme, rhetorical choice or other aspect of the text. You and your classmates will practice looking at, analyzing, and writing about these photographs and their relationships to the texts.

For your final project, you will create an installation that combines words and photographs. To prepare, you will visit a photography exhibition at Duke or in the Research Triangle and write an analysis of that exhibit. Next, you will identify a theme or question from the course that you wish to engage with in your installation. In addition to drawing on class readings, you will identify additional sources. Based on your careful reading of these sources you will map out the scholarly conversation and write a literature review. Having familiarized yourself with scholarship on your topic, you will next write a proposal for your installation that makes clear what you will exhibit and why, and how your exhibit is in conversation with the work of other scholars. Your peers will provide feedback on your installation as you create it. As you craft your installation, you will reflect on your own theoretical, aesthetic and ethical commitments.

\* This course requires taking and printing photographs, as well as visiting photography exhibits outside of class time.

\*\*You may take photographs with any kind of camera, including a cellphone camera. You may print your photographs using the printers regularly available to you at Duke. You might, however, wish to print in different ways, particularly for your final installation.

## TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Writing 101.14-16

Instructor: Lisa Chinn

MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM-MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM-MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM

Texts and Technologies: Literature in the Age of Technological Reproduction

How have the phonograph, the radio, the mp3 file, and streaming services like Spotify or Apple music changed the way we read? How has the mediation of writing, from the typewriter to the word processor, influenced our understanding of literary works? And how, indeed, is the new golden age of television changing the form of contemporary literary texts? Do authors change how they write because their words can now be recorded digitally and sonically? What sort of tension arises when writers discuss their relationships to recorded readings? Do we need written literature when digital bytes can act as both creative beginning and archival ending of a work of art?

This class will engage questions about the historical, cultural, and social alignment of technology and literature from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. We will delve into Duke University's David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, using sound recordings and manuscripts that move from the early days of analog sound and word processing to contemporary digital sound and word processing.

Course readings will include works by writers who address the influence of technological reproduction on (or in) their work, including Ralph Ellison, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), and Jennifer Egan. Readings highlighting the trajectory of mechanical, or technological, reproduction throughout the twentieth- and into the twenty-first century will provide a theoretical framework for understanding our literary readings.

Major writing assignments include: 1) a 1250-word essay in which you compare an archival manuscript with a corresponding "published version" of this manuscript by one of the writers we read in class; 2) a 1500-word paper discussing a single photograph or sound recording in the digitized collection from the Archive of Documentary Arts or Duke's Radio State WDBS collection. You will trace the history of the photograph or sound recording, using a theoretical essay to examine the tensions between practical and theoretical implications of reproduction and preservation; and 3) a final curatorial research project that uses a mix of sound, visual, object-

oriented archival material which you will digitize for an online exhibit space using a digital archival repository, like Omeka. Weekly writing assignments include peer-review, revision, and feedback on each major writing project to help you become stronger in multiple written forms. In addition to major writing assignments, you will use VoiceThread, a cloud-based, voice-recording software (in lieu of traditional blogs posts) in response to weekly readings. Writing thus becomes a synthesis of oral, graphic, and interpretive skills that broaden definitions of “writing” beyond traditional boundaries to prepare you for a future of writing in the increasingly digital world.

## DISABILITY AND REPRESENTATION

Writing 101.17-18

Instructor: Marion Quirici

WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM-WF 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Representation is a cornerstone of modern democracy. Traditionally, however, representation and rights have been reserved for citizens who meet particular standards of fitness and ability. American values of self-reliance and competition enable a narrative in which the “haves” are somehow more deserving than the “have nots.” This course considers the consequences of these ideals, especially for disabled people, who are the world’s largest minority. We will discuss multiple forms of “representation”—within the legal and public sphere, as well as in the world of culture, arts and entertainment, work, the marketplace, and the physical environment. In our current political climate, a “survival of the fittest” philosophy survives in healthcare proposals that would cut Medicare and Medicaid, and leave those with “pre-existing conditions” scrambling to afford coverage. How do we define strength and weakness in our national culture? How do these values impede our professed commitment to equality and civil rights? By considering the perspectives of the more vulnerable members of society, we will expand our understanding of “diversity.” The skills and ideas you learn in this class will make you stand out in your discipline, whether you’re interested in the health sciences, law, politics and government, the social and behavioral sciences, education, architecture and engineering, business, or the arts and humanities.

To address these questions, we will work with an assortment of texts, including representations of disability in television, films, commercials, short stories, and personal narratives, as well as critical essays by disabled activists. Our exploration of articles and essays addressing disability justice will prepare you to engage with current ideas and contribute to an ongoing conversation, both in speech and in writing. You will write responses to the readings and other course content across the semester in an online discussion forum, where you are encouraged to interact with your classmates. For your first formal writing assignment, you will choose a representation of disability from literature, film, television, advertising, or the media, and write a textual analysis (four pages). Our class discussions of a variety of subjects, from history to civil rights, the law, medical ethics, institutions, mental disability, chronic illness, race, and the constructed environment (infrastructure, buildings, transportation, public space, and technology) will help you define your topic for the researched essay (eight to ten pages). We will devote classtime in the final weeks of the semester to drafting, workshoping, and revising your writing. You will work toward the final assignment with an annotated bibliography that summarizes your reading

on the topic, a research statement that clarifies your argument, and a short class presentation. By taking this course, you will learn to enter into important conversations, support your ideas effectively, and to raise social consciousness.

## LAND OF THE FREE

Writing 101.19-20

Instructor: Matthew Whitt

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM-TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM

### Mass Incarceration and Democracy

Today, the United States imprisons more people, per capita, than any other country in the world. The institution of the prison is so deeply woven into the structure of the U.S. that scholars sometimes describe it as a “carceral state”—a state built on and around incarceration. And yet, imprisonment affects the U.S. population in deeply uneven ways. For many Americans, police encounters, jail time, and criminal records are relatively likely occurrences, while others take for granted that their lives will be untouched by the country’s prison system. What does this division mean for a nation founded on ideals of freedom and equal citizenship? What does it do to democracy?

In this class, we will use political theory, philosophy, and academic writing to explore how the U.S. prison system does merely punish wrong-doing, but actively shapes the body politic of American democracy. Writing is an especially deft tool for this investigation, because effective writing demands that we examine complex ideas, evaluate our commitments, and genuinely consider opposing views.

In the first half of the course, we will examine how slavery, Jim Crow laws, and mass incarceration have divided the political community of the United States to create different political realities for different groups of residents. Students will digest this material privately and collectively, through informal writing in reflection journals and structured class conversations. This half will culminate with a formal essay assignment. In-class workshops and multiple essay drafts will enable students to practice writing techniques and gain feedback.

In the second half of the course, we will examine felon disenfranchisement, prison gerrymandering, immigrant detention, and other ways that the U.S. prison system determines who counts, and who does not, in American democracy. Students will construct an independent research project that explores, in great detail, any theme of the course that interests them. A series of workshops, peer review, and revisions will culminate in a final seminar paper suitable for publication in print or online.

## URBAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Writing 101.21-22

Instructor: Lindsey Smith

MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM-MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM

What happens when wildlife and urban sprawl collide? Can cities function effectively while also protecting and conserving wildlife? Through seminar-based discussions, research, and writing projects, we will examine the challenges to conserving wildlife in urban areas through case studies like mountain lions in Los Angeles, wild boars in Berlin, and baboons in Cape Town. We will also evaluate the policies and practices that governments, researchers, and non-profit organizations devise to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and increase biodiversity in cities.

Our course materials will come from environmental science, wildlife conservation, and urban ecology journals and books, popular magazines, and media. You will learn to use writing as a way to process information and explore ideas and to write academic papers that follow scientific conventions. Writing assignments will include two short papers (3-5 pages) in the first half of the semester that will enable you to respond to real-world examples of animals and humans coexisting and clashing in urban landscapes and the approaches proposed to conserve urban wildlife. In the second half of the semester, you will collaboratively research a case study and offer a solution to this urban wildlife conservation challenge in a 9-page proposal. Throughout the semester, you will also take part in a fundamental element of academic writing, the peer-review process, by reading each other's work and providing feedback for revisions.

## THE DISNEY VERSION

Writing 101.23-25

Lisa Andres

MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM-MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM-MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM

“Decoding the Disney Version: Exploring Disney’s Cultural Stranglehold”

Fall 2018 FOCUS: In his seminal article, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” noted Disney critic Jack Zipes insists that “It was not once upon a time, but at a certain time in history...that Walt Disney cast a spell on the fairy tale, and he has held it captive ever since” (21). Zipes goes on to contend that Disney has gained a “cultural stranglehold” on the fairy tale, obscuring the names of the authors and storytellers who came before, to dominate the genre with their deceptive stories peddling dreams of elusive “happily ever afters.”

While Zipes, at times, comes across as hostile, his main point is worth considering: has “the Disney Version” of our favorite childhood stories replaced the versions that came before? Do we know that there’s no such thing as “True Love’s Kiss” in the literary fairy tales? That Cinderella’s stepsisters cut off their heels and toes to try to fit into the glass slipper? That the

Little Mermaid doesn't get the prince and turns (temporarily) into sea foam? Very few of the stories that Disney decides to tell are original ideas – most of them are adapted from or (loosely) based on someone else's source material. Some questions we'll consider are: What changes did Disney make, and what is the overall effect on the story? Is the meaning and/or message of the story changed, or are the changes relatively harmless? How does the medium of film play a role – are the visual images stronger than words alone? As Zipes questions at the end of his argument, has anyone come along to “break the Disney spell” – are there other versions of these stories that we know better or have any other storytellers challenged Disney's supremacy? And finally, how has Disney begun to change it's own formula through the live-action adaptations of its classic animated films?

We'll explore the answers to these questions primarily through class discussion, reading academic arguments (starting with Zipes), and several major writing assignments. Our class discussion will focus on comparisons between the original source material (examining the cultural and historical contexts) and “the Disney version” of texts (focusing on the implications of Disney's changes for race and gender). [Tentative texts include: Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs + the Grimms' tale; Disney's Peter Pan + J. M. Barrie's novel Peter and Wendy; Disney's Mary Poppins + P. L. Travers' novel Mary Poppins (also considering the Disney film Saving Mr. Banks and the new film, Mary Poppins Returns); and finally, Disney's The Princess and the Frog + the Grimm's tale + E. D. Baker's middle-grade novel, The Frog Prince.]

Our writing assignments are based on Graff and Birkenstein's “They Say / I Say” model. We will start with an “I Say” essay (~4-6 pages), which asks you to compare two texts of your choosing and construct an argument about the “Disney version.” We then start to explore what “They Say,” conducting research during library sessions and composing summative and evaluative annotations (~300 words each) on the sources we find. Finally, we will combine the “I Say” and “They Say” components into an argumentative essay (~10-12 pages): one which foregrounds your analysis but which also situates that argument within the larger academic conversation.

Finally, please note that no prior knowledge of or experience with Disney is necessary for this course. However, a genuine interest in the topic and a willingness to read novels are strongly recommended.

## BUILDING FEMINIST WORLDS

Writing 101.26-29

Jennifer Ansley

WF 8:30AM - 9:45AM- WF 11:45AM - 1:00PM- WF 3:05PM - 4:20PM

In her introduction to *Living a Feminist Life*, Queer and Feminist Studies scholar Sarah Ahmed argues that feminism is “building work.” This building work, she implicitly suggests, requires reflection on *how* feminist writers use their texts to shape communities of feminist readers and writers. In this course, we'll give particular attention to how feminist writers and rhetoricians,

including bell hooks and Bernadette Calafell, have used different formal and rhetorical strategies to both build feminist community and, in Calafell's words, to "demonstrate the intimate connections between [their academic] work and [their] identities."

As we both read and generate written work, we'll continually return to the following questions: What do feminist texts *do*? What are the goals of these texts and how do they go about accomplishing their goals both formally and rhetorically? How can we most ethically contribute to the "building project" they've begun through our own writing?

As we attempt to answer these questions, you will be asked to complete three major writing projects that will ask you to analyze the stylistic and rhetorical practices of the feminist writers you read; research a feminist issue of your choosing and examine how the discursive and rhetorical framing of that issue has impacted our cultural understanding of it; and to reflect on the connections between your own identity and the work of this course.

## STRANGER THAN FICTION

Writing 101.35-38

Kevin Casey

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM- TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM- TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

We categorize our favorite stories: this is realism, that's fantasy, this is romance, that's a vampire-themed fantasy romance, this is a crime thriller, that is Literature. This kind of genre classification becomes especially fragmented in the broad realm of speculative fiction: science fiction, fantasy, post-apocalyptic, dystopian, horror — and that's just a quick gloss of major categories, each of which also have all manner of subgenres and hybrids. Yet regardless of how we label them, some of these apparently unrealistic stories touch very current nerves: violence, disaster, government oppression, racism, gender inequity, and other issues real people live with or witness every day.

We're going to investigate speculative stories that unsettle our realities or otherwise challenge the safe haven that "it's just make-believe." We'll focus on stories that rely on speculative genre conventions to engage significant contemporary issues but that simultaneously defy easy categorization in a specific genre. Our reading will include the novels *The Handmaid's Tale* (Margaret Atwood), *The Intuitionist* (Colson Whitehead), *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy), and selected essays and articles from both scholarly and non-scholarly sources. These form the basis of our conversation and writing about speculative fiction and its intersection with our real worlds. Writing will include a close reading (~5 pages), a research proposal (~2 pages), a source annotation (~2 pages), a research paper (~10 pages), and several contributions to our *Stranger Than Fiction* blog (~750+ words each). This latter project will enable us to take additional intellectual and creative approaches to the novels, and to explore the opportunities and affordances of writing for an online medium relative to more traditional academic formats.

## CULTURE IN/AND THE MIND

Writing 101.38-39

Adam Boyette

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM- TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

“Culture” is the central concept of the field of anthropology. It is universally recognized as having immense influence over human behavior, but specialists disagree around precise definitions of *what is* and *is not* culture, and *how* culture asserts its influence over us. For example, does culture exist in our minds or is it purely public, disembodied knowledge? Can we think of culture as consisting of units, or “memes”, that move like viruses between people, infecting our brains and competing for influence? Or is culture a series of performances, whose interpretations are private, and whose meanings are negotiated in social discourse? What are the processes by which people learn and share culture—as it exists in their heads or out in the world? In this course, students will examine the idea of culture through engaging with key readings and through their own writing about culture on campus. The course will be oriented around two major integrated, and collaborative writing projects: A mini-ethnography (first two-thirds of the course), where students will describe the culture of a group on campus, and a mixed-media translation of the mini-ethnography (last third), in which students will represent their ethnographic research in a new format, such as through film, audio recording, or a photography exhibit. Short writing assignments will be used throughout the semester to develop specific writing practices and/or ethnographic research tools, as well as to reckon with the various theoretical perspectives on culture offered by course readings. Some of these short writings will include a visual analysis, a “thick description” of a cultural event, an investigation into the spread of a meme, and an analysis of a formal interview. Ultimately, students will gain essential skills in understanding and implementing core practices of academic writing as well as a deeper appreciation for the role of culture in their own lives and for humanity more generally.

## SAVING NATURE SAVING HUMANS?

Writing 101.40-41

Paolo Bocci

TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM-TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Can humans live in a biodiverse nature? Are indigenous people stewards of the Earth? What has colonialism to do with the environment? Is conservation good or bad? What does it mean to “care for nature” in a time of planetary environmental crisis?

This course invites students to grapple with these and other important questions. This collaborative and writing-intensive class offers students tools for thinking about these issues in their political, cultural, and ecological aspects. The goal of this class is to deepen students’ knowledge of conservation and reflect critically on the interconnected nature of environmental and social issues. With this class, you will consolidate your knowledge of writing expectations in social sciences. Your research paper will contribute to the thriving field of critical studies of the environment.

In the first half of the semester, you will write four short response papers (~400 words) to selected readings. Next, you will choose a topic for the final paper, workshop each other's research questions, and write a first draft of your research proposal and an annotated bibliography (~700 words). During the last month of class, you will produce a literature review, a complete draft of the final paper (~1,200 words), and, upon feedback from me and your peers, a revised version. In class, you will offer individual short presentations (8 minutes) on your research topics. Your final paper (~1,600 words) is due the last day of class.

## SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND SPORTS

Writing 101.44-45

Nathan Kalman-Lamb

WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM-WF 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Sport is perhaps the most popular form of culture in American society today. For many of us, it provides an outlet for pleasure and relaxation, and can function as an escape from the rigors of everyday life. Yet, although it is comforting to view sport simply as a form of apolitical recreation, this perspective fails to acknowledge the ways in which sporting cultures persistently produce and reproduce forms of social inequality. In this course, students will use critical, academic writing to explore the familiar realm of sport from a new perspective. Students will thus simultaneously develop a new critical approach to sport and a new critical approach to writing in the social sciences. Our exploration of sport and social inequality will be guided by a series of questions. Are professional athletes playing or working? Does exploitation exist in high performance sport? Is high performance sport contested on a level playing field? What forms of gender identity are privileged in sporting cultures? Does sport promote racial equity and justice?

Ultimately, our exploration of sporting culture will prompt students to explore their capacities as cultural critics capable of grappling with both popular and scholarly material. We will investigate how to think and write critically about sport by engaging with a range of theoretical texts that examine how sport is informed by structural forms of social inequality. These texts may include selections from Gamal Abdel-Shehid and Nathan Kalman-Lamb's *Out of Left Field*, Harry Edwards' *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, Jean-Marie Brohm's *Sport: A Prison of Measured Time*, Varda Burstyn's *The Rites of Men*, and others. Texts may also include narrative and documentary films such as *Bend it Like Beckham*, *Hoop Dreams*, and *I Hate Christian Laettner* and media and pop cultural commentary.

In order to provide students with the skills required to engage in scholarly writing and debate, including the ability to structure an argument, critique and reference the work of others, and engage directly with primary source material in order to produce original research, the course will be structured in a manner that affords significant portions of classroom time to discussion of theoretical scholarly texts, instruction on academic writing protocols and strategies, and peer-workshopping of student writing. Since this course will use critical writing as a way to unpack social inequality in sporting culture, students will be expected to contribute a variety of written assignments over the course of the term. During the first half of the course, as a form of primary critical engagement with our texts, each student will be expected to contribute one to two-page

responses on each week's primary text. The course will also include two longer written assignments: a co-authored eight-page literature review paper and an eight page critical analysis paper.

## NEUROLAW

Writing 101.46-47

Emily Parks

TuTh 8:30AM - 9:45AM-TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM

The emerging field of neurolaw explores how discoveries in brain science affect our justice system. Can brain scans detect a lying defendant, or even further, a "criminal mind?" Do we have free will, or can we blame the brain for our moral shortcomings?

This course will introduce you to the goals and practices of academic writing as we explore the role of neuroscience in the courtroom. We will reflect on themes both ancient and modern: How can science inform our understanding of our own minds? And how can that understanding, fueled by cutting-edge advances in brain imaging, inform our modern justice system? To tackle these questions, we will first consider what brain science can (and cannot) reveal about the human mind. Then, we will evaluate how that knowledge should be applied in the courtroom.

Through this exploration, you will engage in the process that is writing, completing several projects along the way. First, you will learn to actively read and respond to scientific texts by writing several short response papers (~2 pages each) on a given area of neurolaw (e.g., the insanity defense, juvenile justice, eye witness testimony, etc.). In the second project (~4 pages), you will extend the work of others, arguing for or against the use of neuroscientific evidence in court. For the final writing project (~10 pages), you will synthesize previous scientific research as you write a literature review on the intersection of neuroscience and a legal topic of your choice. Each of these projects will undergo multiple stages of revision and editing as you share your work with other students.

## COMING OF AGE AT DUKE

Writing 101.48-49

Sheryl Welte

WF 11:45AM - 1:00PM-WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM

College is one of the many turning points in your coming of age. It is a time when you separate from your family of origin, and thus are in a unique position to be able to reflect on your identity. The questions - "Who am I?" & "What do I want?" - are often daily challenges as you navigate being more independent. Together, we will use the field of educational psychology to explore your personal and academic identity development. In particular, we will reflect on emerging adulthood & student development theories to help us understand how various factors - such as

gender, socioeconomics, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture - shape the development of self and voice.

By using a variety of texts, videos, observations and interviews about coming of age, we will engage with the work of others, learn to articulate a position, and situate our writing within specific contexts. To begin, we will read, discuss, and write about our classroom treaty and student learning profiles using both our personal experiences & existing theories on coming of age (2-3 pages). Informed by these theories, we will engage in case study research, which involves in-depth descriptive and analytical writing. The final project will be an exploration in the form of a personal narrative & analysis of some issue(s) significant to your coming of age (10-15 pages). The topic, and the related additional readings, will be carefully chosen by you so that each personal narrative will be relevant & meaningful as you continue your coming of age journey at Duke. Throughout the course, we will write self and peer evaluations (2 pages) of our academic writing, and thus collaboratively strengthen our ability to improve our works in progress.

If you're interested and willing to learn about yourself & others through writing, discussion, & readings, then this Wr101 class might be a great fit for you.

## HISTORY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Writing 101.50-52

Benjamin Holtzman

MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM-MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM-MW 4:40PM - 5:55PM

What do we learn by placing capitalism at the center of American history? Is capitalism more than an economic system? How has the trajectory of capitalism shaped – and been shaped by – issues related to politics, race, labor, global affairs, gender, and immigration? How have critics and organized movements challenged – and even altered – American capitalism? Does today's growing wealth inequality have a history? What can students' voices and writings add to our understandings of the history of capitalism? Through course readings and a variety of student writings, *Capitalist America since Slavery* offers a critical examination of the transformation of capitalism in America from the nineteenth century to the present.

You will engage this history while pursuing a variety of written assignments that will develop a range of writing skills and deepen understandings of course content. You will learn how to contextualize and evaluate different kinds of history texts by writing short papers that respond to historians' scholarship. You will then practice developing and supporting your own historical argument in a short paper examining several assigned readings. Over the second half of the course, you will work on an argument-driven essay of about ten pages that utilizes the writing, organizational, analytical, and research skills you have developed in the course. In each of these assignments, we will emphasize outlining and organizing ideas, crafting theses, using evidence to support arguments, peer review, and revising.

## SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

Writing 101.53-55

Haleema Welji

WF 8:30AM - 9:45AM-WF 1:25PM - 2:40PM- WF 3:05PM - 4:20PM

### Speak of the Devil: Religious Language in Everyday Life

For a country that strongly values the “separation of church and state,” American culture is full of religious ideas and “God talk.” From “in God we trust” on our money, to hero worship of favorite athletes, to invocation of God in moments of frustration and pain. TV shows such as *South Park* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as well as other representations, like *The Book of Mormon*, regularly show the relationship between religion and everyday life. Politics, education, media, and everyday talk are loaded with explicit and implicit ties to religion.

In this course, we look at the ways that religious ideologies enter into everyday life and language. Over the course of the semester, we will read a variety of ways in which linguistic anthropologists have studied the intersection between religion and the everyday. Linguistic anthropology is the study of people, society, and culture through the lens of language, language use, and the speakers of language. Some examples of the intersection between language, religion, and everyday life include how sectarian difference in Pakistan map onto explanation of *jinn* (spirits) possession (Khan 2006), or how the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea say that God is “nothing but talk” (Robbins 2001). The integration of religion into everyday life not only demonstrates the diversities of religious interpretation, but the potential pluralism that can help lead to more openness and acceptance of difference.

## ETHNOFUTURISM

Writing 101.56-58

Susan Thananopavarn

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM- TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM- WF 11:45AM - 1:00PM

### **Ethnofuturism: Writing the Future of Race**

Have we arrived at a post-racial future? Many visionaries of the twentieth century predicted a future in which race and ethnic distinctions would be eliminated through technology. Mainstream science fiction in the mid-twentieth century often confirmed this idea or reinforced racial stereotypes in novels, stories, and films. Yet not all speculative fiction has elided questions of race. Afrofuturism is a movement in literature, music, art, and film that has developed alternative visions of the future from the perspective of the African diaspora, as in the recent blockbuster film *Black Panther*. Other authors and artists have also articulated alternative futurisms including Latina/o, indigenous, and Asian American futurisms in novels, stories, music, comics, films, and the visual arts.

This course will examine conceptions and representations of race and ethnicity in speculative fiction. We will look at alternative visions of the future as well as how contemporary authors engage with scientific theory and twentieth century classics of science fiction. Authors we will read include Junot Díaz, Octavia Butler, and Ruth Ozeki. We will also watch films and examine literary criticism to ask how “ethnofuturism” may critique racism now, in the twenty-first century. Writing tasks will require you to engage with the work of others and articulate a position as a literary and cultural critic. Assignments for the class include weekly reaction papers, a 3-4 page review of a book or film of your choice, a short textual analysis, and a 6-8 page academic essay on one of the texts for the class.

## SCIENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Writing 101.59-60

Amber Carr

MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM- MW 1:25PM - 2:40PM

The ultimate goal of science is to train an objective lens on the world in order to discover its fundamental truths. In order to do so, scientists must operate independently of the conscious and unconscious biases that comprise our socially constructed reality and be willing to use empirical evidence to challenge established knowledge and norms. Often, scientific evidence leads to conclusions that are difficult for those in power to accept, as these conclusions expose the false, yet socially accepted, beliefs that are used as tools of oppression. Through its insistence upon empirical evidence and its exposure of socially constructed biases, the practice of science might serve to promote justice, equality, and democracy in society. But does it? And in an era of “fake news,” how might the effective communication of scientific ideas and practices lead to increased science literacy and appreciation by the public?

This course will explore writing by scientists and journalists for both expert and general audiences in order to better understand how different genres of communication influence the public perception of scientific research methodology and results. Readings and other course media will thus span multiple genres, including news reports from various types of outlets, magazine articles, book chapters, opinion pieces, blog and social media posts, and podcasts. Course writing assignments will be similarly diverse, including a press release on a scientific finding, a position paper addressing a scientific issue, and a project in which students present the results of a study that they designed and conducted themselves. For their capstone projects, students will complete a mock grant application of approximately ten pages on a research problem of their choosing.

Through these assignments, students will explore firsthand the full spectrum of communication of scientific results, the conventions of different genres of writing, and the crafting of communication to foster scientific literacy and appreciation in the public. We will also develop an understanding of scientific methodology, including the construction of scientific studies to eliminate bias and confounding factors, and the statistical interpretation of data. Peer review will be used with writing assignments in order to give students the opportunity to improve and revise their work, and to provide insight on the importance of peer review in maintaining high standards

of scholarship in the scientific community. Additionally, an exploration of the funding landscape for science will be undertaken in order to understand how the funding system for science potentially incentivizes certain methods of inquiry and certain types of questions.

Course topics will be determined in part based on student interest and may include: the discovery of the origins of the HIV virus and its ties with past colonialism and current zoonotic infections such as Ebola; the implications of studies such as the Stanford Prison Experiment on the dispositional hypothesis and the criminal justice system; the retraction of the Wakefield paper and the debates on individual rights versus community responsibilities within the context of vaccination; and the discovery of lead contamination in the water supplies of Washington, D.C. and Flint, Michigan and the ensuing erosion of societal trust in governmental agencies.

No particular scientific or mathematics background is required to participate in this course.

## MIGRATION, RACE IN NORTH AM

Writing 101.61-63

Janine Rose

MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM- MW 11:45AM - 1:00PM- MW 3:05PM - 4:20PM

Approximately 180 million individuals or 3% of the world's population reside in places that are outside their country of birth. The United States and Canada are among the most important destination countries with cities such as New York and Toronto being major places of settlement. Additionally, the migration of international populations, particularly racialized groups, has had significant social, economic and political impacts on the countries of origin and destination. In this course, you will focus on how geography and identity shape the migration process and the experiences of immigrants at their destination. Using information derived from text and film, you will write about the circumstances influencing the nature of international migration as well the experiences of immigrants who are often of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. This course is also a useful introduction to how human geographers and other social scientists have written about and broadened the field of migration studies. You will also encounter the following themes in the course: theories explaining the causes of migration; the global interconnections that emerge as a result of the connections that immigrants maintain with their countries of birth; issues that influence the social and economic integration of immigrants in North American cities and the intersection of race, class and gender with the migration experience.

To better understand the implications of migration for everyday life in North America, you will write reflections (minimum of 3 double spaced pages) that will not only allow for an understanding of complex international migration trends but will also facilitate your practice with different aspects of writing. You will use these reflections to explore your own ideas, conceptions and misconceptions about immigrants and the immigration process. Further, these weekly papers will also allow you to practice and develop a repertoire of writing skills that will prove useful for the final writing project.

For the final writing assignment (10 double spaced pages), you will be asked to use what you have learned about the experiences of immigrants, other individuals implicated in the migration process and the academic literature on international migration to write a research paper that analyzes the impact of international migration on a city of your choice. This writing assignment will allow you to apply your understanding of writing conventions in the social sciences as well as your knowledge of contemporary debates about immigration to explain how immigration is resulting in changes to the geographical landscape of many North American cities. You will improve your skills as a writer through the practice of revising and editing the final research essay based on critiques received during the peer review workshops.

## FEMINISM(S), CAPITALISM, CHANGE

Writing 101.64-66

Brenda Baletti

TuTh 11:45AM - 1:00PM- TuTh 3:05PM - 4:20PM- TuTh 4:40PM - 5:55PM

Over the past year, women's marches, women's strikes, and #Metoo, among other events, have placed women's struggles center stage. In fact, many theorists have gone so far as to argue that all politics today are feminist issues in that issues of racism, inequality, state violence, environmental crisis, etc. are in fact "reproductive politics." In other words, as social safety nets are eliminated, wages decline, and communities are displaced through processes like gentrification, our households -- the site for the reproduction of people and communities -- have become increasingly precarious in racialized and class-stratified ways. These theorists argue that different forms of oppression are interrelated, and that in order to understand any of them we must analyze the capitalist social relations through which they intersect. In this class, we will read and write about how feminists have gone beyond a narrow critique of "sexism" to analyze and challenge structural injustices in contemporary society.

In the first half of the semester we will learn to read a variety of different kinds of texts -- including classic academic articles and book chapters, political pamphlets, popular essays, and journalistic articles -- to study the different ways that feminist thinkers have theorized, critiqued, and written about capitalism. In the second half of the course we use group research projects to study several key historical and contemporary struggles to overcome this oppression that place a feminist critique of capitalism at their center. Readings will include seminal thinkers such as Maria Mies, Angela Davis, Silvia Federici, Iris Morales, Claudia Jones, Patricia Hill Collins, and others.

Student writing will include three major writing assignments. The first short essay (750 words) will put different course readings in conversation around a particular course theme. For the second short essay (750 words), students will work with the librarian to identify other authors writing on similar topics and explain how they broaden the conversation begun in the first essay. For the final project, students will undertake a research project, carried out in phases (research question proposal, literature review, and drafts) and in conversation with your peers, about a historical or contemporary issue in "reproductive politics."

## PODCASTS & PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Writing 101.67 & 101.69

Alison Klein

TuTh 10:05AM - 11:20AM-TuTh 1:25PM - 2:40PM

The term “podcast” was first used in 2004; ten years later, Season 1 of the true crime podcast *Serial* was downloaded 80 million times, demonstrating the explosive growth of this new medium. This course will explore the popularity of this genre in general, analyze successful podcasts such as *Serial*, *Welcome to Nightvale*, and *2 Dope Queens*, and consider the assertion of devotees that podcasts level the playing field for comedians, scientists, and aspiring radio producers alike.

In addition to exploring the conversation about podcasts, we will use specific episodes to consider questions such as how to target a particular audience, how to form persuasive arguments, and how to engage a listener – in short, what makes great writing. Assignments for this course will include weekly response blogs, an in-depth analysis of one podcast episode, and a research paper on a controversial issue in the newly forming field of podcast studies. In the final project of the class, students will produce their own podcast on a topic of their choice. All major assignments will be written in stages and workshopped by peers and the instructor.

Updated 5/1/2018