English 0110 – S05 Critical Reading & Writing: The Academic Essay

Instructor: Adam Golaski | Adam\_Golaski@brown.edu

Classroom: 70 Brown Street, rm 130 | Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, 10 – 10:50am

Office: 70 Brown St., rm 224 | hours: Monday & Wednesday, 2 – 4pm, & by appt.

**Our Course**

We begin with a series of provocative essays by music writers, move to an autobiography in essays, and finish with a collection of music writings shaped by research and a presiding thesis. We’ll read for technique and to identify what’s expressed but not written. Our reading will correspond with the writing we do, and when we write, we won’t be concerned only with relating ideas, but with making objects—in this case essays—we want in the world. Essays that do and please. This will happen as we shape ideas through drafts and ultimately craft finished works. Our focus is the essay, but overall our course will introduce you to intellectual life at Brown.

**Course Requirements**

Three essay projects will be assigned. Across the semester, you’ll revise each essay significantly, with useful criticism from your colleagues and from me. Be prepared to draft in longhand. When work is due, submit it complete, on time, and in person—such details count toward your success. At the end of the semester, you’ll hand in a portfolio of your essays, once more revised, and with an introduction or an afterword, tying the essays together.

As part of our collaborative writing process, you’ll be required to meet with me several times for a writing conference. Be prepared, also, to share your drafts with your classmates. You will be required to visit the Writing Center, where you’ll find help for a range of writing weaknesses, including expert help for English language learners.

Dedicate a notebook to this course. Your notebook doesn’t need to be a five-subject behemoth—if you fill a notebook, start a new one. Be practical: you must bring it with you to every class (for notes and writing exercises) and you’ll want it by your side otherwise (for research notes, reading responses, and for when inspiration hits).

Do your own work. If you use someone else’s words or ideas in a paper, you must give them credit. We’ll discuss academic honesty in class, but I also recommend you read the very thorough *Principles of the Brown University Community: Academic & Student Conduct Codes*, available online.

Absence is not neutral: when you miss class, you don’t take part. (Absent more than three times—no credit for the course.)

Be an active participant in the classroom. *We* want to hear from you. Outside the classroom, *prepare* to participate. When you read what’s assigned, hunt for questions. Challenge the texts we use.

**Required Texts**

books:

Byrne, David. *How Music Works*. McSweeney’s Books, 2012.

Ross, Alex. *Listen to This* (“New and Updated Edition”). Picador, 2010.

online:

Abebe, Nitsuh. “Why We Fight: Why Risks Are Risky.” *Pitchfork*, July, 2010. http://pitchfork.com/features/why-we-fight/7824-why-we-fight-5/

Darling, Nikki. “Appropriate for Destruction.” *Live From the Penis Gallery*, Dec., 2009. http://imnikkidarlingandyourenot.blogspot.com/2009/12/appropriate-for-destruction.html

Bogart, Jonathan. “Keep Tickin’ and Tockin’ Work it All Around the Clock.” *Exist Yesterday*, Feb., 2010. http://jonathanbogart.tumblr.com/post/439283435/we-are-in-the-second-week-of-the-third-month-of

Ramsey, David. “I Will Forever Remain Faithful.” *Oxford American*, fall, 2008. http://lowendrevival.tumblr.com/post/37346386491/i-will-forever-remain-faithful-by-david-ramsey

Powers, Ann. “It’s Time To Kick This Addiction.” *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 3, 2007. http://articles.latimes.com/2007/nov/03/entertainment/et-britney3

Gaitskill, Mary. “Lady Gaga in Hell.” *Ryeburg*, June 14, 2009. http://ryeberg.com/ curated-videos/lady-gaga-in-hell/

Ross, Alex. “The Searchers.” *The New Yorker*, August 20, 2001. [http://www. newyorker.com/archive/2001/08/20/010820fa\_FACT1]

handout:

Montaigne, Michel. “Of Coaches,” from *Michel de Montaigne: The Complete Works*, translated by Donald Frame. Everyman’s Library, 2003.

**Accommodations & Issues of Classroom Etiquette**

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Students who, by nature of a documented disability, require academic accommodations should contact me during office hours. Students may also speak with Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 to discuss the process for requesting accommodations and/or visit Brown’s Disability Support Services at 20 Benevolent St. or online at http://www.brown.edu/Student\_Services/Office\_of\_Student\_Life/dss.

Cell phone use is forbidden during class. Let me be very clear about that now: if you are using your phone, or even look like you’re using your phone, I will mark you absent. there won’t be a warning, and *I won’t tell you* that I’ve marked you absent. That means if you look at the time on your phone, and I see you do so, I will mark you absent. How can you avoid such injustice? Put your phone away before class.

Indeed, when I walk into the classroom—even if class hasn’t technically begun—all personal computing devices and phones must be put away, out of sight, unless I say otherwise. (If for some reason you *must* have access to your phone, let me know *before class*, and I may make an exception.)

We will be reading texts online, but I would prefer that you not bring a screen into class; for our discussion, take copious notes and/or print out a reading copy for yourself.

Keep in mind that some discussions with me should not be had during class. Personal problems should be addressed immediately before or after class, during an office meeting, or via email.

Email is an excellent way to reach me, however, I expect you to take care with your emails. Begin with a proper greeting: “Dear Mr. Golaski” or “Dear Professor”; end your letter “Sincerely [your name].” Use—to the best of your ability—correct punctuation. Capitalize the first word of every sentence and proper nouns. Abstain from abbreviations commonly used in texts and from the use of emoticons.

To paraphrase a colleague’s excellent guidelines: Before you speak on a “vexed” topic, such as race, class, or gender, ask yourself a) is what I’m about to say dismissive or presumptive about a person or an entire group of people? and b) how do I know if what I’m about to say is true? What’s my source? I want you to speak up, but you are responsible for what you say.

**What to Read, When, & Etc. (expect this list to change)**

[ response ]

*January*

week one/ 22: Welcome, the syllabus, & freewrite. For next class: read “Why We Fight: Why Risks Are Risky,” then, in your notebook, write a response.

24: Listen to CoCo Rosie, “Why We Fight” responses, & how can we respond to an essay? For next class: read “Appropriate for Destruction” & write a response (be sure to listen to the G’n’R clip provided by Darling).

week two/ 27: Responses to Darling. For next class: read “Let’s Kick This Addiction” & “Lady Gaga in Hell”; write a response.

29: Somebody please explain “Lady Gaga in Hell” & choose a response from your notebook for revision. For next class: read “Keep Tickin’ and Tockin’,” watch “Tik Tok” video & write a response (to essay and/or video). Prepare chosen notebook response to be handed in, one page or less.

31: Quick, in-class, peer review of notebook response & **response assignment**. For next class: read “I Will Always Remain Faithful” & write a response. Pay attention to the essay’s structure & its story.

week three/ 03: Discuss “I Will Forever Remain Faithful”; prepare for office meetings. For meeting: write one paragraph of your response essay.

05: OFFICE MEETINGS.

07:OFFICE MEETINGS. For next class: read Byrne p. 11 – 36 & consider what’s personal about “Creation In Reverse.”

[ personal essay ]

week four/ 10: What is a personal essay & make notes on possible subjects for your personal essay. For next class: read Byrne “My Life in Performance” (p. 81 – 122) and consider affectation in your notebook.

12: Affectations & listen to Talking Heads. Brief intro to Montaigne. **Response assignment due**. For next class: read “Of Coaches,” find an anecdote, & try to figure out how Montaigne’s essay works.

14: “Of Coaches.” What is an anecdote? How does “Of Coaches” work and is it a personal essay? **Personal essay assignment**. Distribute response essay for classmates. For next class: Byrne “Technology Shapes Music: Part One” (p. 81).

week five/ 17: NO CLASS.

19: Workshop: Response essay. For next class: read Byrne “Technology Shapes Music: Part Two” (p. 123).

21: Finish workshop. For next class: Byrne “In the Recording Studio” (p.145) & note what interested you.

week six/ 24: Discuss “In the Recording Studio,” personal essay progress, & prepare for office meetings.

26: OFFICE MEETINGS.

28: OFFICE MEETINGS. For next class: read Byrne “Collaborations” (p. 189) & think about potential collaboration in class & out.

*March* [ research ]

week seven/ 03: Discuss “Collaborations.” For next class: read Byrne “Business and Finances” (p. 213) & consider how you consume the arts.

05: Discuss finances. For next class: read Byrne “How To Make A Scene” (p. 269) & describe scenes you’ve been a part of, are a part of, and/or would like to create.

07: Let’s make a scene. For next class: prepare your personal essay.

week eight/ 10: **Personal essay due**. For next class: read Byrne “Amatures!” (p.289).

12: DIY. read: “Harmonia Mundi” (p. 323) & think about David Byrne’s book as a whole.

14: Critique *How Music Works* & **research essay assigned**. For next class: read Ross “Preface” (p. xi), “Listen to This” (p. 3), & define “research essay.”

week nine/ 17: Potential research-based essays. Ross’s thesis. For next class read “Infernal Machines” (p. 55); compare with Byrne’s “Technology Shapes Music.”

19: Differences / similarities between Ross & Byrne. Did they miss anything? For next class: read “The Storm of Style” (p. 71) & note an experience you had with classical music.

21: Listen to Mozart. For next class: read “Orbiting” (p. 85), and compare (making notes in your notebook) with Ross’s first published draft of the same essay “The Searchers” (online). Be prepared to discuss small changes—& consider that title change.

week ten/ **Spring Recess**

week eleven/ 31: Avoiding plagiarism. Discuss differences between “Orbiting” & “The Searchers.” For next class: Distribute copies of personal essay to your workshop group. For next class: read & comment on essays to workshop.

*April* 02: Workshop: Personal Essay.

04: Finish workshop. For next class: read “Emotional Landscapes” (p. 138) & note when Ross uses quotes.

week twelve/ 07: Listen to Bjork & discuss the use of quotes in “Emotional Landscapes.” For next class: read “The Arctic Sound of John Luther Adams” (p. 176) & “Edges of Pop” (p. 212) Prepare for office meetings.

09: OFFICE MEETINGS.

11: OFFICE MEETINGS. For next class: prepare to hand in your research essay.

week thirteen/ 14: **Research essay due.** A talk on “The Arctic Sound of John Luther Adams” & “Edges of Pop.” For next class: read “The End of Silence” (p. 265) & note your reactions to Cage’s music projects.

16: Reactions to Cage’s projects. **Portfolio assigned.** For next class: read “Learning the Score” (p. 226).

18: Freewrite: What themes appear across my writings? Discuss “Learning the Score.” For next class: read “I Saw the Light” (p. 267).

week fourteen/ 21: Read over your last freewrite and develop it further, with the goal of drafting an introduction or afterword for your portfolio. For next class: read “Fervor” (p. 288) & “Blessed Are the Sad” (p. 293) & note how (if) it works as a conclusion to *Listen To This*.

23: Endings. Leiberson & Brahms. For next class: bring print-outs of essays to revise in-class.

*Reading Period* 25: In-class revision. Wrap-up.

*(During reading period, I am available for office meetings.)*

week fifteen/ 28: NO CLASS MEETING.

30: NO CLASS MEETING.

02: **Portfolio due**, in my office, by 2pm.

Final Exams 07 – 16 [ No final exam ]

This syllabus is not a contract, and is subject to change.