



WRITING ACROSS THE ARTS

AP 3340

FALL 2016

PROF. MARK ROSEN

Course Information

AP 3340 Section: 001
Fall 2016
TTh 11:30 am–12:45 pm

Professor Contact Information

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Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

You must be an Art and Performance major to register.

Course Description

In the era of YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify, we have more immediate access to a broad range of artistic media than at any previous moment in history—too much access, perhaps, to ever stop and bring our own responses into focus. In this endless media onslaught, how do we make our selections and develop critical faculties about the arts? How do we distinguish between pleasure, opinion, critique, and research? What critical models can serve us as we move towards an ever-atomizing media proliferation in the future?

This writing-intensive course seeks to address these concerns and help students in the Art and Performance major develop interdisciplinary skills in researching, responding to, and critically thinking about art. Rather than focus on a single form or era, we will instead dive into diverse readings on music, film, art history, performance, and art practice, in each case seeking to understand the methodologies and approaches possible in writing about those subjects, as well as identifying the ways in which those fields overlap.

This course fulfills the advanced writing requirement for Art and Performance majors. Students will not only write every week but will also be closely involved in reading and critiquing the work of their peers. You will be expected to watch films, visit museums, and listen to music on your own time, but those experiences will also be integral to what you produce over the semester.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will grasp and respond to the interdisciplinary ways that historical texts, artworks, and performances can be understood, described, and evaluated.
 - Students will demonstrate effective communication skills through essays, journals, responses, and in-class presentations.
 - Students will identify and evaluate worthwhile research material and use that material effectively within their own thesis-driven essays.
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Textbooks and Materials

Required books:

- A. O. Scott, *Better Living through Criticism* (New York, 2016)
- David Byrne, *How Music Works*, paperback ed. (San Francisco, 2012)
- Jonathan Lethem, *Fear of Music* (New York, 2012)

Other **required** readings will be available online through electronic course reserves. **The password will be given out on the first day of the course.**

Readings should be done **before** each class meeting. Readings will be discussed during the lecture and it is expected that students will be prepared to participate in the discussion.

Papers and Assignments

Your grade depends primarily on writing and participation, plus one (essay-based) take-home exam. Every week you will turn in a 300-word (or so) “journal entry” in response to an artwork or reading. Those writings will help serve as the basis for longer essays due at regular intervals throughout the semester. You will have a 3-page visual analysis of an artwork due **Sept. 13**, a 4-page film analysis due **Sept. 27**, and a 7-page final paper due on **Dec. 6** (with a draft due **Nov. 3**). You will also have a take-home midterm due **Oct. 13**. Each student will present on their research topic during the week of **Nov. 15–17**.

For information regarding plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity, see the university's website: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>. Let me confirm that plagiarism is a very serious offense and will not be tolerated. It will result in your being forced to rewrite a paper or accept a failing grade for the assignment. Your own intellectual honesty is of the greatest importance in this class.

Assignments & Academic Calendar		
Class	Topic	Reading
23 Aug.	Introduction	
25 Aug.	Research and Writing about the Arts	Krista Thompson, "The Sound of Light: Reflections on Art History in the Visual Culture of Hip-Hop," <i>The Art Bulletin</i> 91 (2009): 481–505. Scott, introduction (1–12)
30 Aug.	The Value and Problems of Definitions: Goth/Gothic	Michael Camille, "Introduction: New Ways of Seeing Gothic Art," in <i>Gothic Art: Glorious Visions</i> (New York, 1996), 8–25. Tricia Henry Young, "Dancing on Bela Lugosi's Grave: The Politics and Aesthetics of Gothic Club Dancing," <i>Dance Research</i> 17 (1999): 75–97.
1 Sept.	What is Visual Analysis?	Jennifer L. Roberts, "The Power of Patience," <i>Harvard Magazine</i> 116, no. 2 (Nov.–Dec. 2013): 40–43 (http://bit.ly/1dOJmsv) Michel Foucault, <i>The Order of Things</i> (New York: Vintage, 1970), 3–16.
6 Sept.	Thinking about Art, Writing about Art	Choose a painting you want to talk about and send a link to the professor before our class meeting Scott, ch. 1 (13–42)
8 Sept.	Writing Workshop	Scott, ch. 2 (43–90)
13 Sept.	Architecture and the Environment	Writing assignment due Ingrid D. Rowland, "The Frank Gehry Story," <i>The New York Review of Books</i> (March 24, 2016): http://bit.ly/1LeMDqF Jane R. Leblanc, "Is Dallas City Hall a Fugly Building?" <i>Dallas Observer</i> (December 30, 2014): http://bit.ly/29CgGuA Mark Lamster, "Why is So Much Architecture Junk?" <i>Dallas Morning News</i> (May 6, 2015): http://bit.ly/1EUPyhp

15 Sept.	Writing about Film	Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis, "Writing about Film," in <i>Film: A Critical Introduction</i> , third edition (London, 2011), 37–61 Scott, chs. 3–4 (91–166)
20 Sept.	Criticism and Taste	Scott, chs. 5–end (167–268) Bring in a piece of criticism about a film that you've seen and want to discuss in class
22 Sept.	Workshop day	Bring in a draft of writing assignment due 9/27 to workshop in class
23 Sept. (Friday)	Optional Lecture	Guest lecture by Dr. Tim McCall on Renaissance clothing and fashion at 10 am in ATC 2.800
27 Sept.	Critiquing a Film	Writing assignment due Watch <i>Taste of Cherry</i> (Abbas Kiarostami, 1997)—available at McDermott Library (DVD 4475) Reviews of <i>Taste of Cherry</i> by Jonathan Rosenbaum (http://bit.ly/29BUBdh) and Roger Ebert (http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/taste-of-cherry-1998).
29 Sept.	Auterism and Film	Andrew Sarris, "Toward a Theory of Film History," introduction to <i>The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968</i> (New York, 1968), 19–37 Pauline Kael, "Circles and Squares: Joys and Sarris," in <i>I Lost It at the Movies</i> (New York, 1965), 293–319
4 Oct.	Dance 1	Watch Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, <i>Revelations</i> : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtJzqfWOHCE Roger Copeland, "Why Women Dominate Modern Dance," <i>The New York Times</i> (Apr. 18, 1982): http://nyti.ms/2b6Ftlk Visit by Michele Hanlon, dance faculty
6 Oct.	Dance 2	John Martin, <i>The Dance in Theory</i> (originally published 1939; 2004 edition on our course reserves page) You will be given a take-home midterm today, due Oct. 13.
11 Oct.	No class	

13 Oct.	Music, pt. 1	<p>Midterm due</p> <p>Chuck Klosterman, “Which Rock Star Will Historians of the Future Remember?” <i>New York Times Magazine</i> (May 23, 2016): http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/magazine/which-rock-star-will-historians-of-the-future-remember.html</p> <p>Byrne, chs. 1–3</p> <p>Listen to Talking Heads, <i>Fear of Music</i></p>
18 Oct.	Music, pt. 2	<p>Byrne, chs. 4–5</p> <p>Steve Albini, “The Problem with Music,” <i>The Baffler</i> 5 (1993) (http://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-problem-with-music)</p> <p>Steve Albini, keynote address at Face the Music Conference, Melbourne, Australia, Nov. 2014 (http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/nov/17/steve-albinis-keynote-address-at-face-the-music-in-full)</p> <p>Watch video: Alex Ross, “The Prospects of Music Writing in a Post-Critical Age” (Jan. 18, 2012): https://vimeo.com/38742553</p>
20 Oct.	Discussion on Research	Byrne, chs. 6–8
25 Oct.	Music—Studies from Life	<p>Byrne, chs. 9–10</p> <p>Lester Bangs, “The Clash,” in <i>Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung</i>, ed. Greil Marcus (New York, 1987), 224–259.</p>
27 Oct.	Music Criticism 1	<p>Lethem, <i>Fear of Music</i>, side 1 (viii–74)</p> <p>Greil Marcus, “Prologue,” in <i>Mystery Train</i> (New York, 1975), 1–10</p> <p>Robert Christgau, “Introduction: My Favorite Waste of Time,” from <i>Grown Up All Wrong</i> (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 1–13</p> <p>Ann Powers, “The Cruel Truth about Rock and Roll,” NPR Music’s <i>The Record</i> (July 15, 2015): http://n.pr/1TGNdgU</p>

1 Nov.	Music Criticism 2	<p>Lethem, <i>Fear of Music</i>, side 2 (75–140)</p> <p>Carl Wilson, <i>Let's Talk about Love: A Journey to the End of Taste</i> (New York, 2007), chs. 1–2 (pp. 1–22)</p> <p>Lester Bangs, “Chicago at Carnegie Hall, Volumes I, II, III & IV,” “James Taylor Marked for Death,” “Jethro Tull in Vietnam,” “Where Were You When Elvis Died?” in <i>Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung</i>, ed. Greil Marcus (New York, 1987), 53–81, 95–97, 128–134, 213–217.</p>
3 Nov.	Visit to David McPhail's Restoration lab	More information on the visit given out the week before.
8 Nov.	Theater 1	<p>Listen to <i>Hamilton: Original Cast Recording</i></p> <p>Genius page and annotations (http://genius.com/albums/Lin-manuel-miranda/Hamilton-original-broadway-cast-recording)</p> <p>Draft of final paper due</p>
10 Nov.	Theater 2	<p>Lyra D. Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s <i>Hamilton</i>,” <i>The Public Historian</i> 38 (2016): 89–98.</p> <p>Responses to Monteiro by Annette Gordon-Reed, David Dean, Jason Allen, and Ellen Noonan, and Monteiro on <i>History@Work</i>, The National Council on Public History Blog (2016): http://bit.ly/29BauQb</p>
15 Nov.	Student Presentations 1	
17 Nov.	Student presentations 2	
22–24 Nov.	Thanksgiving Holiday	No class
29 Nov.	Live Performance Work in class on paper drafts	Over Thanksgiving Break, watch film <i>Stop Making Sense</i> (Jonathan Demme, 1984)
1 Dec.	State of the Arts	Readings to be determined close to the class meeting
6 Dec.	Papers due/celebration	

Course Requirements

1. **Weekly “journal”**—This isn’t literally a journal but rather a weekly reflection on some aspect of what we’re doing in this course—a response to one of the readings, for example, or thoughts on a film you’ve recently seen, music that you’ve been listening to regularly, or a museum exhibition that you’ve visited. The point is not so much to review whether or not you liked the reading/artwork under discussion in a thumb’s up/down manner but to detail how and why you respond to a work, and what you think the author or artist had in mind.
2. **Take-home midterm**—This is an essay-based written exam due Oct. 13.
3. **Short papers**—There are two of these, one a visual analysis of an artwork (due Sept. 13), the other a film critique (due Sept. 27).
4. **In-class presentation** (Nov. 15 or 17)
5. **Final Essay**—7 pages long (due Dec. 6) plus an outline and draft turned in Nov. 3 that will be workshopped in class over the following month.
6. **Participation**—Regular attendance and active immersion in class discussion.

Grading Policy

The final grade will be broken down approximately like this:

Weekly journal: 30%
 Short papers: 30% (15% each)
 Final essay: 20%
 In-Class Presentation: 10%
 Participation: 10%

Note: the final grades will use minuses and plusses, if necessary—that is, it is possible to get an A- or B+ (etc.) for the course.

Course & Instructor Policies

- Office hours are meant for the benefit of you students, so use them! They can be used to discuss class materials, assignments, and questions arising from the readings, or other issues you’d like to ask about. If you can’t come to the scheduled hours, you can make an appointment with me at some other time.
- I can be reached by email and will make efforts to respond in a timely manner, but I’m not on call at all hours; use email sparingly, please.
- Please send emails from your UTD accounts. Even if I receive email from some other account of yours, I reply to the official university account, so check that one regularly.
- All major assignments must be completed to successfully pass the class (you can’t skip the first paper and still expect to get a B+).
- Late assignments will be marked down substantially.
- Please turn off your phone and refrain from texting in class. It’s a drag for everyone.
- Class begins at 11:30. If you must come in late, try to be as quiet as possible.
- You may have no more than three unexcused absences—beyond that, you will get a zero for your participation grade.
- The campus carry policy of UTD is defined in detail on the university website: <https://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/faqs/>.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.