Progress Report
OAT Initiative

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Department of Humanities

HSS 403-001, Fall 2017
Course title: “Literary Journalism: Fact and Truth”
Enrollment of 23 Students (25 Maximum)

Cost savings per student: $200-$300.

Challenges: Students do not process texts on the screen in the way they do on paper, and when it
comes to literary texts this difference is non-trivial. Getting students to print PDF files and the
like is a challenge. On the other hand, having the texts in a format so that they can be projected
on a screen in the classroom for the purpose of examination and analysis on the part of the class
as an entire group is a great asset, while the class undertakes the issues inherent in one or another
specimen of literary journalism.

Additional Comment: It may certainly just be by chance, but thus far I find an unusually high
number of students who are seriously engaged in the course materials and discussions, and are
able to carry them out in a rather sophisticated manner.

Open Educational Resources Used for This Course

1941.
Baldwin, James. “Nobody Knows My Name.” This essay was found online.
_____. “Notes of a Native Son.” This essay was found online.
small comprises a very small percentage of the book it was in; the section was scanned
and put behind a password in Moodle.
Brooks, Richard. Dir. In Cold Blood. 1967. (N.B.: Van Houten Library owns a copy of this film,
which was put on Reserve. The film was found online for viewing gratis, as well.)
Capote, Truman. In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences,
Diaz, Junot. “The Money.” This essay was found online
Didion, Joan. “Los Angeles Notebook.” This essay was found online.
Gawande, Atul. “What Medicine Should Do.” This essay was found online.
Herr, Michael. “Kesanah,” an excerpt from his book Dispatches taken out of The New Journalism,
Hersey, John. “From Hiroshima.” The Art of Fact. New York: Touchstone, 1997. 111-14. This small comprises a very small percentage of the book it was in; the section was scanned and put behind a password in Moodle.


Kincaid, Jamaica. “On Seeing England for the First Time.” This essay was found online.

Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect. 3rd Edition. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2014. (N.B.: Van Houten Library owns two copies of this book; one was put on Reserve, the other on Overnight Loan.)

Miller, Bennet. Dir. Capote. 2005. (N.B.: Van Houten Library owns a copy of this film, which was put on Reserve. The film was found online for viewing gratis, as well.)

Nir, Sarah Maslin, “The Price of Nails. This essay was found online

Simpson, John. “Tiananmen Square.” The Art of Fact. New York: Touchstone, 1997. 111-14. This small comprises a very small percentage of the book it was in; the section was scanned and put behind a password in Moodle.

Thompson, Hunter. “From The Hell’s Angels.” This excerpt was found online.

Wolfe, Tom. “From The Electric Kool Aid Acid Text.” This excerpt was found online.

SYLLABUS
(cf: https://web.njit.edu/~kimmelma/literaryjournalism.htm)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines journalism and its relationship with either fact or truth, or both, especially considering its vital role in a politically free society. The course also compares journalism, and literary journalism, along with (other) literature and film. Aside from written assignments, required work in the course will consist of reading journalistic / literary journalistic texts of various kinds, and viewing like films--all relevant to the overarching discussion in the course. This course is a senior seminar; as such it is designed and committed to allowing students the opportunity to work closely with an instructor in a specific area of the instructor's expertise.

Prerequisites: HUM 102; and one from among HUM 211, HUM 212 and Hist 213 or their equivalents, all with a grade of C or better; completion of either the Lit/Hist/Phil/STS or the Open Elective in Humanities and Social Science, with a grade of C or better.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course students should be able to: demonstrate critical thinking within a narrowly focused subject area through both oral and written communication; develop in-depth, focused, polemical, researched writing with full documentation of sources; write argument-based essays in response to thematic questions; and, explain the dynamic of news media within a free society.
COURSE TEXTS

Books:
Various other short readings are listed below and at the course homepage in Moodle.

Films:

N.B.: The films in their entirety will not be shown in class.

Other Useful Texts:
Writing and Documentation Guides (explanations, examples, etc.)
Abbreviations for Marking Papers
See also:
Moodle Conferencing System portal: http://moodle.njit.edu
Guidelines for a Successful Oral Presentation (see also SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR TEAM ORAL REPORTS toward the bottom of page):
http://go.owu.edu/~dapeople/ggpresnt.html
http://www.auburn.edu/~burnsma/oralpres.html
http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~riceowl/oral_presentations.htm
http://web.cba.neu.edu/~ewertheim/skills/oral.htm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• Oral/Visual Reports, one a group report on a weekly assignment, the other an individual report on the term paper project.
• Weekly Moodle postings (one original of 100 to 150 words, another 50 to 100-word response to someone else’s post).
• A two-staged research project culminating in a researched and fully-cited term paper* (see writing and documentation guidelines above, listed with the course readings):

Stage One: a Term Paper Announcement (see below^) consisting of a Working Title, a one-sentence Thesis Statement (one sentence only, though the sentence can be long and multi-claused and may use one semicolon), a detailed, step-by-step Description of your future paper’s Writing Strategy (i.e. how you will prove your thesis, not a summary of what will be in your paper), and a Bibliography (in MLA format--see the link to documentation guides above) of at least three secondary sources, one of which must be a hard-copy source (for the purposes of this assignment
assigned readings, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and textbooks will not be considered as counting toward the requisite minimum number of secondary sources, although they can be used in your term paper project);

Stage Two: a 1500 to 3000-word, fully-documented, original and critical, discursive, polemical (please look up this word if you don't really know what it means) and otherwise argumentative essay that must include at least some detailed analysis of the artifacts being discussed (see below^^), along with a bibliography of all sources (the bibliography will not be considered part of word count). The term paper topic is open (though the topic must have something to do with the subject of this course) but must be approved ahead of time by the instructor.

The Term Paper is credited when preceded by the Term Paper Announcement.

*An original work of literary journalism (or voiced investigative reporting), developed in consultation with the instructor, may be substituted for the term paper project. This work would also, like the term paper project, manifest in two written stages.

• Final examination, comprehensive, essay in format, open-book.

Failure to submit the final exam will result in the papers that are part of the term paper project being disqualified.

N.B.: Papers must be word processed using a 12' font, double-spaced with one inch margins, spell-checked, and to the best of one's ability grammar-checked. Papers must be submitted as Word files; under no circumstances should a paper be submitted as a pdf.

Weekly Moodle posts should be single-spaced but otherwise must also be spell-checked and to the best of one's ability grammar-checked, and must be in standard English and adhere to standard formal writing protocols.

As regards all writing submitted in this course, please keep the following in mind. If on occasion use is made of the ideas or words of someone else in one's writing, then the source(s) of those ideas and/or words must be cited; that is, when appropriate, papers must be fully documented in MLA format (you must cite sources--using footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical documentation, which include specific page numbers keyed to particular passages in your text, and complete bibliographical information). WRITTEN TEXTS NOT MEETING ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL NOT BE READ AND WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT.

Students are expected to abide by the NJIT Honor Code. You may wish to see NJIT's Academic Integrity web site that contains much information about strategies to avoid plagiarism: http://integrity.njit.edu/index.html.)

Papers must be submitted to the instructor via Moodle, as Word for Windows (preferably Word 2003) attachments, using a proper identifying subject line.

N.B.: Failure to participate in class discussions (especially online) at a minimally acceptable level will result in disqualification of end-of-term assignments such as the term paper and final exam; such disqualification must inevitably spell failure in the course. In order to pass this
course a student must be consistently active in weekly class work starting from the beginning of the course term. Furthermore, only three unexcused absences will be allowed; more than these will mean automatic course failure.

COURSE GRADE

Final Examination: 30%
Term Paper: 25%
Term Paper Announcement: 10%
Class Participation online (initial, originating posts - graded weekly): 10%
Class Participation online (responses to classmates' posts): 5%
Follow-up Questions or Comments: 5%
Portfolio of Eight Best Posts online: 5%
Group Report: 5%
Individual Report: 5%
Extra credit project 10 points

COURSE SCHEDULE*
(for Due Dates, see details of assignments at the course homepage in Moodle--scroll down there)

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Week 2: "Preface" and “Introduction" to The Art of Fact; "Introduction" to Agee's Let Us Now Praise Famous Men; Agee, "Overalls"; (1941) Hersey, Hiroshima excerpt (1946).


Week 5: Baldwin “Notes of a Native Son”(1955); “Nobody Knows My Name” (1961).

Week 6: Capote, In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences (January 1966), Preface and up to p. 74 (Part I).

Week 7: Capote, In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences, pp. 75 to 248 (Parts II and III).


Week 9: Two films: Capote, Dir. Miller (2005); In Cold Blood, Dir. Brooks (1967).


Week 13: REPORTS ON TERM PAPERS.