**English 281A:
Intermediate Expository Writing**

T/Th 8:30-10:20
MEB 245

Instructor: Stevi Costa
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-12:30
Office: Padelford B5B

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Writing is a performance. That is: it is not an innate skill, but a craft that can be learned, studied, practiced, and adapted to elicit different responses from audiences. English 281 is an Intermediate Writing Course intended to further develop students’ composition skills with the goal of improving the performance of writing. In this class, we will hone our skills in genre analysis, audience awareness, tone, argumentation, and research by studying performances and writing about them. We will read about and watch various types of performances (live ones in Seattle theatres, recorded in film and television, and spontaneously in the world around us), and contemplate, interpret, analyze, and evaluate their merits as works or art (or entertainment) as well as how they are crafted to critique and comment on American culture.

Assignments include 3 short papers (3 – 4 pages each) in various genres, as well as a scholarly essay (7 – 9 pages) about performance(s) of your choice. What you choose to write about is up to you, but you will be required to attend at least 2 live performances during the course of the quarter. (At the end of your syllabus, you’ll find a calendar of shows in Seattle with various price points and student ticket options.) Several shorter “writing challenges” will also be required. These challenges are informal exercises that will help you develop specific skills that will make you a stronger writer. As this is a class concerned with the performance of writing (and writing about performance), we will also incorporate some theatrical exercises designed to help you improve the clarity of your writing for audiences.

THIS COURSE ASSUMES that students have previous experiences in college-level writing (such as ENGL 109/110, 111, 121, or 131 or equivalent), as we will be building on those skills and techniques begun in those introductory courses. With that in mind, this class also takes as a basic assumption that writing is a skill and that, like any skill, it can always be furthered and improved through guided practice and experimentation. We will work to develop, challenge, and enhance the writing skills students already possess into the skills and intuitions necessary for successful writing.

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

**Writing Challenges (6 @ 5% each = 30% total)**

These are informal writing assignments that challenge you to master a particular skill. Each Writing Challenge should be between 500-700 words in length (roughly one single-spaced typed page). When I call them “informal,” I mean that they are not as genre-specific or academic as other writing that you will produce in this class – not that you should disregard the formalities of formatting, grammar, and punctuation.

**Critical Recap (10%)**

For this paper, you will write a recap of a performance (live or recorded). However, this should not merely be a play-by-play, but adopt a critical perspective that highlights a particular aspect of the performance itself. (Like a good recap of a television episode, you too should hone in on a theme and its execution.) You will do this in 3-4 (double-spaced) pages.

**Performance Review (10%)**

In this paper, you will adopt the voice of a critic and write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) review of a live performance. This means that your paper should argue for a particular perspective on your chosen performance, and assess and evaluate the construction of the performance.

**Response to a Critique (10%)**

After reading several pieces of scholarly criticism, you will use a combination of the summary, analysis, and argument skills you’ve developed in your previous papers and writing challenges to identify the argument of a piece of scholarly criticism and analyze how the argument is made. You will do this in 3-4 (double-spaced) pages.

**Scholarly Essay (20%)**

Your final paper will combine criticism, argument, summary, and analysis with outside research. In 7-9 (double-spaced) pages, you will craft an argument about a performance (preferably live) that considers not only how the performance is crafted, but to what end. You will incorporate evidence from the performance itself, as well as from critics and scholars who have written on related topics, in order to support your argument.

**Participation (20%)**

Participation in this class means coming to class prepared to discuss writing (both your own and that of others), to complete in-class writing exercises, and to work efficiently and effectively with me and with your peers on writing-related tasks. You will also attend two mandatory writing conferences with me during the quarter.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**LATE WORK\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
Late work is due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the course calendar. For the purposes of this class, this means that you will have an assignment due every Tuesday. Plan accordingly.

Any late work will be marked down .10 from the final grade for each day that it is late. (So, if you write a 3.7 paper, but you turned it in 2 days late, you can only earn a 3.5 on that paper.) The best way to avoid this penalty is to submit your work on time. That said, if you feel you will have trouble meeting deadlines for any reason (re: family emergency, health issues, etc), please email me and we will discuss your options. I’m always more lenient about deadline issues if I know about them in advance.

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

I expect students to adhere to minimum and maximum guidelines. This means that when I ask you for a 10 page minimum, I expect to see your text go all the way to the bottom of the 10th page. I will return for resubmission papers that are much too short, and they will be considered late and incur the above stated penalty when resubmitted. All assignments should be typed according to MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines. This includes (but is not limited to):

* 12 pt. Times New Roman font
* Standard margins (1” – this setting is called “Normal” in Microsoft Word)
* Double-spaced (except for Writing Challenges!)
* Last name and page numbers in the header of every page (except page 1)
* MLA style citation/Works Cited page

If you feel unsure about what any of this means, or if you have any other concerns, consult the online style guide at the Purdue OWL website (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) and/or come talk to me.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/.

**WRITING RESOURCES**

There are two particularly fantastic writing resources for you here on campus at UW. Both are free of charge, and I would **very** strongly encourage you to take advantage of these resources. The **Odegaard Writing and Research Center** allows you to schedule 45-minute tutoring sessions in which to talk about your writing or specific writing assignments for any class. You may book these on-line at: http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/ (and I would suggest booking early, as they tend to fill up quickly!) The **CLUE Writing Center** is located in Mary Gates Hall, and offers late-night drop-in tutoring. You can get all the details here: <http://depts.washington.edu/clue/dropintutor_writing.php>

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing--as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please come to class prepared to participate in the activities for the day. This means: having read the materials and being ready to discuss them, asking questions, listening attentively to your peers when they speak, taking notes, and following along in your texts when appropriate. As this is a writing class, it will also mean that you should be prepared to write, read, and respond to peers’ writing.

**Class/Group Discussions**: The more you engage in this academic community, the more you will learn. As with class attendance, it is important for you to participate in class and/or group discussions as thoroughly as possible; we want our time to be productive. That said, I’d like our classroom space to feel safe and comfortable for everyone to have their voice heard. If speaking up is hard for you, try to participate by asking questions of your classmates or pointing out passages in the text that support others’ ideas. Conversely, if you feel very comfortable talking, try to step back and give others the space to explore. Respect is paramount. We’re all allowed to disagree and have divergent thoughts and opinions, but we must do so in a respectful manner.

**Technology:** My classroom welcomes the use of assistive technologies to aide student learning. If you prefer to use a Kindle or other e-reader for your texts, go for it. If a PDF on a laptop works for you, great. If you take notes better by typing than writing manually, fantastic. Just be aware that you are only to use your assistive technologies for the purposes of accessing texts and note taking – no Facebook, no email, no general Internet surfing during class. Likewise, you are expected to put your cell phone away and set it to “silent.” And don’t text during class. (Think about how well you “perform” student for your audience here and how disruptive these things would be to a performance!)

**Missed Classes:** You are responsible for all information announced in class. If you miss a class, you need to find out what you’ve missed either by asking a classmate or emailing me.

**Cancellations:** In the unlikely event that I would ever have to **cancel** a class, I would let you know as soon as possible by e-mail, generally by 7:00am the day of class.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

Below is the course calendar, which details what we will be doing in this class and when. Whenever you see a reading assignment for a specific date in class, I expect the materials will be read before class, to be discussed in class on the specified date. Writing assignments will be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class in hard copy.

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| DATE | READING ASSIGNMENT | IN CLASS ACTIVITIES | MATERIALS DUE |
| Tuesday, April 1 |  | IntroductionsDescriptive WritingWriting Challenge #1 |  |
| Thursday, April 3  |  | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Tuesday, April 8 | Worthen, “Drama, Performativity, Performance” | Peer Review (of WC#1)Discuss Worthen | Writing Challenge #1 Due |
| Thursday, April 10 | (Recaps)Coleman, “Concert Recap: Broken Bells”Norwalk, “Glee: Frenemies” | Discuss Recaps |  |
| Tuesday, April 15 | Conquergood, “Performance Studies”De Certeau, “Walking in the City” | Discuss ConquergoodDiscuss De Certeau | **Performance Recap Due** |
| Thursday, April 17  | (Reviews)Avila, “One of Us”Jones, “Witty ‘Seminar’…”Hicks, “Hyperventilating Over the Monster-Builder”Adams, “Lou Reed Butoh” | Discuss ReviewsRhetorical Analysis |  |
| Tuesday, April 22 | Goffman, “Performances” | Discuss Goffman | Writing Challenge #2 Due |
| Thursday, April 24 |  | Performance clipsCrafting reviews |  |
| Tuesday, April 29 | Turner, “Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality” | Discuss TurnerPrecis as genre | **Performance Review Due** |
| Thursday, May 1  |  | Research Strategies- Library Day |  |
| Tuesday, May 6 | Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” | Discuss BenjaminWriting Strong Arguments | Writing Challenge #3 Due |
| Thursday, May 8 |  | Developing CounterargumentsWarrants |  |
| Tuesday, May 13 | James, “What Is Art?”Saltz, “The Art of Interaction” | Discuss James | Writing Challenge #4 Due |
| Thursday, May 15 |  | Responding to Critical Writing |  |
| Tuesday, May 20 | Nakamura, “Race In/For Cyberspace” | Discuss Nakamura | **Responding to Critique Due** |
| Thursday, May 22  |  | Research proposals |  |
| Tuesday, May 27 | Butler, “Subversive Bodily Acts” | Discuss ButlerAnnotation | Writing Challenge #5 Due |
| Thursday, May 29 |  | Developing Presentations |  |
| Tuesday, June 3 | Bogad, “Crisis in California” | Discuss BogadResearch Presentations | Writing Challenge #6 Due |
| Thursday, June 5 |  | Research Presentations |  |

**Final Scholarly Essay Due: Tuesday, June 10 @ 5 pm**

**PERFORMANCE CALENDAR\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

As you will be required to attend at least two live performances during the quarter in order to complete the work of the class, here is a list of major theatrical productions occurring in Seattle while our class is in session. This is not a comprehensive list, though, and you are welcome to write about other types of live performances (dance, concerts, etc) and other productions that are not listed here, which you can find out about by visiting seattleperforms.org. (However, if you want to use something that’s not on this list, make sure you run it by me before writing about it.)

**UW Drama**(http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrama/performances/index.shtml)

*The Beggar’s Opera*
April 23-May 24
*The Workroom*
May 28-June 8

**UW Undergraduate Theatre Society**
(http://students.washington.edu/uwuts/)

*Dog Sees God*
May 29-June 8

**5th Avenue Theatre**
([www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org) – be sure to check for student ticket prices!)

*Little Shop of Horrors*
March 8-June 15

**Seattle Repertory Theatre**
([www.seattlerep.org](http://www.seattlerep.org) – be sure to check for student ticket prices!)

*Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
April 18-May 18

**Seattle Shakespeare**([www.seattleshakespeare.org](http://www.seattleshakespeare.org) – be check for student ticket prices!)

*The Importance of Being Earnest*
March 19 – April 13
*King Lear*
April 24-May 11

**The Balagan Theatre**([www.balagantheatre.org](http://www.balagantheatre.org) – student tickets are 25% off)

*Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*
April 18-May 3

**Seattle Public Theater**
([www.seattlepublictheater.org](http://www.seattlepublictheater.org) – $10 tickets for patrons 25 and under)

*Gidion’s Knot*
March 27-April 20
*Arcadia*
May 15-June 8

**Theatre Off Jackson**([www.theatreoffjackson.org](http://www.theatreoffjackson.org) – various programs, check calendar – no student prices)

**The Annex Theatre**
(<http://www.annextheatre.org/> -- various programs, check calendar – student discounts available)

**The Paramount Theatre/The Moore/The Neptune**
([www.stgpresents.org](http://www.stgpresents.org) – various programs, check calendar – no student prices)

Other websites for research:

[www.seattleperforms.org](http://www.seattleperforms.org)
[www.seattle-theatre.org](http://www.seattle-theatre.org)
[www.theatreinseattle.org](http://www.theatreinseattle.org)
www.emeraldcityburlesquecalendar.com