

Fall 2019 ENGL 110 Descriptions

ENGL 110-080

Ray Peters

Creating Musical Taste



This course will explore the connection between writing about music and creating musical taste. Thanks to the cloud, we have easy access to an almost limitless range of music. How do we decide what to listen to? Why is “bad music” for some “good music” for others? Are there good reasons for thinking some music is better than other music? How do we develop musical taste? Why do some musical tastes remain the same or change? What is the connection between creating music and developing musical preferences? How does social interaction influence musical taste? What role do recommender systems and collaborative filtering play in creating musical taste? Are our

musical tastes nothing more than a data profile? Our primary focus will be popular musical forms (rock, pop, punk, rap, hip-hop, country, blues, etc.), but we will also consider classical, musicals, jazz, experimental, and the difficult to classify. Throughout the course, the emphasis will be on the rhetorical analysis of texts. We will read Carl Wilson’s *Let’s Talk about Love: Why Other People Have Such Bad Taste*, Peter Shaffer’s *Amadeus*, Geoff Dyer’s *But Beautiful: A Book about Jazz*, and a number of articles about contemporary music. We will also listen to samples of the music under discussion. Students will write brief response papers, critical reviews, analytical essays, and a research paper and multimodal project examining the creative process in the work of a composer or musician of their choice.

ENGL 110-081

Jim Burns

The Theory and Practice of Nonviolence



In a world seemingly racked by war and violent conflict there exists a little regarded alternative way of settling disputes. Nonviolence has a long (and effective) history in many parts of the world. The class will explore both the secular and religious origins of Nonviolence by examining writings by authors such as Gandhi, King, Tolstoy and Chavez. We will deal with those who are committed to Nonviolence as a principle, as a tactic, and as a personal practice. We will probe the connections of Nonviolence to contemporary political movements, such as feminism. We will see how Nonviolence is implemented, including specific examples drawn from different regions of the world. The class will allow us to develop critical thinking about the nature and efficacy of both violence and nonviolence, and discover ways that nonviolence can be employed to achieve meaningful objectives. Students will write papers on the three areas of focus, cumulating with a research paper that may expand one of the three with significant research. The main text for the class will be *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice* by Barry Gan and Robert Holmes, along with other relevant materials from my own experience using nonviolence as a means of political change.

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ENGL 110-082

Alex McKee

Defining Moments: Private Memory vs. Public History



American philosopher George Santayana famously observed that, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” But what exactly does it mean to remember? How do we hold onto the past individually and collectively? Is memory best understood as a function of the brain? Or does it represent a socio-cultural phenomenon as well? These are some of the provocative questions we will take up in this interdisciplinary course, which combines perspectives from art history, comparative literature, philosophy, psychology, and political science. At the start of the class, we will look at how individuals have variously attempted to preserve their own pasts in writing. But we will go on to

consider how individual testimonies have contributed to collective memories, focusing particularly upon some first-hand accounts of the World War I. At the same time, we will address the historical function that is served by such public sites of remembrance as cemeteries, museums, and monuments. Finally, we will examine the role that war crime tribunals and truth commissions have played in constructing public memories of the Holocaust and Apartheid respectively. Students will explore the difference between private memory and public history in brief response papers and longer essays. They will also learn how to incorporate visual and audio rhetoric into their arguments as they collaborate to produce multimodal presentations for the class. Readings may include Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz*, and Sindiwe Magona’s *Mother to Mother*, as well as selections of World War I poetry.

ENGL 110-083

Christina Durborow

Fast Fashion: Style Without Substance?



Take a look into your closet—what motivated you to buy the clothes you see inside? Design? Cost? A desire to convey something about who you are and what you value? Clothing, of course, is a necessity. But how much do you know about where your clothes come from and what they represent outside of your immediate experience? This course explores the modern phenomenon of fast fashion, disposable clothing that is generally inexpensive and of low quality because it’s not intended to last beyond a season or two. Fast fashion encourages consumers to have fun while trying out new trends, but those

seemingly cheap garments come at a substantial price, and this course seeks to discover who is responsible for footing that bill. Concepts discussed through the semester will include environmental concerns about the clothing industry (the effects of manufacturing, shipping and disposing of these items), humanitarian and ethical concerns (exploitation of workers and dangerous working conditions) and sociological concerns tied to the psychology of shopping, our culture of consumption and how fashion labels, both low and high-end, contribute to the issue. Possible texts include *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion* by Elizabeth Cline, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* by Diane Crane and *Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-Hand Clothes* by Andrew Brooks. Required writing for the course is intended to develop your critical voice while sharpening your academic prose and will include response papers, analytical essays, a research paper and a multimodal text.

ENGL 110-084

Shailen Mishra

Creativity: Myths and Resistance



The theme of this course will be creativity and its two aspects: myths surrounding creativity and the creative ways people resist their oppressive circumstances. In the first part of the course, we will study and challenge the myths/misconceptions surrounding creativity. Our textbook for this purpose will be [The Myths of Creativity](#), which is a heavily-researched, self-help style, popular non-fiction book. You will imitate this writing genre in the first writing project, wherein you will address some of the popular writing myths that affect us as writers, especially the writing community at UD. Early in the semester a sample survey of UD students will inform you of some of the

writing myths prevalent among UD student population. You will select a myth that you have personal stake or interest in, and you will produce a well-researched and engagingly-written article (1500-2000 words) that refutes the myth or develops a complex understanding of it. In the second part of the course, we will turn our attention to creative resistance. How creativity is used to wage a freedom struggle (think of [Gandhi](#))? How an oppressed group employs creative means to challenge their oppressors ([fight for gender equality in Egypt](#))? How creative protests are forged and imagined ([Occupy Wall Street movement](#))? How an artistic expression can be protest too (aka [Hip Hop](#))? For the second and final writing project, you are free to choose a non-fiction writing genre of your choice and produce a researched/informative/persuasive work (1500-2000 words) on creative resistance.

ENGL 110-085

Andy Ross

How to Do Nothing: Writing about Attention

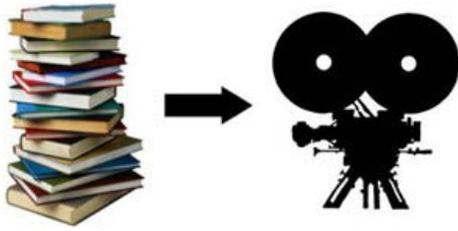


We live in an age of seemingly unending distractions and fractured sensibilities. What does this mean for writing? This honors composition course invites students to consider the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary question of attention—what it is, how it ought to be used, and what rhetorical functions it has come to play in our present cultural moment. Additionally, the course asks: What are we paying attention to when we write? In addition to examining the process of becoming mindful, attentive, and rhetorically-savvy researchers and writers, this course will study the ways that distractibility, mindfulness, “flow,” boredom, and hyper-focus have become concepts around which conversations have accrued from fields as diverse as economics, political science, media studies, education, and anthropology. Student work will include personal narratives, research papers, and a collaborative public exhibit around multimodal re-imaginings of contemporary attention. Course texts may include selections from: Thich Naht Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*; Alan Jacobs, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*; Kathryn Ellison, *Buzz: A Year of Paying Attention*, and Ali Smith, *Autumn*.

ENGL 110-086 & 095

Kevin Burke

Adaptation and Appropriation: the Complex Dialogue of Cultural Interaction



Adaptations are such a pervasive feature of contemporary life that they are often received and judged by simple standards like fidelity to an original. Contemporary adaptation studies, however, show that the adaptive process is more complex than a relatively straightforward transposition of a text from one form to another. Additionally, the study of adaptation can provide a lens through which to consider the basic dynamics of cultural transmission and appropriation. We will begin the course with general considerations of adaptation ranging

from Aristotle's idea of "mimesis" through Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*. Having established a theoretical understanding of adaptation as such, we will investigate adaptation as a field for the interaction between the dominant culture and its marginalized groups. The investigation may include the relationship between the work of African-American musicians like Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, and Chuck Berry, etc., and the white rock n roll of Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones, and the Beach Boys, among others. Other topics may include the gender switching in the lead roles of the play, *The Front Page*, and the film, *His Girl Friday*; and racial and gender switching in films like *the Wiz*, *Annie*, and the opera *Madame Butterfly*. Students can expect to write several response papers, two 5-8 page research papers, one on a common topic and one on topics chosen by students, and to give a presentation on their final research project.

ENGL 110-087

Dustin Morris

Composing Hype



What do Supreme, Fyre Festival, or even an incoming caravan of immigrants have in common? HYPE. Throughout this course, we will examine examples, often failed examples, of hype throughout American culture. We will deconstruct the hype in order to appreciate a fuller range of ethical and social consequences it has on culture at large. Through various readings, projects, and presentations, our writings and compositions will attempt to analyze the rhetoric of hype. Specifically, we will read Jeff Rice's seminal text *The Rhetoric of Cool*, President Trump's speeches on the "immigration Crisis", and the two documentaries on the failed Fyre Festival. Students will "read" and profile the orange blocks scattered across multiple social media platforms and other forms of media to learn about circulation. We will also rhetorically analyze and

research various political speeches using hype as a framework of rhetoric's persuasiveness. Finally, students will locate and offer up ways in which the UD community uses hype –maybe even, as a class, creating a moment of hype across the campus. By examining the ways in which composers/authors/writers use hype, students will become more attuned to the rhetorical nuances within their own texts they compose.

ENGL 110-089

Petra Clark

Nothing Succeeds Like Excess: Minimalism and Maximalism in Contemporary Culture



In contemporary culture, we still seem torn between moderation and excess. On the one hand, there is the allure of downsizing and reducing, as exemplified by the tiny house phenomenon, “green” living, or the success of Marie Kondo’s approach to decluttering, most recently showcased in her 2019 Netflix series. On the other hand, there are the extravagancies of materialism and “late capitalism,” such as McMansions, tech obsolescence, and the commodity-packed lives of celebrities. Both approaches advertise a certain way of living, each of which is potentially unattainable for the average person. Yet that

doesn’t stop us from being fascinated by the (im)possibilities of minimalism and maximalism, and the issues of value, access, privilege, and waste that each raises. In this course, we will trace the fluctuating margins of excess by examining a variety of texts and media. These may include (but are not limited to) Aristotle’s treatise *Nicomachean Ethics*, Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*, the hit novel/film *Crazy Rich Asians*, the documentary *Generation Wealth*, and recent articles and critical collections such as *The Uses of Excess in Visual and Material Culture, 1600-2010*. Through these readings and your collaborative and independent work in this class, you will hone your critical reading, writing, and cultural criticism skills. Your written work for this course will consist of blog posts, short analytical essays, a longer research-based paper, and a final digital project.

ENGL 110-090

Paula Persoleo

Patriotism, Propaganda, and Poetic Rhetoric



This course will urge students to become part of the conversation between political agenda (i.e., encouraging patriotism through propaganda) and alternative viewpoints. Students will determine how rhetoric can reshape a culture’s ideology, specifically during the Counterculture Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, and the current worldwide fight for gender equality. Texts will include *The Portable Beat Reader*; *Words of Protest*, *Words of*

Freedom; and *Washing the Dust from Our Hearts*. Students will also read and discuss relevant essays (including “A Change Ain’t Gonna Come” and “Why Afghan Women Risk Death to Write Poetry”), political posters, and music (from Bob Dylan to Jefferson Airplane) that speak to the dialog of protest. Assignments will include short essays that respond to, critique, and analyze the roles of these poets. A research project, including a 10-page essay and an oral presentation, will demonstrate students’ understanding of the rhetoric of protest in a historical context.

ENGL 110-092

Dan Freeman

Restorative Justice: Nature, Self, and Society



While in jail, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote the following: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” This course will examine the inseparability of ourselves, others, and the environment while asking fundamental questions about finding meaning and purpose. What does it mean to live a good life? How important is it to work for justice? What is our relationship—our society’s and our own—with technology? How do we talk to and treat others? How do we talk to and treat ourselves? How are we affecting the earth and its inhabitants? At a time when the world, both politically and environmentally, is rapidly changing, what can—and should—we do? We’ll be reading nonfiction and fiction on topics such as gender, class, race, education, technology, communication, and nature. In addition to essays, articles, poems, and short stories, we’ll also be reading Dahr Jamail’s book *The End of Ice*, which

explores the scientific, societal, and existential aspects of grappling with an increasingly unstable climate. Assignments will ask students to express themselves persuasively in a variety of forms, including a narrative essay, a research paper with presentation, a podcast, a visual rhetoric piece, an interview, and a public service announcement. The overall intent of the course is for us to come to a deeper understanding, as a community of compassionate and inquisitive learners, of how each of our threads ties into the larger fabric.

ENGL 110-093

Joseph Harris

Representing Learning



We tend to think about learning as something that happens on the inside. You learn a new idea, or a new skill—a different way of looking the world, or of approaching a task, or even of thinking about yourself. So how do writers show that someone has actually learned something new? How do they represent an internal event? We’ll begin our work in this class by reading, writing, and talking about three representations of learning—in a play ([Educating Rita](#), by Willy Russell), a novel ([Push](#), by Sapphire), and an autobiography ([Educated](#), by Tara Westover). I’ll ask you to develop an essay in response to one or more of these pieces. And then I’ll ask you to find another representation of learning,—book, video, audio, whatever—and

show how it connects with, or complicates or disrupts, the views of learning we’ve already talked about.

ENGL 110-094

Lauren Hornberger

Automobiles and American Identity



Driving happens all around us every day. We watch others cruise along, we drive to school and work, we catch an Uber. It's all quite mundane, but could there be more to this simple phenomenon than meets the eye? Social theorist Jean Baudrillard once asserted, "All you need to know about American society can be gleaned from an anthropology of its driving behavior." According to Baudrillard, our experiences with transportation are quite socially and culturally significant. In this theme-based section of ENGL110, we will explore the broad topic of automobility in American society, focusing on how representations of cars and driving reflect and may even shape our personal and cultural ideals. As part of this

exploration, we'll discuss published theory and historical information and apply that knowledge to an examination of driving depictions in literature, film, music, advertising, and the like. Ultimately, we'll use our exploration of automobility in America as a vehicle for you to hone your reading, research, and critical thinking skills and to learn more about composing compelling texts, both verbal and visual. During the semester, students can expect to compose a variety of texts based on the class readings and discussions, including summaries and personal responses, multimedia projects, and a formal research-based paper.