

LITERARY JOURNALISM

HSS 404 , Fall 2025
Office: 413 Cullimore Hall
Hours: Wed. 2:30-3:30 & by appointment
Mail: Humanities Dep't, NJIT, Newark, NJ 07102

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Course Digital Venue, **Canvas Conferencing**

System

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines forms of journalism, focusing ultimately on literary journalism and other literary forms such as creative nonfiction, with respect to their relationship with either fact or truth, or both (especially considering literary nonfiction's vital role in a politically free society). Aside from brief written assignments (N.B. honors college students must also compose a relatively brief term paper in consultation with the instructor), and oral reports, required work in the course will consist of reading journalistic / literary-journalistic and like nonfiction texts of various kinds.

Prerequisites: ENG 102 with a grade of C or higher, and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher.

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; write argument-based essays in response to thematic questions; and explain the dynamic of news media within a free society.

COURSE TEXTS

Books:

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences*, 1965. New York: Vintage, 1994. ISBN: 0679745580.

Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2014. ISBN:9780804136785

Kerrane, Kevin, and Ben Yagoda, *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism*. New York: Scribner, 1998.

Other short readings are listed below in the Week-by-Week schedule and at the course homepage in Canvas.

Other Useful Texts:

Help for Doing Literary Analysis: <http://web.njit.edu/~kimmelma/LitAnalysisHelp.html>

[Writing and Documentation Guides](#) (explanations, examples, etc.)

A suggested protocol for team oral/visual reports can be found toward the bottom of this page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Oral/Visual Reports as part of a group.
- Weekly Canvas postings (one original comment of 100 to 150 words, another of 50- to 100-word response to someone else's post in the week).
- A midterm and final exam (these exams are required for course credit).

Failure to sit for the final exam will result in all written assignments and the midterm exam being disqualified.

Weekly Canvas 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 (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.

N.B. Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, **it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity** whose policy can be found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that **it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office.** Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may

include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

All written work is to be submitted to the instructor via Canvas, in Word or a compatible program; no written work is to be submitted in PDF.

N.B.: Failure to participate in class discussions (especially online) at a minimally acceptable level will result in disqualification and so 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 can mean automatic course failure.

COURSE GRADE

Final Examination - 30%

Midterm Examination - 10%

Class Participation online (initial, originating posts - graded weekly) - 20% (10% if late)

Class Participation online (responses to classmates' posts) - 10% (5% if late)

Follow-up Questions or Comments - 5%

Portfolio of Eight Best Posts online - 5%

Group Reports - 20% (10% each)

COURSE SCHEDULE (access texts via course homepage in Canvas; see due dates and details of assignments at course homepage)

Week 1: Introduction to the course.

Week 2a: Kovach and Rosenstiel, *Elements of Journalism* pp. 1-19, 22-26, 47-61, 65-68, 97-116.

Week 2b: Kerrane and Yagoda, "Preface" and "Introduction" to *The Art of Fact*; "Introduction" to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; Naselli, "Truth in Memoir" (1986); Minkowitz, "How I Broke, and Botched, the Brandon Teena Story" (2018).

Week 3a: Hersey, *Hiroshima* excerpt (1946).

Week 3b: Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955).

Week 4a: Baldwin, "Nobody Knows My Name" (1955).

Week 4b: Breslin, "It's an Honor" and "A Death in Emergency Room One" (1963).

Week 5a: Thompson, *Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gang* excerpt (1965).

Week 5b: Didion, "Goodbye to All That" (1967), "Los Angeles Notebook" (1965, '67, '68).

Week 6a: Herr, "Keshan" (1969).

Week 6b: Midterm Exam.

Week 7a: Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* (January 1966), Preface and upto p. 74 (Part I).

Week 7b: Capote, Dir. Miller (2005) .

Week 8a: Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* ,pp. 75 to 248 (Parts II and III).

Week 8b: Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* ,pp. 75 to 248 (Parts II and III).

Week 9a: Capote, *In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences* ,pp. 249-343 (remainder of the book).

Week 9b: *In Cold Blood*, Dir. Brooks (1967).

Week 10a: Gornick, "To Begin With" (1977), through p. 12.

Week 10b: Simpson, "Tiananmen Square" (1989).

Week 11a: Kincaid, "On First Seeing England" (1991).

Week 11b: Shah, "Kinship, Cousins, & Khichidi" (2004).

Week 12a: Dean, "Dee Dee Wanted Her Daughter to Be Sick" (2016).

Week 12b: Fan, "How My Mother and I Became Chinese Propaganda" (2020).

Week 13a: Alexander, "The Trayvon Generation" (2020).

Week 13b: Raymond, "The Writer" (2022).

Week 14a: Hein, "Archipelagic" (2024).

Week 14b Beckwith, "Returning to the Scene" (2025).

Week 15: Course review.

Numerical conversions from letter grades: A+ = 4.4 A = 4 A- = 3.7, etc.

SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR TEAM ORAL REPORTS

Introduction

Spokesperson for group (preferably Speaker #1 or #4) puts up first viewgraph (topic of report) and defines:

A. Topic of the group report

B. Introduces self and other members of the team (both first and last names)--Viewgraph #2

C. Explains briefly how the topic has been broken down and what aspect of the topic each speaker will

address.

D. Introduces Speaker #1.

Speaker #1:

A. Thanks spokesperson

B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)

C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)

D. Introduces Speaker #2

Speaker #2:

A. Thanks Speaker #1

B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)

C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)

D. Introduces Speaker #3

Speaker #3:

A. Thanks Speaker #2

B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)

C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)

D. Introduces Speaker #4

Speaker #4:

A. Thanks Speaker #3

B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)

C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)

D. Asks for Questions (or reintroduces Spokesperson)

Question and Answer Period:

A. Spokesperson asks if there are questions

B. Recognizes questioner and directs question to appropriate member of team

C. Allows any other member of team to comment

D. After last question, thanks audience.

Resources for NJIT Students

[IST Service Desk](#)

The IST Service Desk is the central hub for computing information and first point of contact for getting help and reporting issues related to computing technology at NJIT.

Students can put in a ticket with the service desk: <https://servicedesk.njit.edu/CherwellPortal/IST>

or call [\(973\) 596-2900](tel:973-596-2900) Monday - Friday from 8:00am – 9:00pm

[Academic Advising Success Center](#)

“...assist in the advisement of students who are undecided in their major, transitioning into another major at NJIT, and those students who need additional support to graduate successfully and in a timely manner.”

[Academic Integrity](#)

“New Jersey Institute of Technology is an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. The university expects that its graduates will assume positions of leadership within their professions and communities. Within this context, the university strives to develop and maintain a high level of ethics and honesty among all members of its community. Imperative to this goal is the commitment to truth and academic integrity. This commitment is confirmed in this NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity.”

[Academic Support and Student Affairs](#)

“From questions about becoming a student at NJIT – to student engagement – to searching for information on career development, the Division of Academic Support and Student Affairs Staff is here to help.”

[Additional Tutoring Centers](#)

[Math Learning Center](#); [Chemistry Learning Center](#); [The Writing Center](#); [ECE Study Groups](#)

[Bookstore](#)

“Show your New Jersey Institute Of Technology pride all year long with our authentic assortment of New Jersey Institute Of Technology collegiate apparel...Plus, our selection of [textbooks](#), [computers](#), and [supplies](#) will ensure every New Jersey Institute Of Technology student is prepared for success.”

[Canvas Help Page](#)

Tutorials for students.

[Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

“The NJIT Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) is committed to assisting students in the achievement of their academic goals as well as benefiting from their personal experience on campus. College life can be personally challenging and stressful at times. We believe that the educational process is an important component of the development of the individual as a whole person. Our goal is to optimize the college experience and improve the quality of the lives of our students by promoting their mental health and facilitating students’ personal, academic and professional growth.”

[Department of Public Safety](#)

“The Department of Public Safety, conveniently located at 154 Summit St. on the first level of the Parking Deck, provides police protection 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

[Disability Support Services](#)

“The Disability Support Services office works in partnership with administrators, faculty and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and support services for students with disabilities that have provided our office with documentation to receive services.”

[Health Services](#)

“To ensure the good health of our students, the NJIT Student Health Service provides quality healthcare to all eligible NJIT registered students.”

[The Learning Center](#)

“Our mission is to assist students both in the classroom and beyond by providing tutorial services, academic coaching, academic and personal enrichment workshops and staff and peer support so students can meet the demands of their coursework and are prepared for life after graduation.”

[Canvas Help Page](#)

Tutorials for students.

[NJIT/Rutgers Shuttle Service](#)

“The shuttle bus is operated jointly with Rutgers-Newark and provides transportation for the University community between the two campuses, major mass transit systems, and Harrison and Kearny. As a courtesy, shuttle service is free to the Rutgers/NJIT community who present identification.”

[Office of Global Initiatives](#)

Resources for international students and study abroad programs.

[Robert W. Van Houten Library](#)

“The Van Houten Library offers electronic and print resources essential to the mission of New Jersey's science and technology university, including a core collection of academic books, databases, and journals, as well as research and consultation services.”

[Student Financial Aid Services](#)

“Student Financial Aid Services (SFAS) at NJIT is committed to providing you with every opportunity to obtain funding to support your undergraduate educational costs at NJIT.”