English 210H—Spring 2001

Arts Writing

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00–11:30am, SJU 318

Instructor: Linda Kenyon
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Office hours: Wednesdays, 3:00–4:30pm; other times by appointment
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Arts Writing is a study of the various forms, processes, and modes of publications of professional writing in the arts. The course will consider both freelance writing and writing within institutional contexts. Practice in research, writing, and editing will be emphasized.

Course text
Woe Is I, by Patricia O’Conner (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996)

Required readings
English 210H readings available at UW Bookstore.

Recommended readings
The Blind Assassin, by Margaret Atwood (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2000)
Elizabeth Rex, by Timothy Findley (Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 2000)

Note on the avoidance of academic offenses
All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts and its colleges are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the University of Waterloo Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11) and St. Jerome’s University Calendar (pp. 11-12). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome’s departmental chair, and ultimately the Student Appeals Officer for St. Jerome’s University.
Class schedule

Tuesday, May 1
Introduction and overview

Thursday, May 3
Writing about the arts

In-class writing exercise

Tuesday, May 8
Finding arts writing
Guest speaker: Carolyn Dirks, Librarian, St. Jerome’s

Discuss library assignment

Thursday, May 10
No class—Library assignment

Tuesday, May 15
Writing about film

Readings
- “Helena gets real: An ‘English rose’ dresses down to play a coal miner’s wife,” by Brian D. Johnson, Maclean’s, January 29, 1996
- Review of Margaret’s Museum, Catholic New Times, May 12, 1996
- “Misty, technicolour memories,” by Tina Loo, The Beaver, February-March 1997

Library assignment due

Thursday, May 17
Writing about film
View Margaret’s Museum

Tuesday, May 22
Writing about film

In-class writing assignment
Thursday, May 24
Writing about the visual arts

Reading

Tuesday, May 29
Writing about the visual arts
Guest speaker: Carol Podedworny, Director, UW Art Gallery

Thursday, May 31
Writing about the visual arts
• Guest speaker: Ron Hewson, photographer

In-class writing assignment

Tuesday, June 5
No class

Thursday, June 7
Writing about books
Guest speaker: Gary Draper, editor, Brick Books, Trout Lily Press

Tuesday, June 12
Writing about books

Readings
• “Exclusive excerpt from The Blind Assassin,” by Margaret Atwood, Saturday Night, September 2, 2000
• “Stiff Upper Slips: Margaret Atwood’s The Blind Assassin,” by Wayne Tefs, Border Crossings, February 2001
• “Margaret’s museum,” by John Bemrose, Maclean’s, September 11, 2000
• “A tale of ruin and woe,” by Stephen Smith, Quill & Quire, August 2000
• “Atwood’s secret: It isn’t easy being the queen of CanLit,” by Judith Timson, Chatelaine, March 2001
• “We had to ask,” interview with Margaret Atwood, Elm Street, October 2000
• “Love and Loss on Zycron,” John Updike, The New Yorker, September 18, 2000

Thursday, June 14
Writing about books

*Discuss book review assignment*

Tuesday, June 19
Writing about music

*Reading*
• “Fiddler on the edge,” by Guy Lawson, *GQ*, March 1998

Thursday, June 21
Writing about music

*In-class writing assignment*

Tuesday, June 26
Magazine writing

*Reading*
• “Unbuilding Ways,” by John Bentley Mays, *University of Waterloo Magazine*, Spring 1996

Thursday, June 28
Magazine writing

Guest speaker: John Bentley Mays

*Book review assignment due*

*Proposals for major project due*

Tuesday, July 3
No class—Opportunity to see matinees at Stratford

Thursday, July 5
Writing about the theatre

Tuesday, July 10
Writing about the theatre

*Readings*
• Excerpt from *Elizabeth Rex*, by Timothy Findley (Winnipeg: Blizzard Publishing, 2000)
• “Queen in search of a heart,” by John Bemrose, *Maclean’s*, July 1 2000
• “Educating Elizabeth,” by Kevin Burns, *Quill & Quire*, August 2000
Thursday, July 12
Writing about the theatre

In-class writing assignment

Tuesday, July 17
Writing artfully

Reading
- “Fiddle and bow: A fugue essay,” by Kim Echlin, in Taking Risks: Literary journalism from the edge, edited by Barbara Moon and Don Obe (Banff, Alberta: Banff Centre Press, 1998)

Thursday, July 19
Writing art

In-class writing exercise

Tuesday, July 24
Other arts writing

In-class writing exercise

Thursday, July 26
Summary

Major projects due

Assignments

All assignments are due on the date indicated and will not be accepted more than two weeks after that date. Two marks per day will be deducted for lateness.

In-class writing assignments (20%)
There will be four graded in-class writing assignments during the term, each worth 5% of your final mark.

Tuesday, May 22: Writing about film

Thursday, May 31: Writing about the visual arts

Thursday, June 21: Writing about music

Thursday, July 12: Writing about the theatre
Library assignment (15%)
In order to hone your research skills, you will be given a list of 15 articles and reviews to locate and make copies of. In addition to the copies, which will be returned to you for use later in the term, you must hand in a list of citations. You’ll be given half a mark for locating each item and half a mark for providing a clear citation.

Due Tuesday, May 15

Book review (20%)

Due Thursday, June 28

Major project (45%)
Proposal due no later than Thursday, June 28
Projects due Thursday, July 26
For your major project, you must experience some form of art—read a book, listen to a CD, attend a concert or play, see a movie, or visit an art exhibit—and locate written materials about it (reviews, programs, catalogues, promotional brochures, press releases).

You will then produce a substantial piece of writing 3,000 to 3,500 words in length, in which you critique selected written materials of the work of art you experienced and write an original review. Total word count must not exceed 3,500 words, and the critique of existing materials and your original review must be given equal weight. You must include copies of the materials you are critiquing with your paper.

Following are some suggested topics:
- An art exhibit on campus
- The sculptures on campus
- A local art exhibit
- A local concert
- A local theatre production
- A new movie currently in local cinemas
- A new Canadian book
- A recently released CD

You may also suggest any other topic that reflects your needs and interests. All students must submit a one-page proposal for the major project no later than June 28. Be sure to discuss any changes or adaptations to the project you propose as far in advance of the due date as possible.