



XIDS 2100: Arts and Ideas – Summer 2017

Professor: Pam Murphy

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Office Hours: T, TH: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Note: all email communication between the student and instructor **must be** conducted via your my.westga.edu account.

Course Description

This course will explore how media forms and mediations of perspective shape modern audiences' understanding of historical events and culture. Students will examine the defining characteristics of different textual and media forms (i.e. photojournalism, popular music, poetry, and film) and will examine how the construction and projection of textual, aural and visual images shape meaning and influence broader discussions of events and cultural phenomena.

Section Description

This section focuses on media and textual forms, as well as audience perspectives with specific emphasis on issues of identity, including that of race, nationality, and the self. Our three primary texts will be

- a variety of music and music videos as well as selected photographs, advertisements, and album covers, all of which we will interpret as “texts” that work to create, construct, and deconstruct the notion of homogenous national identity;
- the poems “Language Lesson, 1976” by Heather McHugh and “America” by Allen Ginsberg, which we will examine while paying close attention to the way the poems engage with and complicate inherited notions of national identity
- the film *The Truman Show*; we will pay close attention to the role of media and audience in the film, both as a way to investigate the influence of each on the other and to interrogate power dynamics and justifications negotiated in “reality show” culture.

In addition to these primary texts of analysis, we will read and analyze brief essays/articles (available as hyperlinks on my website), as well as other texts/media suggested by either myself or students during class discussions.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics that define and differentiate literary, filmic and visual texts.
- Students will be able to apply this understanding to analyze the relationship between form and meaning.
- Students will be able to explain how diverse modes of humanistic and artistic endeavor contribute to an understanding of history and of American culture and identity.
- Students will be able to produce written work that synthesizes evidence effectively in organized, specific, and focused paragraphs to support analytical claims.
- Students will demonstrate the ability in informal and formal writing contexts to express ideas using concise and rhetorically appropriate academic English.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to produce a thesis-driven essay that analyzes texts in relation to larger “real world” questions of social, cultural, or thematic significance.

As a writing-intensive XIDS class, the writing exercises will foster individual exploration of ideas, analytical critical questions, cultural or historical contexts, and ultimately thesis-driven argument. Writing assignments will build on each other and will engage students in discussion of the characteristics of visual media, written text, and the construction and deconstruction of identity.

Expectations

I expect you to:

- Display a working knowledge of the syllabus
- Attend all classes, arriving on time with relevant materials in hand
- Participate fully and respectfully in class discussions
- Remain attentive and engaged throughout the class period
- Offer constructive critiques on your classmates’ work and respond graciously to constructive criticism
- Improve your writing during each step of the process
- Avoid repeating mistakes addressed in feedback
- Submit quality work, complete and on time
- Communicate promptly with me about any questions or concerns

Ultimately, your success depends on how much time, energy, and effort you are willing to put into the class. I am only in control over one hundred percent of my own effort, but I promise you will always receive my full effort. I hope to have the same from you.

A Note Regarding Personal and Academic Responsibility

Being part of an academic culture (and "real life" in general) necessitates that you accept responsibility, not only for your actions, but for the work that you do; this means that it is ultimately up to you to meet deadlines, complete assignments, and accept the consequences when you do not comply with course policies. You are not entitled to a passing grade simply because you are enrolled in the course; likewise, in a university setting such as this one, grades are not assigned on the basis of effort, but rather, on the basis of *academic performance*. Your final grade will be the result of the grades that you *earn*; I cannot ethically give you additional points, even if you need to pass the course in order to avoid academic suspension or losing a

scholarship. You know what the stakes are for you if you do not do well in the course, so take responsibility for your performance.

Assignments

(1) Reading Journal: students respond individually in writing to daily reading assignments (print, filmic, and visual), demonstrating

- expressive writing (personal response), **and**
- analytical questioning (for example, students will use their perception of "pressure points" or parts of the text that they found confusing in order to ask critical questions and then, importantly, return to the text for deeper investigation into how to answer those questions).

Note: Both of these will help students move from response towards analysis. Journals will be collected regularly and used as prompts for class discussion.

(2) Visual image analysis: a brief writing assignment, paragraph length at least, based on an observation, description, and analysis of a visual: an album cover or photograph or brief video. This assignment fosters intellectual curiosity and analytical questioning through a medium students know well and instills confidence in "analysis" before they move on to academic writing about written texts.

(3) One short essay (2 pages): a shorter essay explicating an image or textual sign from a course text and its function in the text as a whole. This assignment builds upon the skills learned from the visual image analysis, allowing for application of those skills to a written text and moves the writer toward understanding how to build a thesis from critical analysis.

(4) Longer text and context essay (3-4 pages): an essay moving from a text itself to consider contexts: social, cultural, or thematic issues that the text raises in connection to the "real world" of individual experience.

(5) Final creative project: students will develop a creative project at the end of the semester on a topic of their choosing that is related to the course content. Students will develop a presentation related to this project at the end of the semester. Further details will be announced in class.

Evaluation

- Course Participation (attendance, group workshops, quizzes, daily work, in-class writing, creative project progress)
15%
- Reading and Class Notes Journal
20%
- Writing Assignment #1 (paragraph-length analysis)
10%
- Writing Assignment #2 (short essay)
15%

- Writing Assignment #3 (long essay)
25%
- Final Creative Project
15%

Notes for Consideration:

Essay Format: **ALL** papers must be in accordance with MLA guidelines, typed and double-spaced.

Attendance and Late Work Policy:

Since this class meets so few times, each absence is like missing a week of a normal class. Students should be in attendance for every class period. No assignments can be submitted late or made up, so even one absence will also affect participation and reading journal grades. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences. Failure to attend all classes may result in a failing grade for the course.

Email Policy:

I welcome email communications; however, please take advantage of my office hours for more detailed feedback or communication. **Please Note:** The official email communication method will be through campus e-mail (MyUWG). According to university policy and federal law (FERPA), I can only accept and answer emails you send me from either your official UWG email account (you can access this remotely through webmail or through “MyUWG”) or your CourseDen account (if applicable to this class). Also, you should follow email etiquette and observe basic rules of politeness and formality in email messages.

IGNITE
UWG'S SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

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Course Schedule

*Changes or additions to the readings may occur throughout the semester.
These will be announced in class or through email.*

Note: All assignments, including readings, are to be completed for the date listed in the schedule. **Red print indicates a written assignment due date.**

Week One

T 06/27 – Intro to course basics: syllabus, major assignments, course theme: the construction and deconstruction of culture in visual and written texts; “Cult of Personality”; writing diagnostic exercise/response to visual image: analytical exercise; reading journal prep.

W 06/28 – Read before today’s class: [Thesis Construction](#) and ["What We Are to Advertisers"](#). What is media (past and present)?; Bruce Springsteen; Tina Turner; ad analysis; grammar exercise.

TH 06/29 – (Read before today’s class: [Awesome Action Verbs](#) and [Paragraph Construction](#).) Continue discussion: Dirty Pop; female pop stars in America: Katy Perry, Madonna, P!nk, Nicki Minaj, etc.

F 06/30 –Finish discussion—student-submitted examples; Begin drafting Writing Assignment One: See website for Assignment One prompt. Thesis and paragraph exercise.

Week Two

M 07/03 –**Writing Assignment One** due at beginning of class; introduction to poetry analysis: “The Secret” by Denise Levertov. Discussion of sign analysis and theoretical inquiry; grammar focus on commas.

T 07/04 – (Read before today’s class: “America” by Allen Ginsberg – linked on my website) Discussion of the poem; free writing exercise.

W 07/05 – (Read before today’s class: [Writing an Introduction](#) and Heather McHugh’s “Language Lesson, 1976” – linked on my website) Continue poetry discussion; Introduce Writing Assignment Two (linked on my website); discuss introduction construction.

Th 07/06 –Analytical exercises; Discuss Writing Assignment Two; Essay construction: types of introductions; grammar exercise.

F 07/07 –Work on draft; grammar focus on streamlined, clear sentences.

Week Three

M 07/10 – **Writing Assignment Two** due at beginning of class. (Watch *The Truman Show* before today's class. Practice: image and textual sign analysis; initial discussion of the film: major characters, audience reception.

T 07/11 –Continue film discussion: thematic and sign identification (small group work); grammar focus on common spelling and word choice errors.

W 07/12 –Cont. discussion: context; themes; culture; introduce Writing Assignment Three, linked on my website.

Th 07/13 –Discussion of essay; grammar exercise; practice unpacking arguments; strategies for expanding analysis; Elaborate: Writing Assignment Three.

F 07/14 –Thesis and paragraph exercises. Work on essay three.

Week Four

M 07/17 –Conferences for third essay; proofreading exercises.

T 07/18 – Creative project explanation; in-class paragraph construction. Conclusion discussion.

W 07/19 – In-class writing day.

Th 07/20 – **Writing Assignment Three** due. Final day of class; course evaluations; return to visual image response (from first day): Write about how your perspective and ability to “read” this image has changed at this point in the semester. What have you learned that you did not expect to learn? In what ways has this class prepared you for college-level coursework?; final editing and proofreading of creative project work.

F 07/21 – Reading Day

S 07/22 – Final: Creative Project presentations: Time TBA

***All links to assignments and readings are available on the XIDS 2100 page of my website:
<http://www.westga.edu/~pamm>