

Syllabus

Course title: Creative Writing Subtitle: Text as a Zone of Thinking Language of instruction: English Study year and semester: Autumn, 2022/23				
Course lecturer: Patrick Nicholas Tayler Email address: patricktayler@gmail.com				
Level and Code: M-SZ-301-ELM-20212201-04	Position in the Curriculum: -	Recommended semester: -	Credits: 5	Teaching hours: 1×130 min session / week
Related codes: ER-THEO-BA-ELM-20202102-02	Type: seminar	Is it open to sign-up as an elective? yes	Specific pre-conditions to sign-up as an elective: -	
Interlinkages: There are no prerequisites to participate in the seminar, which is independent and not connected to any parallel units.				
Aims and Principles: <p>The course investigates the various strategies of writing to find new ways of subverting conventions in art criticism, text-based art pieces and various forms of functional, ‘explaining’ writing. By seeking out well-grounded practices from literature, copywriting, social media and other zones of textuality we aim to discover a wide range of verbal possibilities. During the lessons, we will search for creative responses to the situation when somebody from the art world has to verbalise their thoughts and intuitions. Apart from developing practical writing skills, we examine the creative possibilities of the reader. We will rely on close-reading as a tool of self-reflection. By alluding to a wide range of case studies, we will collectively expand our textual perspectives in the domain of contemporary art.</p> <p>During the course, I will be glad to help you in overcoming any possible language barriers. Whatever the level of your English knowledge might be at the moment, we will find a way to work together!</p>				
Intended learning outcomes (professional and transitive competencies): <p>Knowledge: Gaining new theoretical, practical and artistic perspectives on different forms of art writing. Investigating an expanded notion of creative writing in a group environment. Utilising the tools and techniques of distinct areas of writing (literature, song lyrics, ad slogans, copywriting, etc.) to enhance personal, art-related projects.</p> <p>Skills: Art writing, creative writing, critical thinking and collaborative skills in text-based cultural interactions. Critical editing skills (creative criticality, critical creativity) and editing skills in general.</p> <p>Attitudes/attributes: A self-reflective approach to crafting sentences and paragraphs. An open attitude to creating new meanings through text. A close examination of text as a way to assure the precise expression of ideas. Charting new, personally relevant territories of thought and emotion through text.</p> <p>Autonomy and Responsibility: Understanding writing as a collective platform for collaboration and engagement. Developing skills in writing to let your personal voice contribute to local and global discourses. Helping you gain a more grounded, personal connection to the English language in art-related topics. Establishing the common notions of the classes together.</p>				
Course content (topics and themes): <p>The course will adapt to the interests of the students and the direction that the discussion will take us. Here is a selection of topics and themes we will possibly touch upon in the discursive space of the classroom.</p>				

- *How?* – the practical aspects of writing: drafting, restructuring, deleting, spellchecking and finalising
- *Close-reading* – how to construct a well-grounded sentence and paragraph? (case study: Lori Waxman: *60 wrd / min art critic*)
- *Hashtags, comments and posts* – various attitudes in the online sphere (hater, troll, fan, etc.), *the meme* (case study: *@the_art_gorgeous; @artreviewpower100*)
- *Social media as a platform for exchanging ideas* (case study: *@jerrysaltz*)
- *Subtext* – how do different layers of meaning creep into the equation?
- *Q&A* – how to formulate and answer questions during an interview
- *Charting fictional spaces* – is it possible to “read” computer games (as fiction)?
- *International Art English* – overcomplicating and simplifying sentences, English as a global language, transparency (Flesch-Kincaid reading ease score) vs. *Artspeak* (the elitism of International Art English)
- *Stylish academic writing* – what are the bad habits in academic writing? (Helen Sword, Steven Pinker, James McEnerney)
- *To explain! To question! To sell! To subvert!* – the functions and aims of art writing
- *Boring vs. exciting text* – investigating possible explanations based on examples of literature, *Subjective vs. objective text* – investigating the viewpoints, angles and the general perspective of the text, *Linear vs. non-linear text* – writing as a temporal or as a spatial zone of thinking
- *‘Criticofiction’* – facts, post-truth and subjective hallucinations in art writing
- *Alternatives* – extending language with lexical elements from various zones of popular culture

Specificity of the learning process:

Teaching method: In general, we will start each lesson with a presentation on a given topic. A moderated group discussion will follow. In the second half, we will reflect on the finished assignments, examining possible issues and perspectives.

Schedule: Wednesdays, 16⁴⁰ – 18⁵⁰, classroom

Possible tasks and assignments:

A selection of selectable tasks

- essay-reading group – every week one short essay discussed on a group-level
- short written assignments: explaining an artwork, project or exhibition for different target audiences and age groups; applying various textual filters (i.e. “purple prose”, “beige prose”, etc.)
- random creative tasks: collecting art talk clichés – writing a generic artwork description that could fit any piece; handcrafting memes – using language and imagery in the context of a joke to shed light on issues, etc.

Compulsory task (max. 5000 characters):

- connecting the toolkit of fiction and criticism in a subversive text

Learning environment: classroom (however, in the case of a pandemic situation, hybrid or online solutions may apply).

Assessment:

Assignments: Students will be asked to write short assignments that will be connected to the topics discussed during the seminar. At the end of the course, the students will be asked to create a more complex textual piece (max. 7000 characters), that will summarise the scope of the questions and issues touched upon during the seminar.

Assessment method: paper (max. 7000 characters)

Assessment criteria: Evaluation is to be based predominantly on the active participation of the student, the short homework assignments and the final seminar paper.

Calculation of grade:

- classroom work (attendance, contribution): 30 %
- short home work assignments: 20 %
- seminar paper: 50 %

Some books and other sources of information you might find useful and interesting:

- Gilda WILLIAMS: *How to Write About Contemporary Art*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2014
- David LODGE: *The Art of Fiction*, Penguin Books, London, 1992
- Helen SWORD: *Stylish Academic Writing*, Harvard University Press, 2012
- Helen SWORD: *The Writer's Diet*, University of Chicago Press, 2015
- Steven PINKER: *The Sense of Style*, Penguin Books, 2015
- Haruki MURAKAMI *What I talk about when I talk about running*, Vintage Books, London, 2008
- Umberto ECO: *How to Write a Thesis*, 1977
- Stephen KING: *On Writing, A Memoir of the Craft*, Hodder Paperbacks, 2012
- Stephen EARNSHAW: *The Handbook of Creative Writing*, Edinburgh University Press, 2007
- Craig SHRIVES: *Grammar Rules, Writing with Military Precision*, Kyle Books, London, 2001

A selection of further readings:

- https://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/international_art_english
- <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/45/60103/english-and-all-that/>
- <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/45/60100/international-disco-latin/>
- <https://hyperallergic.com/60675/how-not-to-write-like-an-art-critic/>
- <https://hyperallergic.com/66348/when-artspeak-masks-oppression/>
- https://monoskop.org/images/1/1e/Elkins_James_What_Happened_to_Art_Criticism_2003.pdf
- <http://www.cpanda.org/data/a00052/Visual%20Art%20Critic%20Report.pdf>
- <http://oritgat.com/Art-Criticism-in-the-Age-of-Yelp>
- <https://www.frieze.com/article/altercritics>
- <https://www.frieze.com/article/11-statements-around-art-writing>
- <https://www.frieze.com/article/who-do-you-think-youre-talking>
- <https://www.frieze.com/article/please-release-me>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2009/apr/24/art-criticism>
- <https://archive.ica.art/bulletin/notes-art-criticism-practice>
- https://aklatanqbayan.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/state_of_art_criticism.pdf
- <https://60wradmin.org/home.html>
- <https://arielfeminisms.dk/ygrg>

Schedule and venue for personal consultation: I am available for personal consultations (in English, German and Hungarian). You can reach me via email to discuss a one-on-one appointment: patricktaylor@gmail.com.