

Summer 2019

AP/EN 3179 3.0M (S2) *Art of the Personal Essay*

Course Director:

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Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-5:30pm

Description:

This course examines the history, development, and craft of the personal essay. Unlike the formal essay which tends to eschew the first-person perspective and insist upon an apparent detachment and attempt at objectivity, the personal essay is, well, personal. It is conversational, intimate, reflective, and subjective. It is well-suited to writing in the age of social media. And, as a personal mode disseminated in public, it is often tied to issues around disclosure and exposure of realities about oneself and others. In this course, we will explore the relationship between blogging, and even extended posts on Facebook and Twitter, and the personal essay alongside related genres like creative nonfiction, memoir and life-writing, and autofiction. In so doing, we will look at the history of this form and follow its trajectory from the work of Montaigne to Manrepeller. We'll consider the present context of the personal essay as a form, in light of what has been called the rise of a "First Person Industrial Complex" in academia and popular culture, and the ways that the personal essay is tied to constructions of the self both online and IRL.

Category:

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Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

Blog Posts (4 posts, 500-800 words each) – 50%
Term Essay (2500 words, 6-7 pages double-spaced) – 20%
Final Exam (In-class)– 15%
Participation – 15%

Reading List:

Roderique, Hadiya, "*Black on Bay Street*"
Montaigne, "*That Our Affections Carry Themselves Beyond Us*"
Orwell, George, "*Shooting an Elephant*"
Didion, Joan, "*On Self-Respect*"
Gay, Roxane "*Not Here To Make Friends*"
Coates, Ta-Nehisi, "*I'm Not Black, I'm Kanye*"
Coates, Ta-Nehisi, "*Why I'm Writing Captain America: and why it scares the hell out of me.*"
Als, Hilton, "*Revealing and Obscuring Myself on the Streets of New York.*"
Benaway, Gwen, "*Trans Girl in Love*"
Heti, Sheila, "*Why Go Out*"
Montaigne, "*Of Liars*"
Hedva, Johanna, "*Sick Woman Theory*"
Hodson, Chelsea, "*I Could Live Without Words (An Autoportrait)*"
Didion, Joan, "*After Life*"

All readings required for this course will be available for access online.

Open To:

YR 3, 4