

## CLASS DESCRIPTION

The ability to write well in English is vital for all students. Our language continually evolves and it is important to be aware of how it changes to gain pleasure from the flexibility of English and American English. It is crucial to master the language in order to produce stimulating essays, fiction, non-fiction or any area of creative writing.

We will explore issues of individual voice, narrative techniques, the importance of myth, the three act structure, use of vocabulary and tone. As well as referring to our set books we will read news, features and interviews in the English and US press. The emphasis will be on increasing awareness of current styles and practice in order to improve personal style.

Classes, which will last three hours including a break, will involve writing workshops, writing exercises, peer critiques, professorial critiques, field trips, tutor and student led discussions. Students will be taught how to analyse their own work and that of others. Work will be read out in class to show how style can be improved. The importance of reading out loud will be stressed so that students can become aware of repetition, sentence structure, rhythm and tone.

Students will have the opportunity to monitor their own progress and improve their writing. These manuscripts will be read out in class, at random and without prior warning. Peer critical analysis is an essential part of the program.

The class is in the form of discussion, seminar, field trips and workshop. Tutorials are also offered.

## OUTCOMES

- 1) To develop critical and analytical reading and thinking skills through argument.
- 2) To formulate thoughts persuasively, with passion, precision and eloquence.
- 3) To engage in a variety of writing styles.
- 4) To write with sophistication, clarity and grammatical precision.
- 5) To develop individual voice.
- 6) To develop an awareness of the importance of structure and how it relates to imagination.
- 7) To find new ways to be inspired.

This course will increase writing confidence and develop individual style. It will also improve writing in other courses.

The following areas will be covered over the semester.

Analysis of the press.

We will look at all areas of the British press and also explore its relation to US print journalism. We will read The Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The New York Times and listen to the BBC. Our discussion will explore house style, cultural difference, audience, journalistic 'voice' and the use of language.

We will listen to BBC Radio 4 as an example of mainstream culture.

Students will be required to read *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* every day and report back each week on an important story which can be analysed individually and by the group

#### The Personality Interview. Reading + Theory

We will look specifically at interviews and examine how the student might find their own way into a comfortable interview style. The use of the subjective or objective point of view will be explored. We will explore how the interview is linked to contemporary British life and examine the quality press as examples of inspiring writing

#### The Personality Interview. Practice

An interviewee will arrive for the students to practice their technique. This will be someone who has had an extraordinary past. This semester we invite Eugenie Dodd to talk about her time as a hidden baby in occupied Poland.

#### News reporting- London life

##### Reportage and the British media.

Students will be required to listen regularly to BBC Radio 4 and, in particular, the Today programme as source material. They are also to look at BBC and Channel 4 News. Students will bring a piece of reportage, based on the current news issues in Britain and continental Europe.

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#### Travel

An American in Europe. There are three prongs to this assignment.

- a) 1) Personal travel at midterm
- b) 2 Travel in pairs to a city outside London to be organised by the Director.
- b) Mid Term break travel.

#### The First Person

Op-Ed. Opinion or Editorial pieces will be examined from the broadsheets. Students will be asked to write their own op-ed on a current national or international issue. We will discuss various current topics so that students can choose an issue which fires them

#### Creative Writing

Students will have the option of Creative Writing. This will be the short story or a monologue. It will be inspired by myth. We will discuss the importance of myth in Western civilisation and creativity. We will also explore its role in narrative. We will also have a class where students will write to music to explore writing to an external stimulus which is non-verbal. Object may be given to students to inspire them to create a story around this item.

### The Modern Novel and Short Stories

Students will be asked to read a modern British novel. This is to study the importance of the modern narrative and to help individual creative writing. We will look at voice, style, the importance of the politics and content.

### Critical Analysis

Depending on students' experience there will be several classes devoted to learning Critical Analysis. We will use the British press and journals to explore structure, style, vocabulary, objectivity/subjectivity, witness and news reporting.

### WORKLOAD

Students will produce work weekly. This will be new material or the revision of previous writing. Three papers are to be delivered by the end of week five and three by the end of week eight. All these papers will also be revised to form a portfolio of six papers for final grading. We will be reading work out loud to discuss and positively critique one another during the class. This is an integral part of the student's critical journey. There will time spent on common problems such as repetition, dearth of vocabulary and structure

### GRADING

Grading will not happen until Week Eight so that the student gets used to revising work and therefore improving grades.

Marks are 20% for writing over the semester, 20% for class participation and 60% for the final submission of work.

Students will be examined on the progress they have made over the semester.

1.0 Poor grammar, weak content, banal.

1.5 Poor grammar, weak sentence structure, limited vocabulary, mediocre content.

2.0 Reasonable progress throughout the semester.

2.5 Good progress.

3. Strong style and content.

3.5 Imaginative work in fiction and non-fiction. A genuine talent for writing.

4.0 Flair, talent, impeccable grammar, a strong sense of style and structure.

*Those with appalling grammar, limited vocabulary and poor spelling will receive an Unworthy Writing note to be followed up on campus back home.*

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### FINAL EXAMINATION

The final exam will be the delivery of four pieces of work of 1,000 to 1,200 words. Over the semester there will be up to ten papers submitted, from which a final selection will be agreed by Professor Pascal with each student for the portfolio submission. This means that some papers will serve as practice runs and preparation for the final submissions. Students will have several topics to choose from and, by

Week Seven, will have decided on their five papers which will be submitted for grading. This means either three critical papers and two imaginative ones or three creative pieces and two critical analyses. These will be prepared and submitted throughout the semester. They will be edited and reworked in consultation with Professor Pascal. All students must submit all their written work with the final papers at the front of their files. Delivery date to be agreed with Professor Pascal and Jeannine Wyman.

#### NOTES

This course is held in small groups but tutorials can also be arranged when needed. There will be a concentration on improving writing techniques, which will have a spin-off effect on other essays.

Julia Pascal reserves the right to alter or amend this timetable if any major news event occurs in London or if she feels that the group require a particular focus on a specific area of writing

#### BEHAVIOUR

No eating in class will be tolerated. Any unexplained lateness or absence will result in a grade reduction. No laptops.

#### REQUIRED READING

Marina Warner's. *From the Beast to the Blonde* (By Week Two)

Ian McEwan's *Saturday*. (By midterm)

#### REQUIRED VISITS

We will go to the The Wellcome Institute's exhibition *Skin*.

You will go to *The Holocaust Exhibition* at The Imperial War Museum.

You will be assigned to interview passengers and commuters at St Pancras

International Station on a subject to be decided in class.

Students will be required to travel to cities outside London. These journeys to be coordinated with St Lawrence Administration.

These will be required writing assignments.

Julia Pascal reserves the right to make changes if there are major London news events.

Julia Pascal

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