

Spring 2021

HSS 403-004: Fact and Truth in Literary Journalism

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LITERARY JOURNALISM: FACT AND TRUTH

Hybrid Format

HSS 403, Spring 2021

Office: 413 Cullimore Hall

Hours: Mon., Class Meeting 11-12:20, & by
appointment

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Course Digital Venue, Canvas Conferencing System

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines journalism and its relationship with either fact or truth, or both, especially considering its vital role in a politically free society. The course also compares journalism, and literary journalism, along with (other) literature and film. Aside from written assignments, required work in the course will consist of reading journalistic / literary journalistic texts of various kinds, and viewing like films--all relevant to the overarching discussion in the course. This course is a senior seminar; as such it is designed and committed to allowing students the opportunity to work closely with an instructor in a specific area of the instructor's expertise.

Prerequisites: HUM 102; and one from among HUM 211, HUM 212 and Hist 213 or their equivalents, all with a grade of C or better; completion of either the Lit/Hist/Phil/STS or the Open Elective in Humanities and Social Science, with a grade of C or better.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course students should be able to: demonstrate critical thinking within a narrowly focused subject area through both oral and written

communication; develop in-depth, focused, polemical, researched writing with full documentation of sources; write argument-based essays in response to thematic questions; and, explain the dynamic of news media within a free society.

COURSE TEXTS

Books:

Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2014. ISBN:9780804136785

Various other short readings are listed below in the Week-by-Week schedule and at the course homepage in Canvas.

Other Useful Texts:

Help for Doing Literary

Analysis: <http://web.njit.edu/~kimmelma/LitAnalysisHelp.html>

[Writing and Documentation Guides](#) (explanations, examples, etc.)

[Abbreviations for Marking Papers](#)

See also:

Guidelines for a Successful Oral Presentation (see also SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR TEAM ORAL REPORTS toward the bottom of page):

<http://go.owu.edu/~dapeople/ggpresnt.html>

<http://www.auburn.edu/~burnsma/oralpres.html>

http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~riceowl/oral_presentations.htm

<http://web.cba.neu.edu/~ewertheim/skills/oral.htm>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Oral/Visual Reports, one a group report on a weekly assignment, the other an individual report on the term paper project.
- Weekly Canvas postings (one original of 100 to 150 words, another 50 to 100-word response to someone else's post).
- A two-staged research project culminating in a researched and fully-cited term paper* (see writing and documentation guidelines above, listed with the course readings):

Stage One: a Term Paper Announcement (see below^)
consisting of a Working Title, a one-sentence Thesis Statement (one sentence only, though the sentence can be long and multi-claused and may use one semicolon), a detailed, step-by-step Description of your future paper's Writing Strategy (i.e. how you will prove your thesis, *not a summary* of what will be in

your paper), and a Bibliography (in MLA format--see the link to documentation guides above) of at least three secondary sources, one of which must be a hard-copy source (for the purposes of this assignment assigned readings, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and textbooks will not be considered as counting toward the requisite minimum number of secondary sources, although they can be used in your term paper project);

Stage Two: a 1500 to 3000-word, fully-documented, original and critical, discursive, *polemical* (please look up this word if you don't really know what it means) and otherwise argumentative essay that must include at least some detailed analysis of the artifacts being discussed (see below^^), along with a bibliography of all sources (the bibliography will not be considered part of word count). The term paper topic is open (though the topic must have something to do with the subject of this course) but must be approved ahead of time by the instructor.

The Term Paper is credited when preceded by the Term Paper Announcement.

*An original work of literary journalism (or voiced investigative reporting), developed in consultation with the instructor, may be substituted for the term paper project. This work would also, like the term paper project, manifest in two written

stages. Instructions for this option are available at the course homepage in Canvas.

- Final examination, comprehensive, essay in format, open-book.

Failure to submit the final exam will result in the papers that are part of the term paper project being disqualified.

N.B.: Papers must be word processed using a 12' font, double-spaced with one inch margins, spell-checked, and to the best of one's ability grammar-checked. Papers must be submitted as Word files; *under no circumstances should a paper be submitted as a pdf.*

Weekly Canvas posts should be single-spaced but otherwise must also be spell-checked and to the best of one's ability grammar-checked, and must be in standard English and adhere to standard formal writing protocols.

As regards all writing submitted in this course, please keep the following in mind. If on occasion use is made of the ideas or words of someone else in one's writing, then the source(s) of those ideas and/or words must be cited; that is, when appropriate, papers must be fully documented in MLA format (you must cite sources--using footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical documentation, which include specific page numbers keyed to particular passages in your text, and complete bibliographical information). WRITTEN TEXTS NOT

MEETING ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL NOT BE READ AND WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT.

N.B. Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university.

Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, **it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity** whose policy can be found

at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that **it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office**. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Papers must be submitted to the instructor via Canvas, as Word for Windows (preferably Word 2003) attachments, using a proper identifying subject line.

N.B.: Failure to participate in class discussions (especially online) at a minimally acceptable level will result in disqualification of end-of-term assignments such as the term

paper and final exam; *such disqualification must inevitably spell failure in the course*. In order to pass this course a student must be consistently active in weekly class work starting from the beginning of the course term. Furthermore, *only three unexcused absences will be allowed*; more than these will mean automatic course failure.

^Term Paper Announcement:

Consists of 1) a descriptive paper title, and a subtitle to show focus and specificity, 2) a one-sentence thesis statement that includes the point of your argument, the breadth of that argument, and the argument's significant concepts and details, 3) a detailed, step-by-step description of the writing or argumentative strategy to be employed in your paper, 4) a bibliography of all sources both primary and secondary in MLA format and alphabetized. For the purposes of this assignment, use must be made of at least three secondary research sources (one of them hard copy) excluding assigned readings, textbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

A description and samples of the Term Paper Announcement are available from the course Canvas homepage.

^^Term Paper:

Consists of: 1) a descriptive paper title, and a subtitle to show focus and specificity, 2) a full-length essay, 3) a bibliography in MLA format and alphabetized. For the purposes of this assignment, use must be made of at least three secondary

research sources (one of them hard copy) excluding assigned readings, textbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

N.B.: While one research paper source must be hard copy--and there is no substitute for physically going to a library to do research--a downloaded article from one of the NJIT Library's databases can be considered as a hard copy source (it is best to check with the instructor about the suitability of such an article)

Samples of the Term Paper are available from the course Canvas homepage.

COURSE GRADE

Final Examination

Term Paper

Term Paper Announcement

Class Participation online (initial, originating posts - graded weekly)

Class Participation online (responses to classmates' posts)

Follow-up Questions or Comments

Portfolio of Eight Best Posts online

Group Report

Individual Report

Extra credit project

COURSE SCHEDULE* (access texts via course homepage in Canvas; see due dates and details of assignments at course homepage)

Week 1: Kovach and Rosenstiel, *Elements of Journalism* pp. 1-19, 22-26, 47-61, 65-68.

Week 2: Kovach and Rosenstiel, *Elements of Journalism* pp. 97-116, 169-92, 213-39.

Week 3: Kerrane and Yagoda, "Preface" and "Introduction" to *The Art of Fact*; "Introduction" to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; Hersey, *Hiroshima* excerpt (1946); Heinz, "Death of a Racehorse" (1949).

Week 4: Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955).

Week 5: Breslin, "It's an Honor" (1963); Didion "Los Angeles Notebook" (1965, 67, 68).

Week 6: Thompson, *Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gang* excerpt (1965).

Week 7: Herr "Keshanh" (1969).

Week 8: Davidson, from *Loose Change* (1977)

Week 9: Simpson, “Tienanmen Square” (1989); Kincaid, “On First Seeing England” (1991).

Week 10: Brown, “One Spoonful at a Time” (2006); Gawande, “Letting Go” (2010).

Week 11: Diaz, “The Money” (2011); Fan, “How My Mother and I Became Chinese Propaganda” (2020).

Week 12: Parham, “TikTok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface” (2020); Roberts, “Wonder Women: The Fight for Female Superheroes in Hollywood” (2020).

Week 13: Alexander, “The Trayvon Generation” (2020); Tabios, “A Letter from Napa Valley” (2020).

Weeks 14&15: REPORTS ON TERM PAPERS.

Numerical conversions from letter grades: A+ = 4.4 A = 4 A- = 3.7, etc.

ABBREVIATIONS FOR MARKING PAPERS

Key: Abbreviation - Meaning

| | |
|--------|----------------------|
| A - | Article |
| Agr - | Agreement |
| Awk - | Awkward |
| CS - | Comma Splice |
| Dic - | Diction |
| Exp - | Explain |
| FS - | Fused Sentences |
| RO - | Run On Sentence |
| SF - | Sentence Fragment |
| Sp - | Spelling |
| SS - | Sentence Structure |
| Syn - | Syntax or Word Order |
| Tr - | Transition |
| Un - | Unclear |
| Uncl - | Unclear |
| Us - | Usage |
| V - | Verb |
| Va - | Vague |
| VF - | Verb Form |
| VT - | Verb Tense |
| WF - | Word Form |
| WW - | Wrong Word |

SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR TEAM ORAL REPORTS

Introduction

Spokesperson for group (preferably Speaker #1 or #4) puts up first viewgraph (topic of report) and defines:

- A. Topic of the group report
- B. Introduces self and other members of the team (both first and last names)--
Viewgraph #2
- C. Explains briefly how the topic has been broken down and what aspect of the topic each speaker will address.
- D. Introduces Speaker #1.

Speaker #1:

- A. Thanks spokesperson
- B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)
- C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)
- D. Introduces Speaker #2

Speaker #2:

- A. Thanks Speaker #1
- B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)
- C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)
- D. Introduces Speaker #3

Speaker #3:

- A. Thanks Speaker #2
- B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)
- C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)
- D. Introduces Speaker #4

Speaker #4:

- A. Thanks Speaker #3
- B. Restates his/her particular topic (with viewgraph)
- C. Addresses topic (with viewgraphs)
- D. Asks for Questions (or reintroduces Spokesperson)

Question and Answer Period:

- A. Spokesperson asks if there are questions
- B. Recognizes questioner and directs question to appropriate member of team

- C. Allows any other member of team to comment
- D. After last question, thanks audience.

Resources for NJIT Students

[IST Service Desk](#)

The IST Service Desk is the central hub for computing information and first point of contact for getting help and reporting issues related to computing technology at NJIT.

Students can put in a ticket with the service desk: [_](#)

<https://servicedesk.njit.edu/CherwellPortal/IST>

or call [\(973\) 596-2900](tel:9735962900) Monday - Friday from 8:00am – 9:00pm

[Academic Advising Success Center](#)

“...assist in the advisement of students who are undecided in their major, transitioning into another major at NJIT, and those students who need additional support to graduate successfully and in a timely manner.”

[Academic Integrity](#)

“New Jersey Institute of Technology is an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. The university expects that its graduates will assume positions of leadership within their professions and communities. Within this context, the university strives to develop and maintain a high level of ethics and honesty among all members of its community. Imperative to this goal is the commitment to truth and academic integrity. This commitment is confirmed in this NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity.”

[Academic Support and Student Affairs](#)

“From questions about becoming a student at NJIT – to student engagement – to searching for information on career development, the Division of Academic Support and Student Affairs Staff is here to help.”

[Additional Tutoring Centers](#)

[Math Learning Center](#); [Chemistry Learning Center](#); [The Writing Center](#); [ECE Study Groups](#)

[Bookstore](#)

“Show your New Jersey Institute Of Technology pride all year long with our authentic assortment of New Jersey Institute Of Technology collegiate apparel...Plus, our selection of [textbooks](#), [computers](#), and [supplies](#) will ensure every New Jersey Institute Of Technology student is prepared for success.”

[Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

“The NJIT Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) is committed to assisting students in the achievement of their academic goals as well as benefiting from their personal experience on campus. College life can be personally challenging and stressful at times. We believe that the educational process is an important component of the development of the individual as a whole person. Our goal is to optimize the college experience and improve

the quality of the lives of our students by promoting their mental health and facilitating students' personal, academic and professional growth.”

[Department of Public Safety](#)

“The Department of Public Safety, conveniently located at 154 Summit St. on the first level of the Parking Deck, provides police protection 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

[Disability Support Services](#)

“The Disability Support Services office works in partnership with administrators, faculty and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and support services for students with disabilities that have provided our office with documentation to receive services.”

[Health Services](#)

“To ensure the good health of our students, the NJIT Student Health Service provides quality healthcare to all eligible NJIT registered students.”

[The Learning Center](#)

“Our mission is to assist students both in the classroom and beyond by providing tutorial services, academic coaching, academic and personal enrichment workshops and staff and peer support so students can meet the demands of their coursework and are prepared for life after graduation.”

[Moodle Help Page](#)

Tutorials for students.

[NJIT/Rutgers Shuttle Service](#)

“The shuttle bus is operated jointly with Rutgers-Newark and provides transportation for the University community between the two campuses, major mass transit systems, and Harrison and Kearny. As a courtesy, shuttle service is free to the Rutgers/NJIT community who present identification.”

[Office of Global Initiatives](#)

Resources for international students and study abroad programs.

[Robert W. Van Houten Library](#)

“The Van Houten Library offers electronic and print resources essential to the mission of New Jersey's science and technology university, including a core collection of academic books, databases, and journals, as well as research and consultation services.”

[Student Financial Aid Services](#)

“Student Financial Aid Services (SFAS) at NJIT is committed to providing you with every opportunity to obtain funding to support your undergraduate educational costs at NJIT.”