

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of English
ENGL 210H
Arts Writing
Fall 2021

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Course Description

Welcome to ENGL210H for Fall, 2021!

We will cover three main areas in this course:

- 1) Writing about the arts from a critical perspective -- reviewing, profiles, features, etc.
- 2) Writing to promote the arts from within an arts organization -- such as a museum, gallery, theatre company, etc.
- 3) Editing, proofreading and other “corrective measures”

Note:

- We will emphasize work that duplicates the writing process in professional environments.
- Several visitors to our class and a virtual visit to the U of Waterloo Art Gallery (UWAG) will add perspectives on professional writing.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Write compellingly about the arts, as a critic/reviewer and as a promoter.
- Know how to tailor your writing to a wide range of audiences.
- Edit accurately for style, spelling and grammar, using editorial best practices.
- And perhaps most importantly To write more effectively in future schooling and work!

Readings:

- There are no required texts for the course.
- All readings are available on-line or will posted on LEARN as per the class outlines below.
- **Note:** The reading load is not excessive, but all readings are required. A

big part of this course is learning from excellent writing “models” – so doing the readings will directly impact your mark!

Online Delivery:

- Synchronous class lectures will be delivered Monday evenings, 7-8 pm EST.
- Although attendance during lecture time is encouraged, recorded lectures and the accompanying PowerPoint presentations will be posted for students who cannot attend in person.
- MS Teams will be in use for the sessions, and we will use “best practices” for discussions (i.e. hand raising/chat function to ask questions, discuss, etc.)
- An MS Teams invite will be sent all students’ Outlook calendars via their @uwaterloo.ca addresses.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Your final mark in this class will be based on the following:

- **7 weekly writing “snapshots”:** throughout term 20 per cent
- **Assignment 1:** Review - due in Class 4 - Oct 4 15 per cent
- **Copy editing test:** Class 8- Nov 8 10 per cent
- **Assignment 2:** In-house arts writing (due Class 9 - Nov 15) 20 per cent

- **Final Assignment:**
Outline due class 10 (5 marks) - Nov 22
Final paper due in class 12 (30 marks)
Total 35 per cent

NOTE: There is no mid-term or final in this class.

ASSIGNMENTS

General Information

For the three written assignments, answering five questions is key:

- **Audience:** Who are you writing for? And have you reached them?
- **Style:** Is your writing engaging and compelling for your target audience?
- **Content:** Have you covered all the key facts accurately? (The 5 Ws!)
- **Editing:** Is your work “clean” and free from errors, mistakes of grammar, etc.?
- **Understanding of the material we have covered in class:** Have you demonstrated that you have understood how to use what we have talked about? (In other words, I am looking for work you could not have done prior to taking this class!)

As this is a practical writing class, we will devote **a lot of time** to preparing for assignments, and in reviewing completed assignments. You will receive your assignments back the week after they are submitted.

We will be reviewing each assignment extensively in the classes leading up to the due dates, and will review each assignment in class after they have been handed back.

NOTE: Please put your name, assignment number/name, word count on the front page of each assignment. Assignments are due, via email, by the **start** of class (7 pm) on the due date.

VERY Important Re: Email submissions:

- Please give your attached file a name that has: Your name, the course name (ENGL 201H) and assignment number.
- Do not, under any circumstance, send me an attachment called “Assignment One” or “ENGL 201H Assignment” or any other ambiguous file name.
- It is very confusing (and annoying) to receive these files as I have to re-name them for my own records.
- If I receive such an attachment, I will send it back and will only accept it with an appropriate file name... and this may lead to a reduction in marks! (See below re: late penalties.) An appropriate file name would be: **J Trudeau_ENGL210H_Assignment One**
- You will receive a reply email from me within 48 hours of submitting an assignment via email, acknowledging that I have received it. **Important:** If you do not receive this email, please assume I have not received it... and follow up!

Policy on late submissions: In keeping with the best practices in journalism, you are expected to meet deadlines. If you are registered with U of W as requiring an academic accommodation, we can discuss how this will affect your assignments. Otherwise, you will need note from a doctor or other health care professional to be granted an extension.

In all cases of extension, we will work to assign a new due date.

Note: Please notify me re: any difficulties you are having in completing assignments as soon as possible; it is much easier to make alternate arrangements for submission if there is not a time crunch.

Deductions: One mark (not one percent!) per day for assignments marked out of 15; two marks per day (not two percent!) on the assignment marked out of 40.

Note on plagiarism: Please submit only your own work. See final page of this outline for more info on academic integrity if you are wondering about this policy. To be blunt, after 30 years in writing, I can usually tell if a student is not submitting their own work And if an assignment does not seem as though it was submitted by a student I will check online. Plagiarized assignments can receive a mark of 0, and will not be re-written. Again if you are confused about this policy please ask me.

Assignments

7 weekly writing “snapshots”

Due in classes 2-11 – (20 per cent of final mark)

- **Length:** 100 - 250 words
- **Notes:**
 - These are short, “personal-reflection” writing assignments that will be due each week at 7 pm EST. Please send them via email. They will be returned to you before the next class date.
 - Questions for you to address in these assignments are located in the week-by-week outline below
 - **Important:** Although each individual assignment is “only” worth 2.5 percent of the total class mark, they will all be VERY useful in helping practice what we cover in class!
 - Topics are related to ongoing assignments, readings etc., so these are excellent ways to stay on top of the larger assignments... and to develop your ideas towards these bigger papers!

Assignment One: Review

Due in class number 4 - Monday, Oct 4 – (15 per cent of final mark)

- **Length:** 650-750 words (please indicate word total at top of paper)

- **Note:** KYA - your assignment MUST also include a 25-50 word summary of the audience you are writing for, at the top of the paper! (part of the total word count)

The assignment: Review an arts event such as a film, play, concert, comedy show, “open mike” night, dance performance, etc.

- If possible, attend a live event (safely); if not, watch your event on-line, via cable, radio, etc. DVD, VHS, etc. is also acceptable.
- **Note:** The event you are reviewing needs to be outlined one week prior to the assignment – Monday, September 27.
- I will accept just about any event as a “arts event” but students who have not checked with me first to make sure an unconventional event is acceptable have sometimes found their marks have suffered because the event they chose was in fact not appropriate.

The task: Write a review of the event you attend, using the conventions/styles we have covered in class.

- Grammar and spelling are crucial, as well as an engaging style, and the basic elements of a good review.
- Make sure your review is the correct length.
- Be sure to take into account the scope of your event (i.e. is it a big-budget film or concert, or a small local theatre production?) when providing your judgment.
- **Note:** We will spend a lot of time in class discussing the assignment.
- **KYA:** And, it is crucial you tell me who your audience is – I cannot judge how well you have written for your audience if I don’t know who they are!

Editing test:

Monday November 8 in class number 8 (10 per cent of final mark)

- This is a 1-hour editing test based on editing principles and practices we have reviewed to that point.
- You will be marked on errors you catch in a short chunk of text.
- We will be practicing for this test in preceding classes – with practice tests posted on LEARN.

Assignment Two:

Promotional Arts Writing

Due in class 9: Monday, November 15

(20 percent of final mark)

Length: 1,000-1,200 words (aka longer than first assignment)

****Note:** KYA - your assignment must also include a 25-50 word summary of the audience your **event** is aimed at (see below) – that is, is it a production for kids, adults, special-interest audience etc? (this is part of your word total)

The task: Promotional writing for an exhibit or performance.

- Imagine you work as a one-person publicity department for an arts organization – you decide what the organization is (i.e. symphony orchestra.... Art gallery Pop music tour promotion company...film studio...etc.)
- Also, decide if this is a large-scale or smaller, community organization.
- Your job is to promote and “sell” a **single event** (like a concert, exhibition, film, etc.)
- You target audience will be either the general public, or the media (as specified below) in writing the following:
 - A **news release**- for the media (max 500 words)
 - A **mission statement** – for the public (max 300 words)
 - **1-3 short bios** of major artist(s) (max 600 for all bios)

Notes:

- Please check with your instructor if you have any concerns or questions about your topic.
- We will review format and expectations for this assignment in preceding classes, and do writing exercises (posted on LEARN) to help you with the assignment.
- You may allot the 1,000-1,200 words however you see fit between each of the three elements, and part of your mark will be based on how well you apportion the word count!

Final assignment:

Joining Critical and Promotional Writing

Due in class 12: Monday, December 7 (last class).

(40 percent of final mark)

NOTE – an outline for this assignment is due in Class #10 on November 22. This outline is worth 5 percent of your final mark and will help your planning for the final paper!

**** 4,000-5,000 words.**

Note: KYA - your assignment must also include a 25-50 word summary of the audience your event is aimed at. (this is part of the overall word total)

Your assignment will see you taking both "sides" of the critical/promotional forms we have studied in class.

- As in Assignment 2, imagine a **single** arts event (like a concert, exhibition, film, etc.) – this must be **different** than the one you chose for assignment 2.
- This event is being put on by an arts organization – you decide what the organization is (i.e. symphony orchestra.... Art gallery Pop music

tour promotion company...film studio...etc.) Again this must be **different** than assignment 2

- Again, decide if this is a large-scale or smaller, community organization.

Your task is as follows – there are FIVE separate parts to the assignment :

As PR person promoting your event, write the following – aimed at reporters/journalists who you want to give good publicity to your event:

- A news release
- A mission statement
- Bios of major artists or creative personnel involved

As a reviewer/ critic for a newspaper, magazine or online publication, write the following for the general public:

- A review of the event
- A feature /profile on a person connected to the event-- i.e. on an individual performer/artist, or behind-the-scenes piece

NOTES:

- You can allot the 4-5000 word total as you see fit. Part of this exercise is an evaluation of how you use your judgment to allot the word count on each of the different pieces above.
- As always, your assignment will be evaluated for writing (quality, style, grammar and spelling).
- We will do extensive review and preparation for this assignment in preceding classes, with materials posted on LEARN. Remember KYA!
- As these assignments are due on the final day of class I will return them, marked, to any students who provide me with a mailing address.

(Continued on next page with Class Schedule)

Class Schedule

CLASS ONE: Monday, September 13

What we'll cover:

- Introduction to arts writing ENGL 201H - what it's all about!
- Instructor and class intro; review course outline
- **Discussion:** What do we talk about when we talk about “the arts?”

CLASS TWO: Monday, September 20

Writing Snapshot 1 due today:

- What's your personal definition of “the arts”? What does it include/exclude?
- How do reviewers/critics impact your experience of the arts?
- What does it take to be a good reviewer/critic?

What we'll cover:

- Reviewing -- a general overview; film, books, theatre.
- Review and group work re: paper due in two weeks (Monday Oct. 5)

Reading for this class:

Summary: Chapter 1, The Critic's Canon, by Richard H Palmer. (posted on LEARN)

Sample Reviews:

- **Film:** Roger Ebert Review of “The Madwoman of Chaillot” (from 1969!) : <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-madwoman-of-chaillot-1969>
- **Theatre:** “Theatre Review: Our Town,” by Bob Clark. (Calgary Herald, January 19, 2008) (<https://calgaryherald.com/entertainment/theatre-review-our-town/>)
- **Dance:** “Dancing swans, demented toymakers and men in tutus: how to escape to the ballet online,” by Michael Crabb. (*Toronto Star*, April 27, 2020) (<https://www.guelphmercury.com/whatson-story/9962772-dancing-swans-demented-toymakers-and-men-in-tutus-how-to-escape-to-the-ballet-online/>)
- **Music:** “The Seoul Philharmonic: Concert Review” by Geoffrey Newman (2012). (<https://www.vanclassicalmusic.com/the-seoul-philharmonic-orchestra-concert-review>)

- **Grammar/Style Lesson 1:** University of Waterloo Style Guide – sections Acronyms to Numbers sections. Part 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations; Capitalization; Conventions for academic calendars; Conventions for convocation. (<https://uwaterloo.ca/brand/writing-storytelling/university-waterloo-writing-style-guide>)

CLASS THREE – Monday September 27

Writing Snapshot 2 due today:

- What are you going to review for assignment #1?
- Why did you make this choice?
- What aspects of this event do you plan to focus on?

What we'll cover:

- Overview: U of Waterloo Writing and Communications Centre – a valuable resource (<https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/>)
- Review / group work re: paper due next week

Reading for this class:

Canadian Theatre Critics Code of Ethics:

http://canadiantheatre critics.ca/?page_id=9

Profiles:

- *Obituary: Gord Downie*, by Michael Barclay. *Maclean's*, October 18, 2017. <https://www.macleans.ca/gord-downie-obituary/>
- “For the Love of Lupita Nyong’o,” by Kimberly Drew, *Vanity Fair*. <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/09/lupita-nyongo-cover-story>
- “Jean-Paul Jerome in review: Hard-edge heaven,” by Isa Tousignant. *Canadian Art*, October 30, 2008. <https://canadianart.ca/reviews/jean-paul-jerome/>
- **Grammar/Style Lesson:** University of Waterloo Style Guide – sections Acronyms to Numbers sections. Part 2: Formatting; Numbers; People and titles. (<https://uwaterloo.ca/brand/writing-storytelling/university-waterloo-writing-style-guide>)

CLASS FOUR: Monday October 4

No writing Snapshot due today: : <writing centre?>

What we'll cover

- Assignment 1 due today
- Reviewing music, graphic arts, arts travel.

Reading for this class

Sample reviews:

- **Music:** “Our track by track review of *Lover*, Taylor Swift’s new album”, *Toronto Star*, Friday, Aug 3, 2019.
<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/review/2019/08/23/our-track-by-track-review-of-lover-taylor-swifts-new-album.html>
- **Graphic Arts:** “National Trust denies ‘dumbing down’ in drive for new audiences,” by Harriet Sherwood. *The Guardian*, Aug. 22, 2020
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/22/national-trust-denies-dumbing-down-in-drive-for-new-audiences>
- **Travel:** “Chicago's Shedd Aquarium, Frank Lloyd Wright homes impress,” by Marie Bruce. *Vancouver Sun*, February 24, 2017.
<http://vancouver.sun.com/uncategorized/travel-community/chicago-warns-the-heart-of-our-writer-despite-the-cold>
- **Grammar/Style Lesson :** University of Waterloo Style Guide – sections Acronyms to Numbers sections. Part 3: Punctuation; Spelling; University of Waterloo. (<https://uwaterloo.ca/brand/writing-storytelling/university-waterloo-writing-style-guide>)

MONDAY OCTOBER 11- no class... Give thanks today!

CLASS FIVE: Monday October 18

Writing Snapshot 3 due today:

- What is your personal experience of art “institutions” such as galleries, museums, etc?
- Do you visit often, sometimes, never?
- Do you need to be “prepared” with special knowledge, expertise to enjoy a visit to one of these places?

What we'll cover

- Virtual visit to U of Waterloo Art Gallery (<https://uwag.uwaterloo.ca/>)
- Guest speaker: Ivan Jurakic, director/curator of the U of Waterloo Art Gallery: exhibition tour, aspects of writing a gallery review, connection between critical and promotional writing; Q+A

CLASS SIX: Monday October 25

Writing Snapshot 4 due today:

- How does critic or reviewer approach writing differently from a person who is writing promotionally about the arts?
- Which of these approaches appeals to you more?

What we'll cover:

- Introduction to promotional writing/transition from critical writing
- The elements/products of writing promotionally
- Mission statements + capturing organizational values
- Introduction to editing + practice test #1 (posted on LEARN)

Reading for this class:

News releases/ Media materials: Intro: “The Ingredients of a Press Kit”
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/57260#>

Samples:

- Art Gallery of Ontario (<http://www.ago.net/press>) – read 3 or 4 samples
- Hamilton Philharmonic Press Kit: <https://hpo.org/category/press-room/>
- review elements of kit
- UWAG <http://uwag.uwaterloo.ca/> - see individual exhibition descriptions and artist bios.

Intro to editing 1: Practice test - Editing marks sheet hand out in class + available on LEARN

CLASS SEVEN: Monday November 1

Writing Snapshot 5 due today:

- Have you used outlines in your academic (or personal/professional) work to help organize your work?

- What techniques, tricks, etc. have you used to write successful outlines?
- Is there anything you avoid when outlining?

What we'll cover:

- Introduction to interviewing; interview techniques; outlining.
- Editing test practice #2 (posted on LEARN)

Reading for this class:

Interviewing:

- Four Principles of Interviewing– Columbia School of Journalism (<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/isaacs/edit/MencherIntv1.html>)
- How to Conduct an Interview Like a Journalist (<http://thewritepractice.com/how-to-conduct-an-interview-like-a-journalist/>)

Samples:

- Interview with composer Ludovico Einaudi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR5gbD02HCY>)
- **Intro to editing 2: Practice test** - Editing marks sheet hand out in class + available on LEARN

CLASS EIGHT: Monday November 8

Writing Snapshot 6 due today:

- Is being a good editor important to good writing – or can spell/grammar checking functions take care of that?
- Have you asked others to help you edit your work? Or do you mainly self-edit?
- Do you think there any ethical / academic integrity issues involved in pre-editing student papers?

What we'll cover:

- Editing test (for real; not practice!)
- **Guest speaker:** Tor Lukasik-Foss, long-time columnist, *Hamilton Magazine*, musician, graphic artist.
- **Topic:** Writing about the arts as an artist; how to write profiles; what's it really like to work for an arts organization; Q+A session
- Group writing activity

- Writing display copy - an introduction to heds, deks, cutlines, pull-outs etc

Reading for this class:

- Artist websites at: <http://www.thandb.ca/> and <https://www.cafka.org/cafka13-may-3-august-11/06-tor-lukasik-foss-hamilton-closet-intimacies-shadow-box-semi-private>
- Writing sample at: <http://canadianart.ca/reviews/graeme-patterson-art-gallery-of-hamilton/>
- <https://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/8645091-hamilton-planting-an-artistic-seed-in-the-baltic/>

CLASS NINE: Monday, November 15

No Writing Snapshot today!

What we'll cover:

- Assignment 2 due today!
- Group writing activity
- Discussion re: final assignment + outline due next class

Reading for this class:

- Journalistic Instinct Blog: “Journalistic jargon: hed, dek, lede, nut graf/nutgraf” <https://underthecurve.github.io/jekyll/update/2016/12/29/hed-dek-led-graf.html>
- Columbia Journalism Review http://archives.cjr.org/language_corner/leading_questions.php
- Poynter Institute: Ten Questions to Help You Write Better Headlines <https://www.poynter.org/news/10-questions-help-you-write-better-headlines>
- AAM Curators Committee: Best Practices in Museum Exhibition Writing (2004). (<http://www.museum-ed.org/best-practices-in-museum-exhibition-writing-2004/>)
- How to write Photo Cutlines <https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-write-photo-cutlines-2295921>

CLASS TEN: Monday, November 22

Final Assignment Outline Due Today (5 marks):

- What is your outline for the final paper?
- As discussed in class – how are you going to structure it, what will be your areas of focus, etc.?

What we'll cover:

- Visiting speaker: Nadine Dolly, co-author *The Hogtown Project*.
(https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/07/27/a_book_of_the_toronto_you_never_knew.html)

Topic: Putting a culturally-diverse lens on arts reviewing and promotion.

- Preparation for final paper

Reading:

- 40 Great Headlines: <http://www.copypress.com/blog/40-headlines-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>
- 13 Great Headlines: <http://web.ku.edu/~edit/headgood.html>

CLASS ELEVEN: Monday November 29

Writing Snapshot 7 due today:

- How is it going on the final paper?
- What areas are going well? Any struggles or issues?
- How are you finding the exercise of combining the two different types of writing in this assignment?

What we'll cover:

- Preparation for final paper - workshop exercises and review

Reading for this class:

- None

CLASS TWELVE: Monday December 6

What we'll cover:

- Final papers due today
- Guest speaker TBD - Career options for English/Arts students in writing and editing careers

Reading for this class:

- None

Important Information for Students continues on the next page.

Important Information for Students

- **Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.
- **Academic Integrity Office (UW):** A resource for students and instructors. (<https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>)
- **Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).
- **Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.
- **Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).
- **Note for Students with Disabilities:** The Accessibility Services Office located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, (<http://uwaterloo.ca/disability-services/>) collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term. They can also be reached by phone at 519-888-4567 ext. 45231 or 47922 or via email at: access@uwaterloo.ca

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