

CJVAPS / Academic Writing in English: The Art of the Essay

Autumn 2017

Dr. Joe Lennon Weds 12:30—14:05, Room L32

In this class we will focus on the *essay*, a form of writing which has been interpreted in countless ways by countless authors, and which holds a huge importance in academia and beyond. We'll read, watch, hear, analyze, and discuss several different kinds of essays, and you will design and write your own essays.

Some of the questions we'll explore various answers to in discussion and in writing:

- What is (and what isn't) an essay?
- What is the best way to think about genre and form when writing an essay, and how does a writer choose which forms to write in?
- Why is the essay considered so important in academia?
- How "creative" can I be when I am writing an essay for school (and what are the differences/similarities between academic and creative writing)?
- How do I define "good" writing style in English, and what are some practical ways to get better at doing the type of writing I consider good?
- How can I recognize "bad" writing in English, and how can I avoid doing it in my own writing?
- What are some tricks and tips for revising my work?

Your grade for the course is based on three things:

1. Attendance and active participation at the weekly seminars (20%).

For this class to function well, we all need to be here, sharing our work and ideas. You can miss two classes without penalty, and with no excuse needed or wanted (although I would like you to let me know in advance if you plan on being absent). You'll be penalized 5% for each class you miss after the second.

2. Short weekly reading and writing assignments which will be submitted to me and/or shared with your classmates (20%).

Every week, we'll do some writing in class, and for homework I'll assign some reading and writing, which we will discuss the following week. Sometimes you'll turn these writing assignments in to me, sometimes you will share them in class, and sometimes both. If you come to each class prepared, you'll get full credit.

3. Various drafts of an essay of your own (60%).

You'll design your own essay-writing project in the first few weeks of class. The kind of essay you write is up to you, but it should be something useful and interesting for you,

and it should show a serious engagement with a specified target audience. You'll turn in a first draft of your project around midterm, a second draft toward the end of the term, and a final draft on a date we decide together (probably in January). You'll get feedback on these drafts from me and your classmates.