

School of English, Film, Theatre & Media Studies
Summer Trimester 2008-2009

ENGL 237: Journalism and Literature



Nov 25 - Dec 11 and Jan 13-Jan 29, Tue, Wed, Thu 10am-12noon
Hugh McKenzie Building, HM Lecture Theatre 104

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the ***waters***
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be ***drenched*** to the bone.
If your ***time*** to you
Is worth ***savin'***
Then you better start ***swimmin'***
Or you'll ***sink*** like a stone
For the ***times*** they are ***a-changin'***.

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't ***speak*** too soon
For the ***wheel's still in spin***
And there's no ***tellin'*** who
That it's ***namin'***.
For the ***loser*** now
Will be later to ***win***
For the ***times*** they are ***a-changin'***.

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the ***doorway***
Don't block up the ***hall***
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled

There's a battle *outside*
And it is ragin'.
It'll soon shake your *windows*
And rattle your *walls*
For the *times* they are *a-changin'*.

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your *sons* and your *daughters*
Are beyond your command
Your *old* road is
Rapidly *agin'*.
Please get out of the *new* one
If you can't lend your hand
For the *times* they are *a-changin'*.

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The *slow* one now
Will later be *fast*
As the *present now*
Will *later* be *past*
The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the *first one now*
Will *later be last*
For the *times* they are *a-changin'*.

Bob Dylan, Copyright ©1963; renewed 1991 Special Rider Music

- Course convenor:** Stephanie Pietkiewicz (VZ914 p 463 5233 extn 8869)
Email: stephanie.pietkiewicz@vuw.ac.nz; office hours:
12noon-1.00pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays,
or by appointment, if outside of these times)
- Lecturers:** Stephanie Pietkiewicz, Emeritus Professor Roger
Robinson, Nigel Evans.
- Prerequisites:** 18 100-level ENGL or SEFT points, and 18 further
ENGL, SEFT, FILM, MDIA or THEA points.
Applications from others with special interest should be
referred to Stephanie Pietkiewicz.

Course Aims and Objectives:

Journalism and Literature is a 22-point course at ENGL 200 level, and may be credited towards the major-subject requirements in English Literature. It will be of particular relevance to students with interests in professional writing, creative writing, contemporary literature, “issue-focused” literature, American literature, media studies, the English and American novel, life narrative, and travel writing. Students majoring in such subjects as History, Law or Politics may also find it of relevance.

In a new approach to the study of literature, this course explores definitions of literature and journalism, their distinctions and interrelations. It also offers original ways of close reading literary and journalistic texts within historical contexts. It seeks out the story behind the news or the novel in ways that improve our ability to decipher, analyse and interpret both. Through this lens, major texts of fictional and non-fictional narrative are discussed, including examples of the novel, biography, reportage, and investigative narrative, as well as a selection of shorter texts, including journalism and poems based on topical news events. Texts range from the 17th century (in the selection of poems) to recent blogs, with the main focus on writing since 1965. Special themes are “**writing from the eye of the storm**”, “**writing the city**” and “**writing life narrative**”. *All are required reading. In fact, close and critical reading is required at all times through all texts!*

This is not a course in the skills or practice of journalism, but it is designed to benefit students (among others) interested in studying or working in journalism or other forms of professional writing. Its main purpose is to add a new dimension to literary studies for all students, in ways pertinent to other ENGL courses and other subjects.

The aims of the course are to:

- a) Develop skills of attentive and critical reading through the study of language, form, techniques and ideas of the selected texts;
- b) Develop understanding of the literary, cultural, philosophical, and theoretical issues raised through a discussion of the relationship between literature and journalism;
- c) Develop skills in the oral and written processes of literary discussion, especially in critical analysis and evaluation, in the form of two written assignments, with an optional third assignment for interested students.

By the end of this course students should have gained greater knowledge and competence in each of these areas. The assignments are designed specifically to test these skills and your understanding of the literary conventions and preoccupations of both journalism and literature.

Course Content:

Six main texts (including two selections of “Great Journalism”) are all required study, and all will be tested and assessed or discussed in depth through the assignments and seminars.

In order of teaching, the texts are:

1. Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*; 2. “Great Journalism & Literature: Disasters, Wars, and Poetry” (a selection of short texts from the origins of journalism to 1962) 3. Great Journalism: from the Bomb to the Blog” (a selection of short texts in print and digital media from 1945 to 2008); 4. Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*; 5. Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*; 6. Janet Malcolm, *The Silent Woman*. The books should be purchased (the cost is very modest for a literature course). The short texts will be supplied in lectures, probably free of charge. Alternative arrangements will be made if any books prove to be out of print or unavailable at Victoria Book Centre.

Lecturers: Stephanie Pietkiewicz (SP), Nigel Evans (NE), Roger Robinson (RR)

Programme:

Tue Nov 25	Introduction	SP, RR
Wed Nov 26	<i>In Cold Blood</i>	SP
Thu Nov 27	“ (seminar)	SP
Tue Dec 2	<i>In Cold Blood</i>	SP
Wed Dec 3	Great Journalism 1667-1962	RR
Thu Dec 4	“ (seminar)	RR
Tue Dec 9	Great Journalism 1667-1962/1945-2008	RR/NE
Wed Dec 10	“	NE/SP
Thu Dec 11	“ (seminar)	SP

Thursday December 18, 5pm: Assignment 1 due (*In Cold Blood*)

Christmas

Tue Jan 13	Literature & the City/ <i>Bonfire of the Vanities</i>	RR
Tue Jan 13, 5pm: Optional Assignment due (<i>Short Texts</i>)		
Wed Jan 14	<i>Bonfire of the Vanities</i>	RR
Thu Jan 15	“ (seminar)	RR
Tue Jan 20	<i>The Year of Magical Thinking</i>	SP
Wed Jan 21	“ (seminar)	SP
Thu Jan 22	Plath & Hughes	RR/SP
Tue Jan 27	<i>The Silent Woman</i>	SP
Wed Jan 29	“ (seminar)	SP
Thu Jan 30	“	SP
	Course conclusion & Assignment 3	SP, RR
Monday Feb 9th, 5pm: Assignment 2 due: (<i>Bonfire of the Vanities, Year of Magical Thinking, Silent Woman</i>). NO EXTENSIONS.		

Workload:

The guideline for a 22-point course is at least 15 hours a week for a conventional 12-week course. Since ENGL 237 is accelerated to 6 weeks, workloads must be adjusted accordingly, *by spreading your reading over non-teaching weeks*. **To study only in the six teaching weeks will not be enough.**

Mandatory Course Requirements:

- Fully read and carefully study the six major texts (including the two selections of short texts);
- Attend at least 70% of lectures/seminars (special allowance may be made if there are lecture clashes with other courses)—a roll will be taken at each lecture;
- Contribute to class/seminar discussion as required;
- Complete two or three written assignments at 200-level standard; and,
- Meet deadlines.

Assessment:

Assessment is in-term, by two written assignments that will help develop skills and knowledge in the areas outlined under **Course Aims and Objectives** p. 3. Students may opt to submit an additional assignment (by 13th Jan), to be marked on the understanding that it will contribute to the overall assessment only if it raises the final grade, on the basis of an equal 20% / 20% weighting for Assignment One and the optional assignment respectively. This mid-course assignment can NOT replace the final assignment, which is required for summative, end-of course assessment.

Assignments are to be delivered in hard copy (not email except by special approval). Details of topics are provided in the Assignment handout(s), to be distributed.

1. An essay on *In Cold Blood* (1500 words). Due Dec 18th. 40% of total;
2. An essay (2000 words) on the remaining three texts. Due Feb 9th. 60%.

The total word requirement is as specified for 200-level courses with no final exam.

Due dates:

The 3/3 schedule is tight, and this is a course concerned in part with the requirements of journalism. Due dates must therefore be adhered to as **deadlines** (which means that if your article is late, **it's dead**). In case of unpredictable personal circumstances such as illness, requests for extensions should be made to Stephanie Pietkiewicz. Late work submitted without an extension will be accepted only if the tight marking schedule permits, and the grade awarded may be lowered by one step every two days. Because results are required promptly for First Trimester enrolments, extensions beyond Feb 9th for the final assignment can be only given in very exceptional circumstances. Please plan ahead in case of emergency.

Attendance:

ENGL 237 is designed as a fully participatory course in the “collegial” tradition of this university. It is not designed for distance-learning, on-line study, or as a mere qualification for attainment. **Lectures** represent the discipline of English studies in process, providing not only information on the texts in the particular context of this course (200-level, in Wellington, in 2008-9), but demonstrate the various elements and skills of literary discussion, such as textual explication, analysis and interpretation, examination of historical or biographical context, intertextual references, etc. **Seminar sessions within lectures** offer opportunity for personal participation in the collegial process of learning that is essential to university study. They emphasise students’ responsibility and active role. The skills they train in oral communication and group discussion are highly valued by employers, and, now more than ever, needed by society as a whole. As a species glutted with information, society needs people who can be information navigators and decipherers, not merely consumers.

Academic concerns and problems:

Consult Stephanie Pietkiewicz, the course convenor, or the English Programme Director, Charles Ferrall. (See also *Calendar* re. “Mandatory Course Requirements,” “Student Contract,” and “Academic Grievance Policy.”)

Plagiarism:

Assignments in English are designed to develop and assess your own ability to read closely, think in detail about literary text, form judgements of literary processes and merit, and articulate your response in the form of considered argument with supporting textual evidence. Second-hand summaries of “content,” whether from books or the Internet, may be useful to support your own interpretation and response, but cannot replace your own study, arguments and conclusions.

Students are reminded of the School’s and the University’s policy on plagiarism. *Material downloaded from the Internet is not permitted within assignments unless fully acknowledged in the same way as published material.* Plagiarism from whatever source, including the Internet, may cause failure in the course without further notice, or a lower grade if the submission of replacement work is approved.

Students with disabilities at Victoria:

Victoria makes every effort to enable students with disabilities to study without disadvantage, including the policy that reasonable accommodation will be made with respect to assessment procedures. For further assistance, contact Disability Support Services, 1st Floor Reception, Robert Stout Building, ph 463 6070, email: disabilities@vuw.ac.nz.

General University Requirements:

It is students’ responsibility to be familiar with the University’s requirements regarding course of study regulations, assessment, academic grievance procedures, etc. These are contained in the statutes in the *Calendar*, and on the University website. The University also requires that all members of its community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University’s life in an atmosphere of safety and respect.

Additional information:

SEFT/English notice board, Hugh McKenzie foyer, alongside HM 206. All Short Texts readings, administrative notices and assignments will be posted on Blackboard. *No lecture notes will be posted.* Because ENGL 237 is a condensed course focusing on the guided practice of close reading, face-to-face learning, with students attending and participating in lectures and in-lecture seminars, is the best mode of information transfer.

Student input:

Students’ responses and suggestions are welcomed. Comments from previous classes have been taken into account in this year’s offering.

A Day in the Life

I read the news today, oh boy

About a lucky man who made the grade

And though the *news* was rather *sad*

Well, *I* just had to *laugh*

I saw the photograph

He blew his mind out in a car

He didn't *notice* that the lights had changed

A *crowd* of people stood and *stared*

They'd seen his face before

Nobody was really sure if *he* was from the House of Lords

I saw a film today, *oh boy*

The English Army had just won the war

A *crowd* of people turned away

But *I* just had to *look*

Having *read* the *book*

I'd love to *turn you on*...

Woke up, got out of bed

Dragged a comb across my head

Found my way downstairs and drank a cup

And *looking up, I noticed* I was late

Found my coat and grabbed my hat

Made the bus in seconds flat

Found my way upstairs and had a smoke

Somebody spoke and *I went into a dream*

Ahhhh Ahhhhh Ahhhh...

I read the news today, oh boy

Four thousand *holes* in Blackburn, Lancashire

And though the *holes* were rather small

They had to count them all

Now *they* know how many *holes* it takes to fill the Albert Hall

I'd love to turn you on...

'A Day in the Life,' The Beatles

(from Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967)