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City College of New York: Composition for Creative Expression FIQWS

Instructor: Tim Dalton

Email: tdalton@ccny.cuny.edu; tkd.comp.nyc@gmail.com (preferred)

Course Website: <https://architecture.commonscuny.edu/>

First-Year Composition Mission Statement

First-year composition courses at CCNY teach writing as a recursive and frequently collaborative process of invention, drafting, and revising. Writing is both personal and social, and students should learn how to write for different purposes and audiences. Since writing is a process of making meaning and communicating, FYC teachers respond mainly to the content of students' writing as well as to recurring surface errors. Students should expect frequent written and oral responses on the content of their writing from their teachers and peers. Classes rely heavily on a workshop format. Instruction emphasizes the connection between writing, reading, and critical thinking; students should give thoughtful, reasoned responses to the readings. Both reading and writing are the subjects of class discussions and workshops, and students are expected to be active participants in the classroom community. Learning from each other will be a large part of the classroom experience.

Course Description

This course will explore reading, writing, and rhetoric through readings concerned with design. These readings vary in their approach, style, and difficulty. They address intersections of design with aesthetics, technology, disability, child development, urban life, and more. Each reading and writing assignment is included with the intent of complementing students' work in Architecture 128 while supporting their growth as critical thinkers, close readers, and effective writers in the academic setting.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations.
2. Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.
3. Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations.
4. Engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes.
5. Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.
6. Locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library's databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias.
7. Compose texts that integrate your stance with appropriate sources using strategies such as summary, critical analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and argumentation.
8. Practice systematic application of citation conventions.

Required Texts

This is a Zero Textbook Cost course. There are links to reading assignments that live online, and I have uploaded assigned articles in portable document format (.pdf). These required readings are listed on this syllabus under assignments, along with planned due dates.

In addition to these readings, I will often reference concepts related to writing and rhetoric in college. Because our time in class is limited, I may direct you to *Writing for Success* (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing) and/or to the [Purdue OWL](#). Please make yourselves familiar with both free, online resources.

Assignments

Writing Assignments

In our course we will do a great deal of writing, both formal (typed, graded, with line comments and a paragraph of summary notes) and informal (handwritten, responded to with brief feedback and a checkmark/+/-.) These latter pieces generally won't be revised, though they will all help you build toward a formal assignment. They are also an important measure of your participation in class.

All formal writing assignments should be submitted to Blackboard to the appropriate dropbox in the requested file format by the stated deadline. Assignments not conforming to MLA citation style, including formatting requirements for essays or for Works Cited pages, or which otherwise do not follow the instructions of the prompt, will need to be resubmitted. Any writing assignment--including one that requires being resubmitted--is considered late if it is submitted after the deadline, and will lose one point for every 24 hours it is late. The formal writing assignments and due dates are:

1. Essay #1: "Where I'm From." Due September 17.
2. Essay #2: "Makeover." Due October 1.
3. Essay #3: "Child's Play." Due October 22 (in conferences), with a revision October 29
4. Research Essay. Final Draft Due December 3 (staged--see below)
5. Research Essay, Part 1: Tentative Topic Proposal: Due September 5
 - a. Research Essay, Part 2: Tentative Thesis: Due September 17
 - b. Research Essay, Part 3: Initial Bibliography: Due October 1
 - c. Research Essay, Part 4: Annotated Bibliography & Outline: Due Oct. 29¹ / Nov. 5
 - d. Research Essay, Part 5: Complete Draft: Due November 12 (W) / 19 (W) / 26 (P)
6. Portfolio & Reflection: Due December 10

¹ For students who will have a draft ready to be workshopped on November 12.

In addition to these assignments, students will write a reflection on each formal assignment, which will include a rhetorical analysis on at least one reading from that part of the course. (Up to two more rhetorical analyses may be done for extra credit.) Low-stakes writing activities like this inform your final portfolio and reflection.

Possible Reading Assignments

1. [“Where I’m From,” George Ella Lyon](#)
2. [“My Mother’s Garden,” Kaitlyn Greenidge](#) (handout, in-class, 8/27)
3. [“McMansions 101,” Kate Wagner](#), from *McMansionHell.Com* (9/5)
4. [“Rooms in General,” from *The Decoration of Houses*, Edith Wharton & Odgen Codman, Jr](#) (9/5)
5. [“The Principles of Poor Writing,” Paul Merrill](#) (9/17)
6. [“Between Sound and Silence,” Irene Taylor Brodsky](#) (9/17)
7. [“Thermal Delight,” from *99 Percent Invisible*](#) (9/17)
8. [“Evolution of Communication,” Ian Sanborn](#) (9/17)
9. [“Orphans,” Raymond Luczak](#) (9/17)
10. [“Lauren Ridloff’s Quiet Power,” Michael Paulson](#) (9/17)
11. [Excerpts from *The Decoration of Houses*, Edith Wharton & Odgen Codman, Jr](#) (9/24)
12. [“Light Up Gallaudet,” Ben Bahan](#) (9/24)
13. [The Land](#), dir. Erin Davis (10/1)
14. [“Schools and Nurseries,” from *The Decoration of Houses*](#) (10/1)
15. [“The Future of School Design,” Alexandra Lange](#) (10/1)
16. [“Lessons from the Playground,” Zachary Herrmann](#) (10/1) [suggested]
17. [“State of Play,” Patrick Sisson](#) (10/1) [suggested]
18. [“Caterpillar,” Paul Hostovsky](#) and [“Caterpillar,” Ian Sanborn](#) (in-class, 10/30)
19. [“I was Once the Writer Kelly Davio,” by Kelly Davio](#) (in-class, handout, 10/30)

We may not read all of these texts; we may substitute other readings as your interest and time dictates. Note: “Source Share” indicates that common or helpful sources from student research may be discussed with the class, pending the student-writer’s permission. “Workshop Pieces” indicates that the reading will be the student draft essays due for 10-15 minute discussions the next week.

Criteria and weights for components of the final course grade

1. Writing Assignment 1: 10%
2. Writing Assignment 2: 10%
3. Writing Assignment 3: 10%
4. Reflections & Rhetorical Analyses: 10%
5. In-Class Writing & Peer Editing: 10%
6. Participation & Effort: 10%
7. Research Process: 10%
8. Research Essay: 20%
9. Final Portfolio: 20%

Criteria for grading assignments (rubric)

1. Main Idea: Does the writer...
 - a. express a clear main idea in response to the question at the end of their first paragraph?
 - b. use the first paragraph to describe their argument in relation to relevant essay(s)?
 - c. define key terms at the outset, not simply from a dictionary but in light of their argument?
 - d. offer the reader a sentence explaining what structure the argument will take?
 - e. focus on that main idea, developing it for the entire essay?
2. Evidence: Does the writer...
 - a. expand on their own definitions in paragraphs?
 - b. cite and analyze text from multiple sources?
 - c. include and refute reasonable counter-arguments?
 - d. develop her paragraphs through detail, comparison, description, narration, and example?
3. Organization
 - a. Are the sentences complete? Clear? Efficient? Interesting?
 - b. Are the paragraphs present? Indented? Composed of sentences that logically connect and transition?
4. Mechanics
 - a. Does the writer demonstrate an understanding of sentence boundaries?
 - b. Does the writer make fewer than four agreement errors (referent-antecedent, subject-verb, tense, etc)?
 - c. Are there fewer than three instances of one kind of other local error, including formatting flaws?
5. Intention: Does the writer express ambition in their main idea, evidence, structure, and/or sentences?

Classroom etiquette

To keep our classroom clean, please limit any necessary eating and drinking to the first ten minutes of class. While we will have ample opportunity to use technology in our classroom, until those moments arise, I ask that you keep your cell phones away and silenced during class. If you prefer to use tablets or laptops for notetaking or writing, I ask that you turn off your wireless access. These policies allow us to use technology to our benefit while minimizing the distractions it can cause writers. Please follow them.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class session of this course and to be on time. If you miss three classes, your final grade will be dropped by one-half of one letter (a 90 to an 85, for example). If you miss four classes, your final grade will be dropped one full letter. If you miss five classes, you may not be able to pass the course. Consistent late arrivals and early departures will have a negative impact on your grade. I will notify you by email if course absences (for full or partial classes) are having an impact on your grade. If you have special circumstances, please see me. I'm happy to work with you to help you complete this course.

College Resources & Policies

[AccessAbility Center](#)

Located in NAC 1/218, the AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services (AAC/SDS) ensures full participation and meaningful access to all of City College's services, programs, and activities.

[The Writing Center](#)

Located on the third floor of the NAC, the City College Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance for students working on writing assignments and projects from any discipline.

[SEEK Peer Academic Learning Center](#)

Located in NAC 4/224, SEEK offers counseling and peer tutoring for students in need of academic and financial support who have registered for the SEEK Program.

[Student Support Services Program](#)

Located in NAC 6/148, SSSP invites new students, especially incoming freshmen and transfers at the start of fall, to join us up to our 500-student cap. SSSP students should be either first-generation college students OR have a family income below a certain threshold. SEEK students are not eligible to join as SSSP's services in many ways mirror SEEK's. [To apply, complete this application.](#) Accepted students have full access to SSSP's services, which include academic advising, personal counseling, and tutoring in the [Academic Resource Center](#) in Marshak 1104. Tutoring supports all disciplines, and offers SSSP students the only online, 24/7 writing review service currently offered at City. Students requesting in-person writing tutoring are assigned to the same tutor for a series of meetings which can be weekly or customized to the students' schedule of due dates.

[Gateway Advising Center,](#)

Located in NAC 1/220, this resource offers students without a declared major a place to receive academic advising, especially helpful for students with questions about your course of study, core requirements, etc.

[CCNY's Statement on Community Standards:](#)

co-ex-ist (kō'ig-zīst'); intr.v. co-ex-ist-ed, co-ex-ist-ing, co-ex-ists

- To exist together, at the same time, or in the same place.
- To live in peace with another or others despite differences, especially as a matter of policy.

I strongly encourage you to read the full statement on the CCNY website.

SCHEDULE

Subject to change. Reading and writing assignments are DUE the day they are listed.

Note: When a reading is assigned without a specific response listed, I expect you to annotate, summarize, and respond to the text so that you are prepared for our class work around it. The annotations should be on a printed or digital version of the text. Summaries and responses should be in a notebook, with your other informal writing. It is more important that they be thoughtful and helpful to you than that they be long or perfectly proofread. Though I will check them regularly, they will not be collected or graded in a formal way.

August 27

Reading: “Where I’m From,” George Ella Lyon; “Superman and Me,” Sherman Alexie; *Home*, by Carson Ellis; “My Mother’s Garden,” Kaitlyn Greenidge

Writing: “Where I’m From” in-class; feedback practice; expand & revise for 9/5

September 03: COLLEGE CLOSED: NO CLASS

September 05 (Monday Schedule)

Reading: *McMansion Hell*'s [“McMansion 101”](#); [“Rooms in General”](#) from *The Decoration of Houses*, Edith Wharton & Odgen Codman, Jr.; bring to class definitions of “ugly” with examples from reliable print and online publications (start with *McMansion Hell*)

Writing: Summary and Response, Wharton & Codman

In-Class: Description Activity; Positioning Activity; Rhetorical Analysis Activity (“Image Search”) Research Essay, Part 1: Tentative Topic Proposal Due

September 10: COLLEGE CLOSED: NO CLASS

September 17

Reading: [“The Principles of Poor Writing,” Paul Merrill](#); [“Between Sound and Silence,” Irene Taylor Brodsky](#); [“Thermal Delight”](#) from *99 Percent Invisible* (in-class); [“The Evolution of Communication,” Ian Sanborn](#) (in-class)

Writing: **Essay 1 Due (“Home”)**

In-class: [How an AC Works](#) / [How a CI Works](#), with peer illustrations

Research Essay, Part 2: Tentative Thesis Due

September 24

Reading (in groups): [“Walls,” “Doors,” “Windows,” “Ceilings and Floors”](#) OR [“Bedrooms,”](#) from *The Decoration of Houses* (groups); [“Light Up Gallaudet,” Ben Bahan](#)

Writing: Find some especially striking language from each of these sections. Position yourself in response to that language. Share this in other groups, and develop an idea for designing a space. This will prepare you for Essay 2 (“Makeover”). Reading Response, Bahan

October 1

Reading: [“State of Play,” Patrick Sisson](#); [“Lessons from the Playground,” Zachary Herrman](#); [“The Land”](#) (dir. Erin Davis); [“Schools and Nurseries,”](#) from *The Decoration of Houses*; [“The Future of School Design”](#).

Writing: **Essay 2 Due (“Makeover”)** Advice about a wall, door, window, floor, library, bedroom, or nursery problem from a contemporary website (ie: Apartment Therapy) or magazine (ie: *Better Homes & Gardens, Dwell*).

Research Essay, Part 3: Initial Bibliography Due

October 8

COLLEGE CLOSED: NO CLASS

Reflection: Write a letter back to teacher about comments on your paper.

October 15

Reading: “The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact” and “The Uses of Sidewalks: Assimilating Children,” from Jane Jacobs’ *The Life and Death of American Cities*; “Beloved Enemy: A Cripple in the Crippled City,” Leonard Kriegel, “Public Transit,” John Hockenbery, both from *Voices on the Edge*

Writing: Reading Response, Jacobs

October 22 — Conferences

Bring a draft of your **Essay 3: “Child’s Play”**

Research Paper: Annotated Bibliography (3-5 primary sources, 3-5 secondary sources)

Reflection: Respond to teacher’s comments about rhetorical analysis

October 29

Reading: Source Share; Other readings as assigned

Essay 3: “Child’s Play” due

Writing: Research Essay, Part 4: Annotated Bibliography/Outline due for 11/12 workshoppees ONLY

November 05

Reading: Source Share (con’t); upload copies of workshop pieces to Blackboard by start of class

Writing: Research Essay, Part 4: Annotated Bibliography/Outline OR Drafts for 11/12 workshop due

November 12

Reading: Workshop Pieces (9 writers); upload copies of workshop pieces to Blackboard by start of class

Writing: Comments for workshopped writers as assigned

November 19

Reading: Workshop Pieces (9 writers); upload copies of workshop pieces to Blackboard by start of class

Writing: Comments for workshopped writers as assigned

November 26

Reading: Responses to Presentation Pieces (in-class)

Writing: Comments for presenters as assigned

December 3: Writing Final Draft of Research Essay Due; First Draft of Reflection Due for Peer Editing

December 10: Writing: Reflections and Portfolio work

December 17: Final Draft of Reflection Due