“Be the change you want to see in the world,” may be what Gandhi said, but he didn’t live in modern day D.C. and have a full class schedule. We will move beyond that easy slogan to consider the implications, systems, and limitations to social reform and access to basic human rights. We’ll read about movements and events that propelled service work, such as Progressivism in the early 20th century, Hurricane Katrina, the fall of Detroit, the Boston Marathon bombing, and education inequality. You’ll work on understanding what kind of reform captures the hearts and hands of nonprofits, lawmakers, and citizens – and what doesn’t.

This course will examine the implications of inequality, injustice, and social mobility through writing assignments and course readings. We will read and analyze the rhetoric of social justice advocates, diverse communities, and service work. Major writing assignments will include a feature-style article on a service event, a scholarly essay on why individuals serve, and an essay that incorporates scholarly and primary research. There will be short writing or group assignments and readings due nearly every class.

Students may choose to register for the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Conference to be held at American University on March 28, 2015 and connect their coursework to a workshop or larger project at the conference. This is optional.

Students enrolled in this course may add the optional Community Service Learning Project’s fourth credit, which enables student to earn an additional academic credit through completing 40 hours of direct service volunteer work in the D.C. community, completing a service project for their community service partner, and a reflective essay (which is also the final essay for our course).

Texts may include:
Zeitoun, Dave Eggers
Excerpts from various Best American anthologies, including David Ramsey’s “I Will Forever Remain Faithful: How Lil Wayne Helped Me Survive My First Year Teaching in New Orleans” Articles from WritingSpaces.org
Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts, Joseph Harris
Excerpts from On Writing Well, William Zinsser

Let’s Make a Deal: The Rhetoric of Game Shows
Professor Lee Alan Bleyer

From the radio beginnings of the American mass media through the quiz show scandals of the 1950s to the reality show era, game shows – broadcast competitions measuring knowledge, skill, talent, and pure chance – have gone in and out of fashion, but have always reflected and contributed to mass culture. For seven decades, contestants have said the secret word, told the truth, bought a vowel, taken the deal, and won big in the bonus round; yet, very little scholarly attention has been paid to the ways in which game shows have influenced, reflected, and, occasionally, dominated the rhetoric of popular culture. In
this writing- and research-intensive course, students will develop and refine advanced techniques in expository writing and research using primary and secondary sources to examine the rhetoric of game shows, paying particular attention to how game shows reflect and influence social and political ideas and trends, including popular conceptions of truth, argument, negotiation, authority, and knowledge.

Texts may include:
*Rules of the Game: Quiz Shows and American Culture*, Olaf Hoerschelmann
*The Quiz Show*, Su Holmes
*Prisoner of Trebekistan: A Decade in Jeopardy!*, Bob Harris
*Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, Susan Murray, Laurie Ouellette, eds.
*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Joseph M. Williams

**WRTG 101.003 TF 4:00-5:15pm**
“*How Long Must We Sing This Song?*: The Language of War
Professor Natalie Giarratano

If, as Margaret Atwood writes, “War is what happens when language fails,” then what happens to language when war has failed the combat soldier? The civilian witness? How do the complexities of war ripple out into the world? In this course we’ll explore writing of some modern wars (WWI to present), how the writers deal with the effects of war, and how language about war has evolved. We’ll discuss photography, music and films created to understand war and non-fiction/memoir, poetry, and fiction from combat veterans and civilians affected by and witness to it. And though war’s association with masculinity has long been a trope in literature, a variety of voices will be represented in this course. The essays that you’ll write will engage with these modern texts about war and the ways in which the language has evolved (and why) even within this last century, and you will go on to research the complex ways that the “war on terror” affects the lives of millennials in order to practice your own brand of analytical writing on war.

Our texts may include:
*Baghdad Diaries*, Nuha al-Radi
*Control Room* (film)
*Easy Writer*, Andrea Lunsford
*Full Metal Jacket* (film)
*Persopolis*, Marjane Satrapi
*Warhorses*, Yusef Komunyakaa
*Waiting for the Enemy*, Brandon Davis Jennings
*Women on War*, Ed. Daniella Gioseffi
*Writing with Style*, John Trimble
Other readings distributed via Blackboard

**WRTG 101.004 MTH 8:55-10:10am**
**Gender & The Media**
Professor Joellyn Powers

The media portray gender in many different ways, shining a light through television, film, and the written word onto what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman in today’s society. But are media perceptions of femininity and masculinity always the truth? Is the media mirror the one we want projecting the “realness” of our genders — and ourselves?
In this class, we will examine how gender is portrayed through different types of media. We will look at essays, novels, news articles, television and film clips, and other popular and scholarly sources in order to develop our own interpretations of how the media portray men and women. How does a scholar such as Roxane Gay question gender preconceptions, and her own implications in those preconceptions in the first place? How does a popular novel such as *Gone Girl* allow us to view the differences between men and women, as well as the similarities? What does the language used in commentaries on social issues tell us about feminism, gender equality, and self-acceptance in today’s society? What does it mean to be “a likable person,” and does likability even matter? We will also examine major cultural figures, such as Beyonce, Hillary Clinton, and Kanye West, in order to develop deeper ideas of what it means to be a certain gender in the public eye. Major class assignments may include: a cultural commentary on a gender-focused topic; response papers to all major readings; and a research paper that closely examines how one form of media represents gender, and what it does to us as the audience in the process.

Class Texts May Include:
*Bad Feminist: Essays* by Roxane Gay
*Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn
*They Say/I Say* by Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein
Excerpts from *Not That Kind of Girl* by Lena Dunham
Various television and film clips from works such as *Girls*, *The Daily Show*, *Louie*, and *Orange is the New Black*

Various cultural commentaries from publications such as *Slate* and *The Atlantic*

WRTG 101.005 TF 8:55-10:10am
*Lost in Translation: Communicating in a Globalizing World*
Professor Angela Dadak

“Languages are more ancient than anything we have built with our hands. They are monuments to human genius,” says linguist and AU graduate David Harrison. In this view, English stands as a modern, diverse, towering pinnacle among the world’s tongues. With the ever-increasing numbers of English speakers in the world, English has become a truly global language. Yet even when two people speak the same language, miscommunications can disrupt personal, business, and diplomatic relations. In this course we will examine the position and use of English around the world, and we will question in what ways having a global language both facilitates and complicates communication. Will English continue to dominate the global linguistic landscape? What role, if any, does English play in the extinction of other languages? We will consider what it means to be multilingual and multicultural, why people create artificial languages, and how we adapt our own language use in different situations – including academic ones. All of these investigations will be aided by and contribute to the writing you do throughout the semester.

Texts may include:
*You Are What You Speak* by Robert Greene
*Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages* by Mark Abley
*Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft* by Steven Kellman
Other readings by Chinua Achebe, Gloria Anzaldúa, David Crystal, David Harrison, Henry Hitchings, Akira Okrent, Ilan Stavans, and Amy Tan.
Imagining Where We Live Now: Reading and Writing the Urban Centuries
Professor Karen Shaup

By 2020, the majority of the world’s population will be living in urban areas, and scholars, policymakers, and planners have started to describe the twenty-first century as the urban century. The promise or inevitability of the mega-city seems to offer something distinctly new and has been met with a mixture of foreboding and excitement. Similarly, in the past, individuals experienced dramatic changes in urban spaces and demographics as something radically new. For instance, in the nineteenth century, the populations of London and Paris increased by nearly 500% as people flocked to cities for new types of work. This mass migration became known as the urban revolution. Throughout these past and recent urban transformations, writers, artists, and philosophers have plumbed the meaning of the city experience and calculated how cities have changed the texture of daily life and the structure of relationships. In this class, we will join the conversation about the promises and challenges of cities. How have cities been imagined? How does city experience affect the imagination? How have cities been conceived as utopias or dystopias? What does the architecture of a city inspire or provoke? What hopes or fears do individuals have for the cities of the future?

We will read Georg Simmel’s “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” selections from Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities, Dinaw Mengestu’s The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears, and watch the films Metropolis (1927) and Detropia (2012). Students will write several short papers and a long research paper that utilizes materials from an archive. We will focus on strategies for reading critically and for generating and revising academic writing.

Survival and Identity
Professor Brendon Vayo

Civilization bestows the wonders of cell phones, the internet, and the unlimited stream of movies and television shows, but Henry David Thoreau worried that the comforts, and conformity, of civilization denies us our identity. “We do not ride on the railroad,” he warned, “it rides upon us.” Karl Marx also predicts that if we dedicate our lives to material obsessions, it would determine our consciousness, the way we perceive the world. We buy products and thus we become one; to borrow from René Descartes, we do not “know thyself.” Thus, some travel to the wilderness, the antithesis of civilization. There, they deprive themselves of materials and people in order to (re)discover their identity; they try to “know thyself.” In the texts and films for this class, we will see an example of one young man struggle to survive, and die. In another, we will see a young man struggle, and live.

These experiences will lead us to provocative questions: Does evidence exist that these people “knew” themselves any better because of their struggle to survive? If so, how has their concept of identity been altered? What might this insight into identity be?

Additionally, we will examine the rhetorical form of the mediums, book and film, and ask: how does a book and film (re)shape formations of identity? And to what end?

Required Texts:
Terror: What are we afraid of?
Professor Hildie Block

Terror! What does it mean? How can we define this term? Is it an act by individuals against civilians for political purpose or the emotion that you feel on a roller coaster? Is what you experience watching a horror film or CNN's “terror ticker?” Is it what happens in an abusive home or an oppressive government's “Reign of Terror?” This course continues the work of LIT-100, and students will continue to evolve their inquiry and research methods, and explore the topics like analyzing a text, evaluating a source, logical fallacies, and fine tune ability to think and write critically to further prepare you for scholarly writing at the university level.

The Politics of the G-word: Or How I Learned to Love Grammar and Boldly Split that Infinitive
Professor Hunter Hoskins

"To me, the N-word is not as aggressive as people make it seem. It's a culture thing. It's just something that African-Americans use, and it's not always in a derogatory way […] When you have [the NFL Commissioner] — someone who is white — enforcing [the ban of the N-word from football field], he doesn't quite understand the relationship I have with another African-American. He doesn't understand that." Terrance Knighton here shows language’s effect on our daily lives and how language intersects culture, class, gender, and race. It’s not just words, however, that expose the fissures that crack the façade of cultural unification, its also the G-word that power uses to divide and conquer. Therefore, it’s no surprise that most of us who bother with the matter would admit that we sweat at the first mention of “Grammar.” We get anxious. We feel wrong and, often, wronged. But, mostly, we just feel judged. We see grammar as a tool with which teachers and other “grammar Nazis” make us feel inferior. We see grammar as a tool by which we are publicly shamed, if not humiliated. After all, we’ve all been absolutely sure we’ve just exposed that Reddit poster’s poor logic when we conclude with—“your a fool for believing the Earth is flat!”—only to have the entire thread break out in cyber laughter as we (figuratively?) hide under our desks once we realize our error.

And that’s the point. Grammar often scares us, but—often without us even noticing—it defines us. Indeed, it genders us; it cultures us; it classes us. It conquers and divides. Grammar is political.

In this course, then, we will explore the ways grammar defines us—and is used to define us. Any female, for example, who has ever wondered who this mysterious—yet ubiquitous—generic “he” is we always refer to (to whom we always refer?) understands the power of the gendered pronoun. While others, perhaps, find those who insist on using “she” in such instances as overly “political correct.” And what is this “Ebonics” thing anyway? Shouldn’t everyone just speak and write “standard” English? And if we aren’t using “standard” English, what are we using? And who defines what “standard” English is anyway?

We will research the way authority uses grammar to reinforce itself while disempowering those it sees as threats. We will write about ways grammar shapes us (who{m} we are?). We will historicize various “prescriptive” rules in order to better understand who made these rules and to what end. We will even write about whether or not colleges should even teach the prescriptive rules of grammar or even require a “college writing” for that matter. We may even rethink plagiarism in order to decide whether or not Rand Paul and Joe Biden really should be punished for “borrowing” language or if Bob Dylan should “tip out” every line he “borrows” in his auto-biography. In short, this class will explore the politics of grammar in order to better understand its rhetorical nature.

This class should interest not only language mavens and budding cultural theorists among us,
but also those who are interested in careers in politics and diplomacy and public relations. Students will not only explore their own experiences with grammar and instruction to see how they themselves have been shaped by language and how they use it define others, but they will research various grammatical “rules” to better understand the politics and the history behind them. Ultimately, a final project might have you research a particular grammatical construct in order to shed light how it came to be and why and how it’s used today for good and ill. Depending how things go, perhaps we might invent our very own language with its own rules and constructions.

At course’s end, we shall feel no shame in splitting our infinitives and smugly thumbing our noses at those who think they know better than us . . . or is it we?

Possible authors include:
George Orwell, “The Politics of the English Language”
David Foster Wallace / Bryan A Garner, Quack This Way
Scholarship in the field of linguistics and rhetoric
Political speeches and writing
Advertisements
Supreme Court rulings
Various message boards
Bob Dylan’s Chronicle

WRTG 101.010 MTH 10:20-11:35am
Globalization: A Better or More Corrupt Future?
Professor Allison Sparks

The free market. Globalization. You can have it all—but if you do, what’s left over for everyone else? As globalization delivers commodities and values to developing nations—education, technology, clean water, wealth disparity, and cheap labor, to name a few—who decides who gets what? And once decided, how do resources actually get distributed? In this class, students will investigate how globalization’s effects on communities can inspire hope and determination or lead to corruption and poverty. Through a variety of international writers, students will explore how cultural elements spread from one group of people to others, thus resulting in the global community becoming more standardized. Students will investigate how this homogenization continues to alter standards of living, culture and values across the globe and its complex consequences.

Texts may include:
Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba
Whispering in the Giant’s Ear by William Powers
Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry (film)

WRTG 101:011 TF 11:45am – 1:00pm
The Future: The Sight of the Stars
Professor Marita La Palm

Vincent Van Gogh once wrote, “For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.” Our hope for this semester is to observe the current situation of the world in specific domains in order to talk about possible futures and what others predict. We will discuss a myriad of topics from economy to food to social organization.

The method of the class is largely a flipped classroom, meaning that there are required readings
and videos outside of class, and class time consists of dynamic activities so as to maximize the intellectual interaction. Essays such as a literature review, researched argument and feature article will be the evidentiary product of our mental journey. Above all, this is your class, dedicated to your future and the issues you feel passionate about.

**LIT-101-012 MTH 10:20-11:35am**
**Show and Tell: The Rhetoric and Composition of the Graphic Memoir**
**Professor Keigh-Cee Welsch**

The popular adage of many composition instructors, "show, don't tell," will be put to the test when we look critically at the composition and rhetorical choices made in a genre with rapidly growing popularity. In this course we will read a variety of graphic memoirs closely and critically while paying attention to the way the graphic form works (or doesn't). Students will learn the basic knowledge necessary to discuss graphic writing in the classroom and to compare and contrast it with traditional essay writing. We will also use the language of the composition classroom to make arguments about the graphic form.

Students in this course will have three major writing assignments, including a researched argument essay on the use of graphic narratives in the classroom, a persuasive argument essay on the form and implementation of graphic memoir, and a short graphic personal narrative essay. There will also be a number of smaller writing assignments in class and on Blackboard. There are no requirements for previous comic reading or composing skills for taking this course; this class is open to everyone.

Readings may include:
- Excerpts from *Understanding Comics*
- *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing*
- *Maus I*
- *Dragon's Breath*
- *Persepolis*
- *Are You My Mother?*

**WRTG 101.013 TF 10:20-11:35am**
**Imagining Where We Live Now: Reading and Writing the Urban Centuries**
**Professor Karen Shaup**

See Course Description for WRTG 101.006

**WRTG 101.014 TF 10:20-11:35am**
**The Power of Narrative**
**Professor Jocelyn McCarthy**

In the writing world, narrative is frequently acknowledged as one of the best ways to get and keep a reader’s interest. Though we don’t often think of stories when we think of persuasive, argument-driven writing, many effective nonfiction writers find ways to blend the two. Even in the world of densely researched scholarly writing – a world we’ll explore in our reading and writing – touches of narrative are increasingly used to make argument and research more inviting. In this course, we’ll strengthen our research and argument skills, we’ll explore scholarly discourse, and we’ll examine strategies for harnessing the power of narrative to create more powerful and persuasive academic writing.
WRTG 101.015 TF 10:20-11:35am
Videogames, Rhetoric, and Community
Professor Chuck Cox

According to the Entertainment Software Association, 59% of Americans play some form of videogame, everything from smartphone games like *Candy Crush* to massively multiplayer online games like *World of Warcraft*. Despite this reality, public discourse about videogames remains skeptical, often stuck on topics of violence or addiction. On the other hand, a dynamic, interdisciplinary scholarship has emerged around gaming, and these academic conversations are as complex and diverse as games themselves have become. Literacy scholar James Paul Gee describes videogames as “a new tool with which to think about the mind and through which we can externalize some of its functions.” Meanwhile, game designer Ian Bogost argues that videogames make “claims through procedural rhetorics” and thus “possess the power to mount equally meaningful expression.” In other words, videogames, through their interactive, rule-based structures, can mimic the functions of the mind, show us how our minds work, and make arguments through their very processes. Following in the path of Gee and Bogost, this seminar will use research and writing to approach the theme of videogames rhetorically, exploring them as means of communication, persuasion, and learning. And since rhetoric is contextual, we will also investigate communities – scholarly and otherwise – that concern themselves with videogames and their meaning. Since the goal of this writing seminar is to deepen and complicate students’ academic skills, students will engage in scholarly research, critical reading, and writing in several academic genres. Gaming experience is not necessary for this class; however, an open, curious mind is essential.

Readings will include the works of videogame scholars and public intellectuals, possibly including James Paul Gee, Ian Bogost, Jane McGonigle, Nick Yee, Bonnie A. Nardi, and others. Students may also be expected to register with free online game websites and forums for research purposes.

WRTG 101.016 TF 10:20-11:35am
Monster Culture
Professor: Jona Colson

Enter freely and of your own will! As critic Jeffrey Jerome Cohen states, “We live in a time of monsters.” Whether the monsters take the form of werewolves, witches, vampires, dragons, beasts, or the forces of illness, monsters do a great deal of cultural work. This course will examine the ways in which monsters challenge and question contemporary culture and shape societies. Students will interrogate historical and recent incarnations of monstrosity and how they reveal what we desire and fear. Texts may include: *American Gothic Tales*, edited by Joyce Carol Oates (Plume), *Monsters* edited by Brandy Ball Blake and L. Andrew Cooper (Fountainhead Press V Series)

WRTG 101.017 MTH 11:45am-1:00pm
Art of Activism: Reading and Writing Protest
Professor Melissa Scholes Young

Is protest effective in constructing social change? How has activism shaped the world? Through scholarly research and writing, we’ll explore the strength of an individual voice and the consequences of community radicalism. Students will read and write about protest leaders, such as Mother Jones, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi, and learn to express themselves and persuade others using the art of argument. We’ll also evaluate modern protest movements, such as Arab Spring and the Tea Party, and critically examine how social media is utilized to organize protest. Through essays, music, and film, we’ll consider rhetorical strategies that get your voice heard in a noisy world.
WRTG 101.018 MTH 11:45am-1:00pm
Comedy and Commentary
Professor Jeremy Wade

Comedy has always acted as social commentary. It is both a reflection of society and a lens through which to see society. This course will explore--through essay composition--comedy from the latter half of the twentieth century to the present day: the stand-up of Lenny Bruce and Louis C.K. as well as the satire of Saturday Night Live and Inside Amy Schumer. You will figure out what implicit or explicit arguments these sketches, books, and bits are making about race, gender, and sexuality by employing academic writing skills to produce researched, explicit arguments of your own.

WRTG 101.019CB MTH 11:45am-1:00pm
Called to Serve: Writing for Community Engagement
Professor Amanda Choutka

Do you believe you can discernibly “change the world” through volunteer work in your community? Is volunteering one’s energy to a non-profit organization a religious, moral, or civic duty? What are the ethical and political implications at stake when choosing a community to volunteer in? What factors will influence the relationship between the volunteer and the members of the community served? After service, does the volunteer change? And has the volunteer actually created a visible change in the community they chose to serve?

This course will examine the implications of service through writing assignments, course readings, and a required fieldwork experience. (The fieldwork experience is required of all students enrolled in the course and includes 15 hours of volunteer work in one of four Washington, D.C. community service organizations.) We will read texts on the rhetoric of social justice, community engagement, and service experiences. Major writing assignments will include a feature-style article on your fieldwork experience, a scholarly essay on why individuals serve, and an essay that incorporates scholarly and primary research. There will be short writing or group assignments and readings due nearly every class. This is a Community-Based Learning (CB or CBL) course; CBL courses emphasize social responsibility and engagement with the city’s issues.

Students are encouraged to register for the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Conference to be held at American University on March 28, 2015 and connect themselves to the larger culture of service learning and community-based work in the D.C. community at the university level. This is optional.

Students enrolled in this course may add the optional Community Service Learning Project’s fourth credit, which enables student to earn an additional academic credit through completing an additional 25 hours of direct service volunteer work, completing a service project for their community service partner, and a reflective essay. CSLP students are also required to register for the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Conference and attend the conference.
Our relationship with animals is complex and, well, weird. We all know about the animals in the wild, in zoos, in labs, and in our homes, and yet we rarely think about the many other ways we encounter animals. For instance, consider that neighbor, friend, or relative we all have—the one who, you know, obsessively collects pig figurines. Need some more examples? Think about the many animals that serve as school mascots, or the animals served as school lunch, or the animals dissected in school classrooms. Too close to home? Shift your attention to the plethora of cat videos on YouTube or focus instead on the simple existence of doggles (sunglasses for dogs?!). And, if you’re still not convinced that animals are all around us, reflect upon the relentless anthropomorphism that Disney movies provide; or those elderly women who care for more than fifty cats in their homes; or the Ohioan who, before shooting himself, released his extensive collection of exotic wild animals on an unsuspecting public. This course will examine the multifaceted interactions between humans and animals. While some of our inquiries will lead us toward issues regarding animal rights and what appears to be a human need to dominate animals, we will also enter critical conversations about our inherent desire to be with and understand animals. For this reason, we will thoroughly examine the human-pet bond. By the end of the term, our inquiries will have led us through explorations and writings rooted in the natural and social sciences, economics, environmental issues, race, culture, gender, and concepts of selfhood. Major course assignments will include two research-based projects, both of which require field research or first-hand experience. Students will also prepare and participate in a series of presentations.

Course materials may include:

*Why We Love Cats and Dogs* (documentary film)
*Mine: The Pets That Hurricane Katrina Left Behind* (documentary film)
*Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*, Robert Sullivan
*Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals*, Hal Herzog
*Eating Animals*, Jonathan Safran Foer
*Pets in America: A History*, Katherine C. Grier
*Animals Make Us Human*, Temple Grandin

Excerpts and/or short works by Aristotle, Jeremy Bentham, Rene Descartes, Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Arnold Arluke, Clinton R. Sanders, Malcolm Gladwell, Matt Cartmill, Leslie Irvine, among others.
What is a memory? Is our memory of a past event the same thing as the event itself, a close approximation, or simply a recollection the last time we recalled that event? Are the vacation photos that we post to Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter accurate depictions of those moments, or are they carefully crafted – even invented – based on our own perception?

To form individual memories and pass them off to others, we often facilitate recollection through photos, albums, letters, diaries, notes, films, and digital media. New media scholar José van Dijck notes that these documents and tools “mediate not only remembrances of things past; they also mediate relationships between individuals and groups of any kind.” When curating our own personal memories, we have a choice in the character of those items; but when it comes to constructing a shared cultural memory, who gets to decide its content and form? If journalist Joshua Foer is correct in his suggestion that, “Our culture is an edifice built of externalized memories,” how important is it to consider who shapes those monuments and narratives?

This class will examine the relationship between writing and memory, and use writing (of our own and others) to explore these questions. Because memory is filtered through multiple forms, we’ll explore this topic through a range of media including film, autobiographical essays, graphic novels, and public memorials. In addition to a lot of reading and writing, you should also be prepared to complete a site visit to a local memorial, and to screen several films outside of scheduled class meeting times.

Texts may include:

*Maus* by Art Spiegelman
*Moonwalking with Einstein* by Joshua Foer
*Meditated Memory in the Digital Age* by José van Dijck
*Rewriting* by Joseph Harris

Films by Michel Gondry, Christopher Nolan, Chris Marker, Patricio Guzmán, and Orson Welles.
and learn how to be comfortable navigating current events. Adding to the theme of current events and ideas, Ted Talks will amend our understanding of a constantly unfolding world of ideas. Focus will be on contributing to a conversation that changes every day. Students will need a digital subscription to the Times.

**WRTG 101.026 TF 1:10-2:25pm**  
**The Power of Narrative**  
**Professor Jocelyn McCarthy**  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.014

**WRTG 101.027 TF 1:10-2:25pm**  
**Imagining Where We Live Now: Reading and Writing the Urban Centuries**  
**Professor Karen Shaup**  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.006

**WRTG 101.028 TF 1:20-2:25pm**  
**Revising Villains**  
**Professor: Sarah Sansolo**

In books, movies, TV shows, and even Broadway musicals, iconic villains are being shown in a new light. There is an increased interest in telling the other side of the story. How have writers managed to revise our opinions of real and imagined bad guys? And where do we draw the line between recuperating the misunderstood villain and excusing the inexcusable? Through our readings, research, and writing, we will explore both the fictional baddies who loomed over our childhoods and the real life villains who continue to frighten us.

Texts may include:  
*Catch Me If You Can* by Frank Abagnale  
*I Wear the Black Hat: Grappling with Villains (Real and Imagined)* by Chuck Klosterman  
*Wicked* by Gregory Maguire  
*Rewriting* by Joseph Harris  
Additional essays and short stories  
Films and TV shows including *The Wizard of Oz, Catch Me If You Can,* and *Once Upon a Time*

**WRTG 101.029 MTH 2:35-3:30pm**  
**Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction in a Digital Age**  
**Professor Arielle Bernstein**  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.025

**WRTG 101.030 MTH 2:35-3:50pm**  
**What’s in a Pronoun? Writing Gender, Genre, and Intersectionality**  
**Professor Marnie Twigg**

What are your pronouns? This simple question only begins to acknowledge vast differences between assigned sex and gender identity. It also pushes us to question the assumptions we make about gender, whether we identify as a man, a woman, genderqueer, or agender, etc. Is it in our faces, the way we walk, the sound of our voices, the people we love, whether we like shoe shopping or football? How could these questions ever be covered in two (or more) categories? More importantly, why are we pressured to categorize gender at all?

Our course will begin with writing about these questions, but it will not end there. This class will empower you to research and write about gender construction and performativity; gender and
privilege; and intersectionality, a theory that connects different institutionalized forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia. Students in the course may or may not already be familiar with these ideas; however, we are not just going to write about them. Ultimately, we are interested in the connections between approaches to gender and approaches to writing. By considering how these approaches may overlap, we will discover whether the way we choose to write can be an act of resistance as much as what we write about.

Texts May Include:
*My New Gender Workbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Achieving World Peace Through Gender Anarchy and Sex Positivity* by Kate Bornstein

*Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity* edited by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore

Selections from Kortney Ryan Ziegler, Julia Serano, J Mase III, Nico Dacumos, Dean Spade, Naeem Mohaiemen, Audre Lorde, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Halberstam, Janet Mock, Eric Stanley, Rocko Buldagger, Jasbir Puar, Susan Stryker, Laverne Cox, and local queer writers

**WRTG 101.031 MTH 2:35-3:50pm**
*Manifestations of Fear*
*Professor: Alison Klein*

As the success of the horror movie industry indicates, fear is a powerful and fascinating emotion. Most people avoid situations that may lead to actual injury, yet we go to the movies, read Stephen King novels, or ride roller coasters in order to be frightened. Why do we enjoy shivers down our spine, and how is simulated fear different from or similar to the genuine fear experienced in moments of crisis? How do authors create fear in their audience, and what purposes does this fear serve? In this course, we will consider these questions and examine our own reactions to potentially frightening stimuli by exploring the ways that authors inspire, assuage, analyze, and depict fear. Texts may include: *Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein*, short stories by Edgar Allen Poe, Sigmund Freud’s “The Uncanny,” the film *Psycho*, and essays by Malcolm Gladwell.

**WRTG 101.032 TF 2:35-3:50pm**
*The Devil in the Diploma: Deviance and Crime on College Campuses*
*Professor Lydia Fettig*

We tend to think of college as the safest and smartest next step—and yet a recent study revealed that high school graduates who go to college take more risks and break more laws than those students who stay home or enter the workforce soon after completing high school. In fact, much sociological research shows that, among deviant populations, college students rank among the highest. But students are not the only criminals on campus. Professors and other university officials have been known to bully and manipulate, abuse drugs and alcohol, pursue inappropriate relationships, and plagiarize within academic work. This course will examine both social deviance and criminal behavior across college campuses. After considering the major theories of deviance from the social sciences, specific topics of inquiry will range from the relatively benign (getting tattoos, forgoing conventional methods of hygiene, participating in drum circles, experimenting sexually, etc.) to the potentially dangerous (cheating, stealing, hazing, binge drinking, using and abusing illicit drugs and prescription medications, committing sexual assault, etc.). We will also ask if the marked rise in anxiety and mental illness among college students is in itself a category of deviance. Major course assignments will not only encourage student writers to examine how risk-taking can work in writing, but also to break some of the rules they may have learned about what makes a “good” academic essay. The course will require several research-based projects, some of which may require field research or first-hand experience.
Course materials may include:

*Degrees of Deviance: Student Accounts of Deviant Behavior* (Henry and Eaton)
*Deviance and Crime in Colleges and Universities: What Goes On in the Halls of Ivy* (Huckson and Roe buck)
*Girl, Interrupted* (Susanna Kaysen)
*Renegade Kids, Suburban Outlaws: From Youth Culture to Delinquency* (Wooden and Blazak)
*Readings in Deviant Behavior* (Thio, Calhoun, and Conyers)
Excerpts and/or short works by David Sedaris, Chuck Klosterman, Susan Cheever, among others.
*Heathers* (feature film)
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (feature film)

**WRTG 101.033 TF 2:35-3:50pm**

*Real & Imagined: An Examination of Cultural Villainy*

Professor: K. Tyler Christensen

What are we really saying when we classify someone as bad, even evil, in society? Good and evil’s disunion has long been a central conflict underlying praxis and philosophies across cultures. In this course, students will be required to define villainy for themselves, and analyze society’s real and imagined villains (sans Hitler, for all of the obvious reasons). Pop culture critic Chuck Klosterman asserts, “In any situation, the villain is the person who knows the most but cares the least.” Klosterman’s, *I Wear the Black Hat: Grappling with Villains Real and Imagined*, will serve as the primary text for this course.

Research-based writing assignments, as well as critical, textual analysis will aid students in answering the villain question. Upon harnessing your thoughts, you could weigh, compare, and contrast as you ask: Who is more worthy of my scorn: Bill Clinton or Monica Lewinsky? In the case of the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School: shock-rocker, Marilyn Manson or video games?

The centerpiece of this course is writing, and, as such, students will learn to challenge the assumptions of other writers like Andrew Solomon (*Far From the Tree*), and documentarian Michael Moore (*Bowling for Columbine*). As a class we’ll examine the ways in which these writers have been successful/unsuccessful in their writing approach on the topic of cultural villainy. This heuristic investigation will aid the student as they situate themselves on the subject in their own writing. The major course requirements for this semester will include frequent short writings, three major essay assignments, an annotated bibliography, and a final presentation based on research findings.

**WRTG 101.034 TF 2:35-3:50pm**

*What’s for Dinner?*

Professor Erin Nunnally

While we all need food to live, how we go about satisfying that need varies in some pretty extraordinary ways. Whether we frequent McDonald’s or avoid meat and animal products altogether, we are constantly making choices about what we put into our bodies. Choosing what to eat is something we can’t avoid, but lately that decision-making process has become tricky at best in America. Popular documentaries like *Supersize Me* and *Food, Inc.* have called into question not only the quality of the food we eat, but also the ethics of the food industry behind it, and the effects not only on our health and wallet, but on the economy and job market, of what we put on the table. Rather than a source of comfort, for many, food has become a source of anxiety and stress. In this course, we will examine the food industry in America – its influences, agendas, and impacts – and its relationship to our culture and identity. We will examine rhetorical choices of advertisers, doctors, and chefs, among others, that seek to influence our decisions and explore ways in which food impacts other aspects of who we are. You will add your voice to the conversation on food culture and industry through research-
driven, argumentative essay assignments, group presentations, and various smaller writing assignments throughout the semester.

Texts may include:
*My Life in France*, Julia Child  
*Food and Culture: A Reader*, edited by Carole Counihan  
*Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Malcom Gladwell  
*The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Michael Pollan  
*Writing With Style*, John Trimble  
Excerpts from *The New Yorker, Bon Appétit*, and various news and academic sources

**WRTG 101.035 TF 1:10-2:25pm**  
*What’s for Dinner?*  
Professor Erin Nunnally  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.034

**WRTG 101.036 TF 4:00-5:00pm**  
*The Devil in the Diploma: Deviance and Crime on College Campuses*  
Professor Lydia Fettig  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.032

**WRTG 101.037 MTH 4:00-5:15pm**  
*In Sickness and Health: Writing Wellness Across Cultures*  
Professor Marnie Twigg  
What does it mean to be healthy? Many Americans assume there is an easy answer to this question, but it varies widely based on our cultural communities. The consequences of the answer may change too, particularly as we look for solutions to address the U.S. healthcare system’s many challenges.

In this class, we will look at current and historical definitions of sickness and health through a sociocultural lens. That means we will discuss and write about how perceptions of physical and mental wellness both shape and reflect cultural attitudes in the medical field and beyond. Like any writing-intensive course, this class will require you to hone your critical and analytical skills along with the quality of your prose. Although we will learn a quite a bit about illnesses and treatments, a background in science is not necessary for success in this course.

Texts may include:  
*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman  
*Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande  
*The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The First Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing* by Lori Alvord  
*United in Anger: A History of ACT UP* by Jim Hubbard  
*Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* by Ethan Watters

**WRTG 101.038 MTH 4:00-5:15 pm**  
*Manifestations of Fear*  
Professor: Alison Klein  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.031
De minimis non curat lex. Law does not concern itself with the smallest matters. Judge Judy would of course disagree (and she would be right), but this course will deal with the big matters that underlie legal discourse. When we talk about justice, do we mean procedural or substantive justice? Does liberty mean being free from interference, or having the practical ability to act as one wants? When we strive for equality, is it formal equality or material equality? Should our laws recognize negative rights or positive rights? In this course we will explore why the complexity of legal issues means the answer to each of these questions is “Yes.”

This course aims to help students develop their writing and close reading skills through careful analysis of legal language. While legalese has a bad reputation for being seemingly impenetrable, a closer look reveals there is often a connection between the complexity of the language and the precision of the ideas.

Writing assignments will have a strong focus on revision, with special emphasis on how the exact meaning of individual terms can dramatically alter an argument.

Required texts may include:
- The Federalist Papers
- Second Treatise on Government by John Locke
- Why the Law is So Perverse by Leo Katz
- Unlearning Liberty by Greg Lukianoff

WRTG 101.040 TF 4:00-5:15 pm
The Business of Caring: Argument and Sports
Professor: John Carroll

In his New Yorker essay on the 1975 World Series, Roger Angell wonders why sports fans invest themselves so heavily in a world he describes as "foolish," "childish," "insignificant," "patently contrived" and "commercially exploitative." He concludes that those descriptors leave out sports' "business of caring," which lets fans invest themselves in a way that few other outlets allow. We will use this essay as a starting point to explore the evolution of sports fandom, ranging from the aforementioned 1975 World Series to the hooligan culture in English football. From there, we will catch up to contemporary sports culture and examine the ways that sports writing and conversation now mimic the type of argumentative writing demanded of first-year college students. How has the statistical revolution impacted both fandom and sportswriting, and what lessons can we incorporate into our academic work? And is the work really different after all? Writing assignments will begin at the level of reporting and observation, and will escalate toward a final researched argument of your choosing. Course readings will include Michael Lewis's Moneyball, H.G. Bissinger's Friday Night Lights, and Bill Buford's Among the Thugs.

WRTG 101.041 TF 4:00-5:15 pm
Pictures or It Didn’t Happen: Mediated Memory in Film and Culture
Professor: Mike Cabot

See course Description for WRTG 101.022

WRTG 101.042 TF 4:00-5:15pm
Music and Identity
Professor Matthew Bonetti

Have you ever wondered why you gravitate towards a particular genre of music? Perhaps you’re a “punk,” perhaps you’re an “indie-person,” perhaps you’re a “believer,” or perhaps you’re just someone who enjoys a particular kind of music. Regardless of terminology, our musical preferences are intimately tied up with our sense of “self”—the ways in which we form our identities. In order to explore this relationship between music and “the self,” we will analyze music from a variety of academic perspectives, such as the philosophical, the sociological, and the psychological.

For this writing-intensive course, students can expect their reading, writing, and research to engage with the following questions: “What is the value of music?”, “What effect does music have on the listener?”, “What’s the cultural significance of rock n’ roll?”, “What’s are the aesthetics of rap?”, “What is Jimi Hendrix’s connection to his music?”, “What about Bob Dylan, Elvis Presley, Henry Rollins, or Katy Perry?”, and perhaps most importantly, “How does music function as a mirror that we can see ourselves in?”

Students can also expect guest speakers, including John Stabb: lead-singer of Government Issue, and the godfather of DC Punk.

Texts may include:
Musical Identities, by Raymond A. R. MacDonald, David J Hargreaves, and Dorothy Miell
The Social Psychology of Music, by David J. Hargreaves
Room Full of Mirrors: A Biography of Jimi Hendrix, by Charles R. Cross

WRTG 101.043 TF 4:00-5:15pm
SEE SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING!
Professor Trisha Reichler

What is courage? What is outrage? What does it take for you to see something wrong and do something to change it? In this class we will explore the writings of individuals who have used language to influence, inspire, and sometimes insult others in order to bring about political and social change. We will examine the passionate prose of individuals from different genders, races, cultures and generations who share a common characteristic: their commitment to justice. Some of these individuals, such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and Malcolm X, gave their lives to the struggles for freedom and equal rights. Others, like the suffragists of the 1920s or the recent Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, risked their lives, survived, and continued to fight for women’s equality. And some less famous individuals, such as the 83-year-old Edith Windsor, simply said, “enough is enough,” and brought the case that forced the Supreme Court to rule that limiting marriage to heterosexual couples violates the Constitution. Each in their own way, the individuals we will study this semester saw something unjust, and did something to change it.

The readings in this class will be drawn from a wide variety of sources including speeches, essays, films, songs and Supreme Court cases. Students will be expected to download these documents and interrogate them closely to discern how content and style work together to produce passionate prose that moves others to act.

WRTG 101.044 TF 4:00-5:15pm
“Touched with Fire”: Creativity & Madness
Professor Leah Johnson

Why have so many great artists—Vincent Van Gogh, Robert Schumann, Lord Byron, Virginia Woolf—struggled with insanity? Is there a link between madness and creativity? Is it necessary to be “a little
mad” to create works of art? Or does the artist create in spite of his/her madness? Is one’s creativity enhanced or hampered by extremes of temperament? What price must the artist pay for his/her sensitivity? Where do we fall on the spectrum of madness and sanity? How do we even begin to define these terms? We’ll address these questions and others as we read memoirs of madness, theories about madness, and creative transformations, deepening our understanding of the artistic temperament and of the role madness may or may not play in the creative life of the artist. Guest speakers will share their perspectives with us.

Texts will include:
*Darkness Visible* by William Styron
*Girl, Interrupted* by Susanna Kaysen
*Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
*Pollock* (film)

**WRTG 101.045 TF 8:55-10:10am**
The Power of Narrative
Professor Jocelyn McCarthy

See Course Description for WRTG 101.014

**WRTG 101.046 MTH 10:20-11:35 am**
Haves and Have-Nots: Wealth and Poverty in America
Professor: Lacey Wootton

Have you gone out of your way to avoid the homeless person asking for spare change in front of the CVS? Have you gazed enviously at the mansions near AU in Spring Valley? Have you wondered how the person who cleans your dorm makes ends meet in an expensive urban area? In fact, on our campus and in DC, we can see people representing the full economic spectrum. In this course, we will examine the dynamics of wealth and poverty, but instead of simply looking at the economics involved, we’ll consider the meanings of wealth and poverty in our culture: What signifies wealth and poverty? How does our economic status determine who we are, how others perceive us, and what our opportunities are? We will examine a variety of perspectives—academic and personal—on wealth and poverty to help develop research-based arguments about those who have and those who have not.

Note: We will likely have three book-length texts about socioeconomic class and at least one book about writing.

**WRTG 101.047 MTH 11:45am-1:00pm**
What’s in a Pronoun? Writing Gender, Genre, and Intersectionality
Professor Marnie Twigg

See Course Description for WRTG 101.030
WRTG 101.048 MTH 1:10-2:25pm
This Written Life
Professor Stina Oakes

“Each week on our program, of course, we choose a theme, and bring you different kinds of stories on that theme.” – Ira Glass, This American Life

In this seminar, we will use the format of the popular radio show, This American Life, from Chicago Public Media. You will develop an individual theme to explore throughout the semester and write about that theme through different lenses. Over the semester you will write three pieces on your theme – a personal introduction to the theme, a researched feature, and a scholarly piece.

Since this course is an academic writing course, our primary focus will be to continue to practice and refine writing skills through critical reading, research, writing, and discussion. As a class, our theme will center on the craft and process of writing; we will examine the issues and rhetorical strategies of academic writing. We will be using a variety of texts that focus on writing, reading, and research, such as Joseph Harris’ Rewriting, Roy Peter Clark’s Writing Tools, and articles from WritingSpaces.org.

Please note: a requirement of this course includes listening to free weekly podcasts of This American Life.

WRTG 101.049 MTH 2:35-3:50pm
Lives on the Margin
Professor Caron Martinez

Military veterans, minimum wage workers, newly-arrived immigrants, devout members of religious sects: these and other groups often occupy a place outside of the U.S. mainstream. In this course, located at the intersection of social psychology and cultural analysis, we will explore communities "on the margins" with an intent to examine human behavior, social norms, and identity. What does it mean to live in a society with widely divergent socio-cultural differences? How diverse can democracies become without risking fragmentation or lacking empathy? What are the roles of research and writing in expanding awareness and tolerance? Students can expect to gain experience with social science databases and observational pedagogy to construct annotated bibliographies, interview members of marginalized communities, and complete a project of their choice. We will approach this course with an attitude of inquiry and even self-inquiry as we explore the experiences and values of groups of people and their everyday realities "on the margins."

Texts may include:

The Yellow Birds, Kevin Powers
Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting by In America, Barbara Ehrenreich
The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible, A. J. Jacobs
The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation, Sherif, et. al.
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures, Anne Fadiman
Enrique's Journey, Sonia Nazario
Big Data. Common Core. Race to the Top. Education headlines are full of solutions to our education woes. The Obama administration champions the need to hire and maintain excellent teachers; the Bush administration, however, focused on reducing the education gap between minority and white students and boys and girls. Before that, debate in the 90’s launched the accountability movement we now call Common Core. Each so-called solution started with good intentions, but how each reform continues to play out often surprises and frustrates us. In this course we will begin by reading children’s literature, considering these texts from a variety of viewpoints and debating the purpose and value of children’s literature. After thinking about what happens in the classroom, we will pivot and begin reading and making arguments about U.S. education policies and politics. And finally, our work will lead us to the current scholarly discourse surrounding education reform. While this course is centered on politics and education reform, it is first and foremost a class focused on deepening academic writing skills. Students will write three major essays: a synthesis argument, a researched argument, and a literature review. Please be aware that this course will require a significant amount of work outside of class meeting times, as students will read and grade their peers’ work.

Possible course texts:

* Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. Rowling
* Kira-Kira. Kadohata
* Olive’s Ocean. Henkes
* Paperboy. Vawter
* The Politics of American Education. Spring
* The Flat World and Education. Darling-Hammond
* The Death and Life of the Great American School System. Ravitch
* On Writing Well. Zinsser
* They Say/I Say. Graff and Birkenstein
* Writingspaces.org

WRTG 101.051 TF 1:10-2:25pm
The Earth Untrammeled: Rhetoric of the American Wilderness
Professor Mary Switalski

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” – Section 2c, Wilderness Act, 1964

In September of 1964, the 88th Congress signed into law the Wilderness Act, considered one of America’s greatest achievements in conservation and preservation. In the fifty years since its adoption, nearly 110 million acres of our nation’s natural treasures have been protected as wilderness for posterity, and new proposals reach Congress each year. What is it that we value so deeply about the wild? We go into the wild as a visitor, to marvel at it, or to test our mettle. We go to it for recreation; in it, we are re-created. In this course, we’ll explore meanings of wilderness in the American imagination, from Puritans and pioneers through contemporary nature writers. You’ll write a thesis-driven profile essay about an individual whose rhetoric and actions contributed significantly to our perception of wilderness and its value. We’ll also research and analyze modern environmental theory and policy, and in a formal academic essay, you’ll explore a topic of your choice related to wilderness law and/or environmental ethics.

Texts may include excerpts from the journals of The Corps of Discovery, Thoreau’s Walden and
The Maine Woods, Gary Snyder’s *The Practice of the Wild*, and Annie Dillard’s *Teaching a Stone to Talk; Wild* by Cheryl Strayed; and lots of scholarly articles in support of your own projects. We will also see the “Wilderness Forever” exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

**WRTG 101.052 TF 11:45am-1:00pm**
The Earth Untrammeled: Rhetoric of the American Wilderness
Professor Mary Switalski
See Course Description for WRTG 101.051

**WRTG 101.053 TF 10:20-11:35am**
The Politics of Education
Cindy Bair Van Dam
See Course Description for WRTG 101.050

**WRTG 101.054 TF 8:55-10:10am**
Listening to Hip Hop and Country Music (reading lyrics, defining genre, performing identity, writing culture)
Professor Anna DeWitt
You know that friend you have, the one who says they "love all music-- except for Rap and Country"? What's up with that? Why does Taylor Swift always sing about kissing in the rain? Is Jay-Z a sellout? Is Keith Urban to Country as Macklemore is to Rap? No? Why not? This semester, we'll use keen writing and reading skills to delve into the backgrounds and subcultures that define each of these musical genres. We'll delve into the lyrics and instrumentation of artists both mainstream and underground. We'll explore what it means to "read" music as a cultural artifact and as a personal badge of selfhood. We'll write original criticism that makes meaning from the themes, motifs, and narratives that make these genres unique. We'll listen to a ton of music-- some of it we'll like, some of it we won't-- and we'll make meaning from all of it.

Readings:
An awesome weekly playlist
Selections from *The Grey Album* by Kevin Young
Selections from *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* by Dick Hebdige
The poetry of Jake Adam York, Langston Hughes, and others
Original interviews from *Rolling Stone* and *Fresh Air*
Selections from *Musicophilica* by Oliver Sacks
and more!

**WRTG 101.055 MTH 10:20-11:35am**
“Based on a True Story”: The Rhetoric of Historically-based Films
Professor Kelly Joyner

*History does not exist until it is created.*
Robert A. Rosenstone in *Visions of the Past*

*Whenever you make a historical film, whether it is set two decades or two centuries in the past, you are referring to the present.*
Humberto Solas, Cuban filmmaker
Many of us don’t feel fully capable of digesting an important event until we’ve seen it on a screen captured and interpreted by a gifted filmmaker. There’s something in films—documentaries as well as historically-based dramatic films—that helps us get at the meaning of the event, to understand the various truths about it. Some filmmakers hew closely to the facts. And some take liberties, though they might argue convincingly that those liberties serve a larger truth. All the good filmmakers seem to hold a mirror up so audiences might see their own reflections.

In this writing class, which is primarily concerned with developing academic writing and research skills, we’ll study such films; we’ll read about them; we’ll write analytically about how historical events are reproduced on screen; and we’ll research and write cinematically about a specific historical event from our own idiosyncratic point of view. In all, we’ll join ongoing intellectual conversations, and we’ll strive to make meaning from the events that have captured our interest and imagination.

Texts may include:
Works by Timothy Corrigan, Alexander Nemerov, Robert Rosenstone, David Thomson, and David Foster Wallace.

WRTG-101.056 MTH 11:45-1:00pm
Humor and Place
Professor Gretchen VanWormer

“I do not go outdoors. Not more than I have to. As far as I’m concerned, the whole point of living in New York City is indoors. You want greenery? Order the spinach.” –David Rakoff

This course looks at the way writers have used humor to write about place. We’ll consider the techniques they use, the perspectives they take, and the arguments they create. In doing so we’ll also discuss how to use this knowledge to strengthen our own writing. We’ll explore such questions as: What ethical concerns do we need to consider when writing about communities outside our own? What makes a piece of writing funny? And how might we persuade our reader to see beyond the myths and biases she may have about a place? Texts will likely include books or individual essays, stories, or poems from:
David Sedaris
Anne Fadiman
David Rakoff
Kevin Young
Sarah Vowell

WRTG 101.057 MTH 1:10-2:25pm
“Based on a True Story”: The Rhetoric of Historically-based Films
Professor Kelly Joyner

See Course Description for WRTG 101.055

WRTG 101.058 MTH 2:35-3:50pm
“Devotion to Justice…Devotion to Truth”: Lincoln, Darwin, and Their Words That Shaped a Future
Professor Adam Tamashasky

In one of those startling accidents of history, Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln entered the world on the same day in the same year. Adam Gopnik, in his book about these two towering figures, argues Darwin and Lincoln “did not make the modern world. But they helped to make our moral modernity.” And they did this through their rhetoric. So this course will center on these two men and their writing—writing that embodied and furthered changes in their respective fields of science and politics. From Darwin, we’ll study (and enjoy) the unabridged On The Origin of Species, among other
pieces; from Lincoln, a great many of his speeches and letters.

In coincidental emulation of our two subjects, the course will feature constant reading and writing, necessarily at an advanced level. The major assignments will include essays designed to implement the lessons of argument and style gleaned from our studies of both men: lessons of observation and analysis, of audience awareness and subsequently tailored arguments.

Planned texts:
Adam Gopnik, *Angels and Ages: A Short Book about Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life*
Charles Darwin, *From So Simple a Beginning: Darwin’s Four Great Books*
Abraham Lincoln, *Selected Speeches and Writings*

WRTG 101.059 TF 1:10-2:25pm
**Food (and) Writing**  
Professor Heather McDonald

Food: a simple word for a complex concept. Food writing: a simple label for a complex genre. From reviewers to novelists, from journalists to memoirists, food writers explore how their subject is both literal and metaphorical fuel for individuals and communities. This course goes well beyond the idea that “food tastes good.” We will examine the genre as writers, by sharpening critical thinking skills, practicing writing techniques, and honing research skills. We will combine texts on writing with topic-specific texts. Full or excerpted readings may include *Rewriting*, by Joseph Harris; *How to Write a Sentence*, by Stanley Fish; *The Tastemakers: Why We’re Crazy for Cupcakes but Fed Up with Fondue*, by David Sax; *Eating Wildly*, by Ava Chin; *The Third Plate: Field Notes on the Future of Food*, by David Barber; *The Gastronomical Me*, by M.F.K. Fisher; and *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*.

WRTG 101.060 MTH 8:55-10:10am
**The Politics of the G-word: Or How I Learned to Love Grammar and Boldly Split that Infinitive**  
Professor Hunter Hoskins

See Course Description for WRTG 101.009

WRTG 101.061 MTH 8:55-10:10am
**Infected: The Causes and Consequences of Nature’s Clever Killers**  
Professor: Michael Moreno

The media today offer plenty of anxiety-inducing headlines about deaths at the hands of villains, fighting factions, dictators, psychopaths and other unsavory sorts. But there are even more terrifying killers against which we have limited means to defend ourselves. They lurk in the rainforests, merrily moving from healthy host to human victim. They are in the environment and getting into our food supply. They reside in our own bodies, just waiting for the right moment to begin their siege. They are viruses, bacteria and mystery molecules that turn our own bodies into disease factories. In this course, we examine the history, present and future of these nefarious killers and analyze what the experts say can and should be done to keep us safe. Discussion and research topics include the anthrax attacks of 2001, the ongoing discussion about whether or not to destroy smallpox vaccine stockpiles, the explosive Ebola outbreak in Africa, historical and recent incidences of food- and water-borne illnesses, and hotly debated autism research and the anti-vaccination movement that has yielded spikes in infectious diseases such as measles and whooping cough.
WRTG 101.062 TF 8:55-10:10am  
The Comedic Memoir  
Professor Emily Prince  
“The only honest art form is laughter, comedy. You can't fake it... try to fake three laughs in an hour -- ha ha ha ha ha ha -- they'll take you away, man. You can't.” –Lenny Bruce  
In this section of WRTG 101, we will focus on the form of the comedic memoir, reading books by a variety of comedians and comic writers—from old standard Lenny Bruce, to satire specialist Tina Fey, to essayist David Sedaris—and examine the ways in which they use the genre to make arguments, deliver social commentary, and share nuanced and powerful personal narratives. In doing so, we will explore the complexities of humor and writing and hone our academic writing skills by conducting research and forming our own arguments about comedy and genre.

WRTG 101.063 MTH 4:00-5:15pm  
“Devotion to Justice…Devotion to Truth”: Lincoln, Darwin, and Their Words That Shaped a Future  
Professor Adam Tamashasky  
See course Description for WRTG 101.058

WRTG 101.064 TF 2:35-3:50pm  
Food (and) Writing  
Professor Heather McDonald  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.059

WRTG 101.065 MTH 1:10-2:25pm  
"The Roads Taken: Travel Writing and the Rhetoric of Place and Identity  
Professor Bryan Freeland  
This course will look closely at essays, a memoir, and other texts concerning travel, place, and movement, in order to get insights into what comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell referred to as the “monomyth,” or “hero’s journey.” Major course requirements may include: a reader-response paper, a brief biographical profile, an ethnographic essay, and a literary journalism research portfolio. As the second course in the College Writing sequence, students will be expected to continue to develop critical reading and critical thinking skills, improve information literacy, and write coherent and engaging prose.

Texts may include:

*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell  
*West with the Night*, Beryl Markham  
*Not So Funny When It Happened: The Best of Travel Humor and Misadventure*, Tim Cahill  
*The Curious Researcher*, Bruce Ballenger  
*Rewriting*, Joseph Harris  
*Easy Writer*, Andrea Lunsford
The Boom Poetic: Hip Hop and the Art of the Emcee
Professor Sarah J. Trembath

The Bronx Renaissance of the 1980s brought us the fuzzy Kangol, the head-spin, the subway train as a painter’s canvas, and a powerful, bass-heavy music, narrated in rhymes rapped over beats, samples, cuts, and scratches. With these artistic innovations came a brand new culture and art form—Hip Hop—that would soon become a global phenomenon. During its hey day, now regarded by hip hop scholars as the Golden Era of Hip Hop, there arose an important wave of street poets known as emcees: rappers who honed their skills in freestyle cyphers, recorded their compositions, and produced a body of work characterized by fluid mastery of English-language poetics that remained steeped in the West African griot function and American funk tradition. This lyricism in its uniquely African American incarnation is what is referred to here as the boom poetic.

This course will begin with the history and definition of hip hop and end with your researched, informed analyses of current, post-commercial-era hip hop products. In between, we will study—as texts—the poetry and poetics of the Golden Era emcees. This is a writing class, and we will be applying the tools of scholarly research and analysis to our exploration of this impactful movement.

Texts may include:
--Blues People by LeRoi Jones
--The Gospel of Hip Hop by KRS-1
--Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America by Tricia Rose
--They Say/I Say by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein
--The Easy Writer by Andrea Lunsford
--Other texts, sound recordings, and audiovisual media.

“Touched with Fire”: Creativity & Madness
Professor Leah Johnson

See Course Description for WRTG 101.44

Lives on the Margin
Professor Caron Martinez

See Course Description for WRTG 101.049

Eating in America
Professor Kate Wilson

Decisions, decisions! Organic apples? Free-range chicken? Locally sourced cilantro? Beef that was kind to cows? Humanely raised chickens? Or should I just pick up the stuff I usually do? What do these labels even mean? Maybe I’ll just run screaming out of the supermarket!

In this course we will examine the notion of “eating in America”—what do we eat? How do we make our decisions? Is one thing “healthier” than another? And who’s in charge of my choices anyway? Course materials will include sociological studies of particular food products by a variety of scholars; articles and books by modern food industry critics such as Michael Pollan, Marion Nestle and Dan Barber; films about food in the US; and a series of short narrative works about food and eating. Students will write in multiple genres, including textual analysis, extended research project and narrative.
In a recent slideshow presentation about her book, *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison*, author Piper Kerman showed a picture of her alma mater, Smith College. “This was the first female-centered institution I was part of,” she said. She flipped to her next slide - a photo of a Federal Correctional Institution. “And this is another female-centered institution I was part of.”

We don’t typically put places like Smith College into conversation with federal prison. But Kerman’s slides draw our attention to meaningful questions about what institutions do, what happens when we’re part of them (or not), and how they shape our thinking. Even her book title reminds us that something as simple as the color orange is associated, in our minds, with the jumpsuits inmates are required to wear.

We are surrounded by institutions and organizations that shape the way we think about the world. Has the business of the NFL defined our relationship with sport? Has American University influenced our identity as students and faculty? Have the ceremony and tradition of the Supreme Court had an impact on what we believe the law should be?

In this class, we’ll engage with a rigorous process to use writing, reading, and research to explore complicated questions about the ways these organizations construct narratives about themselves, the far-reaching impact they have on decision making of all kinds, and the promises and expectations that surround them.

As we examine the power of this rhetoric, students will employ the tools they’re learning in persuasive writing of their own. Each student will choose a single organization or institution to investigate throughout the course of the semester, getting to know the organization and communicating its values and place in our consciousness through deep research and writing projects in a variety of genres.

Possible texts include:

*Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison*, by Piper Kerman  
*The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court*, by Jeffrey Toobin  
Readings from *Sports Illustrated*  
Essays by Malcolm Gladwell  
Excerpts from *Discipline and Punish*, by Michel Foucault  
Scholarship from the fields of psychology and sociology
WRTG 101.073 TF 2:35-3:50pm  
Eating in America  
Professor Kate Wilson  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.069

WRTG 101.074 MTH 8:55-10:10am  
Art of Activism: Reading and Writing Protest  
Professor Melissa Scholes Young  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.017

WRTG 101.075 TF 10:20-11:35am  
Orange is the New What? The Rhetoric of Institutions  
Professor Allison Thomas  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.071

WRTG 101.076 TF 11:45am – 1:00pm  
Your Brain and You: The Culture of Human Nature  
Professor Ed Comstock

We all know that scientists have made major strides in understanding the human brain and in cracking the genetic code. Riding this wave of scientific advance, popular magazines, newspapers, and television news outlets trumpet the latest developments in medicine and neuroscience—finally, we’re told, the secret recesses of our humanity are revealing themselves to us. And we’re buying in. Don’t like your current relationship? There’s a pill for that. Voting Republican? That’s just your genes. Don’t fancy modern art? Well, the structure of your brain repels you from it. Thanks to science, we’re told, we now have control over this crazy thing we call humanity. But is it all too good to be true?

In this course we will explore the uses and limits of science and how the media and popular culture distort science, appealing to our latent desires and biases. We will trace the long history of racist, sexist, and homophobic ideas as they well up through bad science and into the popular imagination. At the same time, you’ll discover that the scientific method usually prevails over error and bias. In this process, you will become empowered to critique ideas and problematic claims made under the banner of science and truth, and you’ll study some interesting arguments from the field of cognitive neuroscience about how you can become a better, more persuasive writer. But ultimately, the goal of this course will be to cultivate the research and writing skills that will enable you to debunk myths and falsehoods and to make a significant contribution in the name of truth through research and writing.

Possible texts include:
Steven Pinker *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person’s Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*
Sally Satel and Scott O. Lilienfeld *Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience*
Joseph Harris *Rewriting*
Stanley Fish *How to Write a Sentence*
Roger N. Lancaster *The Trouble with Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture*
Stephen Jay Gould *The Mis-Measure of Man*
WRTG 101.077 TF 1:10-1:25pm  
Your Brain and You: The Culture of Human Nature  
Professor Ed Comstock  
See Course Description for WRTG 101.076

WRTG-101.078 TF 2:35-3:50 p.m.  
Transformative Ideas  
Professor Adam Fishbein

Without the rise of coffee houses in England, there may have been no Enlightenment. Without the advent of YouTube, we may have never heard the sweet voice of Justin Bieber. Ideas, just like the songs of teenage heartthrobs, don’t spread by themselves. So how do innovations, good and bad, come to transform society? Where do great ideas—democracy, civil rights, MRI machines—come from? Why are bad ideas—fascism, eugenics—sometimes so successful? Which ideas will transform the future? Self-driving cars, lab-grown organs, toilets that can detect cancer? How will society react to these new ideas? In this course, we will write and think about the most influential ideas of the past, present, and future. We will examine the arguments of some of the world’s greatest thinkers. We will research the backstories of a variety of famous and failed ideas. And we will explore the innovations that might change the future.

Texts may include:  
*The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell  
*Where Good Ideas Come From* by Steven Johnson  
*Physics of the Future* by Michio Kaku  
Short works by other writers and thinkers