

Instructor: Maggie O’Leary
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Office hours: Monday 10:30-12:00
PM

Class information

Meeting place: SRTC 108
CRN: 44392
Section: 007
Meeting time: 8:00-9:50 M/W

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 3rd ed. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (ISBN 0393935841)
- *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*, Antjie Krog (ISBN 08129312)
- *Schindler’s List*, Dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993 (Amazon)



The main texts are available for purchase through the PSU Bookstore, Amazon, or Powell’s. I will provide access to other readings listed in the course schedule as online readings. The films are available to rent or stream through Amazon and Netflix.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The theme of this section of WR 323 is human rights within narratives. The frame of this course will be on non-fiction tales of human rights in international and domestic contexts. Questions of human rights and violations of these rights will motivate us critically throughout the term. How do we define what rights are and are not? What is the difference between the possession and exercise of these rights? What do human rights mean when situated within different global perspectives? In this course, we will analyze the ways that human rights, history, and perspectives can be embedded into a story. We will use this analysis to strengthen our own writing, creating work that probes how we tell certain stories, and that weaves storytelling and narrative urgency into academic research writing.

This course aims to teach you how to enter this scholarly conversation by improving your ability to think critically, synthesize information, and write with sophistication. This class will introduce you to advanced writing and reading practices to increase your confidence and skill in

all aspects of the writing process. We will spend time refining components of drafting and revision with focus on rhetoric and analysis in order to develop skills of argumentation. Classwork will rely heavily on reading, discussion, and varied writing practices. A significant component of the course is participation, so come prepared to contribute to our learning community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. We will examine and practice writing as a process and as an experience—as writers and as readers.
2. We will explore how we perceive ourselves as writers and as individuals with potential to produce a social, living piece of writing.
3. We will learn about the importance of engaging with a text, what this may look like, and how many different forms a text may take.
4. We will learn to critically analyze the material we encounter, what we read, and what we already know.
5. We will practice and test our abilities as writers in a number of different contexts and assignments; these will include in-class responses, critical responses, and group writing
6. We will learn how to write ethically and with respect to the minds and ideas of others, avoiding plagiarism and other forms of intellectual and academic dishonesty.
7. We will attempt to develop our own unique voices as writers, and use that voice to articulate the ideas that result from our different perspectives and experiences.
8. We will learn to write effectively and clearly, speaking to specific questions of audience and context.
9. We will establish standards for academic discourse and participation through in-class discussion, peer evaluation, and collaborative assignments.

THE BASICS:

Papers: Expectations for each writing assignment will be made explicit on the according assignment sheets—look to your assignment sheets for answers before emailing me. Essays must be typed, formatted, and documented according to MLA standards for written work. Due dates are made explicit in the syllabus and on assignment sheets. Failure to turn in any of the written assignments will affect your grade significantly, and you cannot pass this class if you do not turn in first and final drafts of the midterm *and* research essays. There will be designated dropboxes on D2L for every writing assignment. These dropboxes will close after the time specified on your assignment sheet. **Submissions to the dropbox must be in PDF format only.**

Workshops: You will be required to workshop your rough draft of your final essay with your peers. A workshop will take place the day your draft is due and is a required aspect of the drafting process. As such, workshopping this draft will figure into your final grade for the essay as a whole—if you miss peer review, it will negatively affect this grade.

Office hours and contacting me: My office hours are Monday mornings from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM and are held in Neuberger Hall, room 378. I am also open to making appointments with students who have scheduling conflicts with my posted hours. My email address is oleary2@pdx.edu. This is the best way to get ahold of me, as I check it frequently and will

respond to queries from students as quickly as I can. As a rule, however, I do not check my email after six in the evenings during the weekday, and do so less frequently over the weekend. Please allow for 24 hours to respond to you before you send a follow-up email.

Late work: All work should be completed by the due dates made explicit in this syllabus and on your assignment sheets. As a rule, I do not accept late work in the absence of extenuating circumstances. It is your responsibility to have all materials ready for each class meeting. Assignments turned in after the due date (meaning the class meeting) will be deducted a full letter grade for *every day* they are late. You *must* turn in your first draft. ***I will not grade a final essay that did not go through the drafting process, and I will not grade a final essay if you did not turn in a first draft.*** If you are ill or need to miss class the day any written work is due and there is no D2L dropbox for it, you must email the work to me before the class meets. If you need an extension, you need to contact me at least 48 hours before the final due date, and granting these extensions is at my own discretion. If you miss a workshop, you will be required to schedule an appointment in the Writing Center immediately in order to work with a consultant. In the event of something significant (e.g. prolonged or sudden family illness, emergencies, etc), contact me and we will proceed appropriately. If you miss a class, unless I have changed the syllabus, do not ask me what you missed—look to your syllabus and talk to your classmates. **I will not chase after you about missed or late assignments.** Your work is your responsibility, and I am under no obligation to consider awarding late work credit.

A note on incompletes: I do not grant any requests for incompletes. You must finish all required work for the course in order to pass.

A note on plagiarism: I expect all work turned in to be the original work of each student. Do not submit work that is not your own in both conception and execution. Do not submit work that was completed for another class. Plagiarism in this class is grounds for immediate failure, and if it becomes a problem also grounds for expulsion from the university. If you have questions about proper documentation and citation methods, please see me or set up an appointment with a consultant in the Writing Center.

Also of importance: Please note that the texts we will be reading and watching contain content some might find controversial or upsetting, including explicit language, violence, and sexual content. If you are concerned that such material might prevent you from completing the course, you might want to reconsider your enrollment in this class.

Technology policy: Excessive phone use in my class will lead to reductions in your attendance and participation grade, and a loss of daily points. If you feel taking notes on your laptop or tablet is an absolutely necessary extension of your learning process, I will expect you to email me a full set of notes at the end of each class period. If you need to use your phone or tablet for translation-related concerns, please let me know. Also: I do not allow photographs to be taken in my classroom unless I am aware that the photo is being taken and I have given my explicit permission for you to do so. I do not allow video recordings in my class to that same effect.

Disability statement: If you have a documented disability, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Center (drc@pdx.edu) at PSU. Please see me during the first week of class if you have a documented disability and I will be happy to make accommodations.

Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the Disability Resource Center should contact the DRC immediately. PSU's statement is as follows:

“Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-725-4150.”

Title IX statement: Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination with a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals through the Dean of Students, or visit the Women's Resource Center.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

In order to pass this class to your and my satisfaction, your efforts must reflect a willingness to engage with class material and requirements at a level consistent with your own educational goals. In other words, you are your grade, and I evaluate your work. To break this down so you know what you may expect from me:

-  **B-level work** will include a final project of satisfactory quality, including participation, depth, and thoroughness in your contributions to your workshop group and the class as a whole. You attended all workshops and conferences and enthusiastically participated in all aspects of the writing process, from invention to preliminary drafts culminating in a thoroughly revised, well-developed final draft that has been submitted in accordance to set deadlines. You have also completed all homework assignments on time and in accordance with assigned requirements. Additionally, you will have completed each component part of your final essay in a timely and satisfactory manner. You have met my expectations for this class with a B.
-  **A-level work** will include all of the elements and specifications required of a B-level project, but with a pronounced excellence in quality. There will be evidence of a deep and thorough engagement with assignments and subject matter throughout the term. Your in-class participation has been consistent, topical and productive, and you will have demonstrated a marked interest in learning from the class and in improving as a writer and thinker. You have exceeded my expectations for this class with an A.
-  **C-level work** will include a mix of satisfactory and unsatisfactory quality in the final project and throughout the writing process, including first and final drafts of your essay and its component parts. Your in-class participation is sporadic. You have met the minimum requirements for this class with a C.
-  **D-level work** (or below) will include a final project of unsatisfactory quality, a marked lack of participation, and an unsatisfactory engagement or a failure to engage with the

writing process. You will have failed to meet minimum requirements for the course with a D or below.

Important: I do not maintain grades in D2L. I use a grade book set up in Drive and I always have access to it. **If you want to view your grade, please let me know and I will be happy to show you what I have graded at that time.**

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE):

You cannot expect to succeed in this class without attending regularly and participating in class (either individually or in groups). To that effect, I will allow you two absences, no explanations necessary, as I recognize that life is messy and unpredictable. Absences in excess of this number will lower your final grade—more than four will result in failure of the class. If you miss more than three class meetings, it will lower your grade significantly (half a letter grade). You must attend conferences—failure to do so will qualify as two absences. Participation will be assessed based on your contributions to in-class discussions and group work in addition to your preparedness for class—including coming to class with all assigned work finished and all reading completed. When online reading is required, you will be expected to print copies of each reading, as we will be using them in class. If you arrive to class more than fifteen minutes late, you will be considered absent and lose points for that day. For every three times you arrive to class five or more minutes late, you will lose an absence. If you must miss class due to participation in a university-sponsored athletic event, religious observances, or an emergency, you will need to contact me in advance to be certain of my requirements for make-up work. Make-up work will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

TUMBLR POSTS (10% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE):

These shorter responses (300 words) will be due by the beginning of each class. I will post prompts on our class tumblr weekly with the expectation that you will reply to them directly, or enter into a discussion with your classmates. The prompts will require responses that are cogent and not limited to a single sentence. These tumblr posts are due by 8:00 AM (class time). You will be expected to complete eight (8) responses throughout the term (there will be no posts during the weeks we hold conferences). I grade these responses full, half, or no credit. While these posts will often be informal, proper rules of citation still apply. You can find our class tumblr at: <https://wr323winter2017.tumblr.com/>

ANALYTICAL FILM REVIEW (10% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE FEBRUARY 5TH:

This assignment will accompany our in-class film viewing. Your response should be 2 pages long, abide by MLA formatting rules, and adhere to the accompanying assignment sheet.

MIDTERM CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER (15% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE FEBRUARY 6TH & 12TH:

For your midterm you will be required to write a critical response paper. This response should be 3-4 pages long, focus on one of the assigned “texts,” and abide by the rules of proper citation in MLA format. You can choose which text to respond to, so long as it is from the list of texts provided (or you clear your choice with me beforehand). The response must be typed, edited for errors, and submitted to the class D2L dropbox by the due date.

RIGHTS AUTOBIOGRAPHY (10% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE FEBRUARY 19TH :

This is the first in a sequence of assignments that will require you to pursue independent research and incorporate the voices of others into your own writing. While this is an autobiography, it is still very much a *social* piece of writing, so you need to view it as adding to an already-existing conversation.

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL (5% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE FEBRUARY 26TH :

The first step of your final project, to be turned in for feedback and approval. This proposal will include the main idea of your project, the critical impetus for this idea, and how you intend to pursue this idea further as part of a longer writing project.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (10% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE MARCH 5TH :

As you begin working on your final essay, you will compose an annotated bibliography. This is a works cited list with detailed notes, to be turned in after the proposal and before the rough draft. This assignment will be evaluated separately from your essay.

FINAL PROJECT (20% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE) | DUE MARCH 6TH & 20TH :

Your final project will be a critical essay that you write in stages, with attention paid to *process* and to *polish*. Your goal with this essay is to produce a finished, well-constructed essay making a critical point about a topic of your choosing, or in response to a prompt I give you.

MY PHILOSOPHY:

- 🌐 I believe in messy first drafts, and I believe that the strength of our writing reveals itself in revision, rather than an anxious struggle to produce a perfect first draft.
- 🌐 I believe in writing assignments that are ambitious in process, but not in scope. I do not assign very long essays, and because of this, I want to emphasize the importance of developing skills and moving beyond what you are comfortable with in your own writing.
- 🌐 When I refer to “process,” I want to encourage you to think about writing as something that emerges from sustained hard work, rather than spurts of inspiration or innate brilliance.
- 🌐 To that effect, I believe that every student possesses the ability to develop into mature, effective writers. With practice, and with lots of reading, you *will* improve—it’s unavoidable.
- 🌐 I believe that writing is a social act. Social in that you are joining an ongoing conversation with other writers, but social also in the sense that you must share your writing with others to truly understand how your writing is received and how you may improve. Your work and your intellectual development needs to be shared with me and with your peers.
- 🌐 I believe that writing is meant to be challenging, disruptive, and is meant to expose writers and readers to some vulnerability or dissonance. Learning how to create a productive, critically energetic piece of writing means that you need to learn how to create this kind of experience for a reader, in a mature and open manner.

This syllabus is subject to change and I may revisit due dates, assignment requirements, or reading schedules based on adjustments to workloads or to allow more time for us to spend on different aspects of our learning process.

Course Schedule

Source Abbreviation:

TSIS = They Say, I Say

CoMS = Country of My Skull

OL = Online (via D2L)

Question: What are Human Rights?

Week One (1/9 & 1/11):

Monday—

- 1) Syllabus review
- 2) Introductions
- 3) In-class: Writing diagnostic, midterm assignment

For Wednesday: Read Gallop “The Ethics of Reading” (OL); Boler, “The Risks of Empathy”; Hersh, “Torture at Abu Ghraib” (OL); tumblr post

Wednesday— Due: tumblr post

- 1) What are human rights?
- 4) Discussion of reading

For Wednesday: Read TSIS, “Entering the Conversation”; CoMS intro, Ch.1, and Ch.2 (v-33); Nixon “Apollo 11, Apartheid, and TV” (OL); tumblr post

Question: What are We Supposed to be Writing?

Week Two (1/16 & 1/18):

Monday— Martin Luther King Day, No class

Wednesday— Due: tumblr post

- 1) Discussion of reading
- 2) Writing narratives: audience, purpose, style

For Wednesday: Read Wallace, “Shipping Out” (OL); Giggs, “Whale Fall”

Question: How Do We Add Texture to Our Writing?

Week Three (1/23 & 1/25)

Monday— Due: tumblr post

- 1) Discussion of reading
- 2) Writing descriptively
- 3) Group activity: Wallace and description

For Wednesday: Read TSIS (something on intros and analytical writing);

Wednesday— Due: tumblr post

- 1) Discussion of reading: TSIS
- 2) Writing scene
- 3) In-class analysis: Michelle Obama’s 2008 DNC speech

For Monday: Film viewing Monday 1/30 & 2/1

Question: How are Human Rights Portrayed in Different Texts and How Do We Respond to those Texts in Our Writing?

🌐 Week Four (1/30 & 2/1)

Monday—Due: tumblr post; film review assigned

1) Film viewing: *Schindler's List*

For Wednesday: Film (continued); TSIS “Her Point Is,” “As He Himself Puts It,” “Yes/No/Okay/But,” and “And Yet”; Kennedy, “Schindler’s List Review” (OL); Ebert, “Schindler’s List” (OL); Maslin, “Schindler’s List/Imagining the Holocaust” (OL); Malcolm “Schindler’s List” (OL)

Wednesday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) Finish film
- 2) Discussion of film
- 3) Analytical writing

For Monday: Draft of midterm essay; peer review; film review due Sunday by 11:59 PM

🌐 Week Five (2/6 & 2/8)

Monday—Due: Midterm draft

1) In-class: Peer review

For Wednesday: No class, conferences

Wednesday—No class, conferences (my office, Neuberger 378)

For Monday: Coates, “The Case for Reparations” (OL); final midterm due 2/12 by 11:59 PM PST

Question: What Does a Human Rights Writing Project Look Like?

🌐 Week Six (2/13 & 2/15)

Monday—Due: tumblr post, rights autobiography assigned

- 1) Discussion of reading
- 2) Argumentative writing

For Wednesday: Continue with Coates; read TSIS “What’s Motivating this Writer?” and “On Closer Examination”

Wednesday—Due: tumblr post; final project proposal assigned

- 1) In-class activity: Form scavenger hunt using Coates
- 2) Final project proposal

For Monday: Read TSIS “What’s Motivating this Writer?”; Domonoske “South Africa Announces Withdrawal From International Criminal Court,” (OL); Tongco and Saraswat, “Should Paramilitary Murals in Belfast Be Repainted?” (OL); autobiography due by 11:59 PM PST

Question: How Do We Write to Different Perspectives and Articulate Our Own Positions?

🌐 Week Seven (2/20 & 2/22)

Monday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) Discussion: Perspective
- 2) In-class activity: “Bad Blood” and perspective
- 3) Imperialism and human rights

For Wednesday: Bring in four (4) copies of the thesis statement for your essay

Wednesday—Due: tumblr post, annotated bib and final essay assigned

- 1) Discussion: Thesis statements

For Monday: Read TSIS “They Say,” “I Say”; bring in two (2) articles or news stories from a source that you use every day or very frequently

Week Eight (2/27 & 3/1)

Monday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) Discussion of reading
- 2) Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing
- 3) In-class: Using and evaluating sources

For Wednesday: Library day, meet in the Miller Library Room 107

Wednesday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) In-class: Library day

For Monday: Final essay draft due

Week Nine (3/6 & 3/8)

Monday—Due: tumblr post, final essay draft

- 1) In-class: Peer review

For Wednesday: No class, conferences in my office

Wednesday—

- 1) Conferences, NH 378

For Monday: TBD

Question: What Next?

Week Ten (3/13 & 3/15)

Monday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) In-class: Voice and expression

For Wednesday: Abramowitz, “Making Good on Nuremberg”

Wednesday—Due: tumblr post

- 1) “Pangs,” *Buffy*, and moving forward
- 2) Evaluations