



SYLLABUS

Summer Session 2020
ARTS JOURNALISM IN LONDON
Instructor: Christopher Cook
Contact Hrs: 40
Language of Instruction: English

REMOTE/LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Amongst the so-called 'world cities', London is unique in its cultural diversity and artistic richness. It boasts both healthy privately funded and an adventurous publicly subsidised theatre, with two international companies, the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, both playing in the city. There are two opera houses, dance companies, seven symphony orchestras, a film industry and a unique broadcasting system that is dominated by the BBC, the world's most extensive newsgathering organisation which is committed to a not-for-profit version of public service broadcasting. Then there are art galleries and museums.

It's hardly surprising that it seems there are more arts journalists working in London than in any other comparable city in the world who satisfy an ever-growing appetite for cultural news, arts reviews and feature material about art and artists. They are skilled at writing for different media, broadcasting, print and online and know exactly how to tailor their work to a specific demographic. And four of the most distinguished of them will be joining us during the course.

This course will take full advantage of both London's rich cultural provision and the varied work of its many arts journalists and critics. To augment lectures and tutorials by the course instructor, and regular guest visits from practitioners, students will polish their own writing skills responding to work made or shown in London.

THE INSTRUCTOR

Christopher Cook began his career in television, working as a documentary director and producer for the BBC and Channel 4 Television. He was Head of the Department of Liberal Studies at what is now Central St Martin's School of Art and has written about cinema, theatre, classical music, architecture, literature for a range of print publications including the Guardian, The

Listener, The New Statesman and The Observer. He has been a regular broadcaster on the arts for BBC Radio and has reviewed regularly for Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the course is twofold.

- To acquaint students with a different system of cultural provision than that with which they are familiar in the United States.
- To teach the key elements in the practice of arts journalism in the United Kingdom. These are skills which are valid on both sides of the Atlantic, viz writing arts news stories and arts features, researching and undertaking interviews for publication, writing criticism of theatre, concerts, art exhibitions, dance etc within a prescribed number of words and against the clock for both print and online!

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate:

- A general knowledge of the structures, organisation and practices of the principal arts and media organizations in London and how they broadly differ from those in the United States
- An awareness of how cultural provision in London interfaces with broadcasting and the print media
- An understanding of the purposes and styles of the principal kinds of arts journalism currently practiced in London
- An informed understanding of how media ethics and traditional best practice in journalism are intrinsic to media coverage of cultural provision
- The ability to properly research and source different kinds of arts journalism
- An ability to write professionally and well about the arts
- A capacity to criticize their own work as scrupulously as they would judge the cultural endeavours that they choose to write about

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught by online lectures, tutorials, seminars and class discussion.

All lectures will include material about the art form featured each week. And as much of that as possible will be on video.

There will be meetings on Zoom with working arts journalists and weekly views of notable creative sites in London

There will be at least one viewing each week of a major London arts performance/event.

At the heart of the course will be a sequence of class discussions on Zoom in which students review their own and each other's work.

CLASS BOOK

All students are required to own a copy of *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams – Routledge, London - 2016 (PB ISBN – 978-1- 138 -93210 -4), Third Edition

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Written Work

Four pieces of assessable written work are required from students taking this course.

A **short arts news story** set in the second week of the course, a **critical review** of 500 on an event within the performing arts that we have seen for the class, an **Arts Blog** of 700 words written about the cultural event(s) of one week and to be completed in the third and fourth weeks, and a **final project** which of some 1500 words to be submitted at the end of the course which will take the form of an arts feature, an interview with or an extended profile of an arts practitioner or a video project

All work will require a high degree of independent research in the student's own time. There will be appropriate tutorial support from the course instructor for all written work.

GRADING

- 15% News Story
- 15% Critical Review
- 20% Arts Week Blog
- 30% Feature, profile or interview
- 20% Participation in class and attendance

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that any written work submitted for grading for this course will be entirely a student's own work. If within the body of the paper you have advanced arguments or cited examples which you have found in your wider reading, while researching the internet, in attending other classes within the programme or from any other place then you are required to identify these sources both within footnotes and in a formal bibliography. Failure to acknowledge any source may leave you open to the charge of plagiarism and at the very least failure to secure a grade for this class.

ATTENDANCE

Every class must be attended. Absence will only be accepted on grounds of sickness. Sickness must be notified in advance by email either to Amanda or Mary together with the course instructor. Any absence not for sickness will affect your grade.

CULTURAL VIEWINGS

During the course we shall watch

- A Dance event
- A Production
- A Visual Art Exhibition

- A music Classical concert

GUEST SPEAKERS

The following guests will talk to the class:

- Judith Mackrell - Dance Critic, the Guardian Newspaper
- Sarah Hemming – Theatre Critic, The Financial Times
- Richard Cork - Former Visual Arts Critic, The Times
- Amanda Holloway – Music Critic and Feature Writer

THE COURSE

What follows is a weekly plan for what will happen in class. However, it will almost certainly vary according to both the needs and the interests of the students.

WEEK ONE – GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The first week of the course will consist of a general introduction to Journalism in the UK, to include Broadcast and Print and Online Journalism.

READING

Chapter 2 – ‘Introduction’ - *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriett Gilbert – Routledge, London -1999

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to select one object from the collections at the British Museum and to write and research a 600 word account of their research and how it relates to the object that they have chosen from the museum’s collections. There will be a seminar on the idea of the museum and a class discussion about finding a written language for a cultural artefact

SCHEDULE

Lecture: Broadcast Journalism in the UK

Seminar: What is a Museum?

Lecture: Print and Online Journalism in the UK

Class Discussion: How do we describe a cultural artefact, a pot, a picture or a sculpture etc

WEEK 2 – DANCE

Students will be introduced to the multifaceted opportunities for dance and dancers in London, and to the range of reviewing styles and critical practitioners writing in the city.

READING

Chapter 2 – ‘Writing News’ - *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriett Gilbert – Routledge, London -2016

Students will also be required to read and discuss at least one arts story published within the week of the course and posted online.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to write and submit a short arts news story (500 words) written for a particular UK national newspaper and taking full cognizance of the demographic of that publication

CLASS WORK

Lecture: Cultural provision in London covering such topics as Arts Policy, Funding, Venues, Demographics etc

Class Discussion: Review British Museum Assignment

Lecture: Introduction to Dance in the UK

Seminar: Finding a critical language for Dance

Class Guest: Judith Mackrell

Viewing (In Students own time): TBC Dance Performance

Class Discussion: Review of dance performance

Class Presentation: Review of assigned Class Reading

Assignments: Set Arts News story

WEEK THREE – THEATRE

Students will be introduced to the theatre scene in London and to the range of reviewing styles and critical practitioners writing in the city.

READING

Chapter 4 – ‘Writing Reviews’ - *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriett Gilbert – Routledge, London - 2016

Students will also be required to read and discuss at least one theatre review published within the weeks of the course. These reviews will be posted as class hand-outs

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to write a short theatre review (500 words) written for a particular UK national newspaper and taking full cognizance of the demographic of that publication

CLASS WORK

Class Discussion: Review students News Stories

Lecture: Theatre in London

Class Presentation: Review of assigned Class Reading

Viewing (In Students own time): TBC Theatre Performance

Discussion: Review theatre reviews and viewed performance

Class Guest: Sarah Hemming

Lecture: Journalism and Ethics

Assignments: Set Theatre Review exercise

Briefing for Final Project

WEEK FOUR - THE VISUAL ARTS

Students will be introduced to the Visual Arts Scene in London together with the range of reviewing styles and a survey of the critical practitioners writing in the city.

READING

Chapter 5 – ‘Writing Online’ - *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriett Gilbert – Routledge, London – 2016

CLASS WORK

Class Discussion: Review students Theatre Reviews

Lecture: Introduction to the London Visual Arts Scene

Viewing (In Students own time): Either a London exhibition or selected pictures from a gallery

Discussion: Review visual arts reviews and exhibition or pictures viewed

Class Guest: Richard Cork

Class Presentation: Review of assigned Class Reading

Assignments: Set Visual Arts Blog exercise

One to one tutorials for final project

WEEK FIVE - MUSIC

Students will be introduced to the music scene in London, both art and popular music and to the range of reviewing styles and critical practitioners writing in the city.

READING

Chapter 6 – ‘Writing Features’ - *Writing for Journalists* – Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriett Gilbert – Routledge, London - 2016

Students will be required to read two arts interviews/features connected with music. These readings will be representative of the full range of feature writing within UK national newspapers and periodicals.

ASSIGNMENTS

In this week Students will be required to complete research, to write and submit a full-length arts feature (1500 words) based upon original research and interviewing in person or on the telephone. The form of the feature can range from an extended feature interview with an arts practitioner, a profile of a practitioner or a more general feature about an event or an institution. Students will be required to demonstrate research as well as writing skills in this final exercise

Class Discussion: Review students Visual Arts Blogs

Seminar: Finding a critical language for Music

Viewing (In Students own time): A concert or recital

Seminar:

Discussion: Review music features and discuss concert

Class Presentation: Review of assigned Class Reading

Class Guest: Amanda Holloway

Assignments: If required last tutorials for final project

ADDITIONAL COURSE READINGS

Adams, Sally (2000). *Interviewing Journalists*. Routledge.

Crisell, Andrew (2002). *An Introduction to the History of British Broadcasting*. Routledge.

Garrison, Bruce (2009). *Professional Feature Writing*. Routledge.

Hicks, Wynford (1999). *Writing for Journalists*. Routledge.

Hodgson, F.W. (2000). *Modern Newspaper Practice*. Focal Press.

Keeble, Richard (2004). *The Newspaper Handbook*. Routledge.

McKay, Jenny (2004). *The Magazines Handbook*. Routledge

McNair, Brian (1999). *News and Journalism in the UK*. Routledge

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