



## SYLLABUS

**ARTS JOURNALISM IN LONDON**  
**Instructor Name: Christopher Cook**  
**Contact Hrs: 40**  
**Language of Instruction: English**  
**LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Amongst the so-called 'world cities', London is unique in the richness and diversity of its cultural provision. 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 that extend from the Royal Ballet to innovative work made by such distinguished British choreographers as Siobhan Davie, Matthew Bourne, Richard Alston, Shobana Jeyasingh and Mark Baldwin. There are seven symphony orchestras, five concert halls, two recital rooms, a lively popular independent music scene that embraces everything from jazz to pop, a burgeoning film industry and a unique broadcasting system that is dominated by the BBC, the world's most extensive newsgathering organisation and the richest broadcaster in Europe, that is committed to a not-for-profit version of public service broadcasting that privileges the production of music and drama.

Then there is the world's largest modern museum, the Tate on Bankside, a clutch of other leading museums that include the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert and a series of new galleries in the East End of the city that are showcasing new multi-media work by the generation that came after the BritArtists

There are, it seems more arts journalists working in London than in any other comparable city in the world and satisfying 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.

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 class room lectures and tutorials by the course instructor there will be field trips to significant cultural sites, theatres, galleries, concert halls, newspapers, TV studios etc, and regular guest visits from practitioners in the field.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Instructional Goals. The course will:

- Acquaint students with a different system of cultural provision than that with which they are familiar in the United States.
- 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!

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will 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 class room lectures, tutorials, seminars, class meetings with arts journalists, field trips to significant cultural sites in London and at least one visit each week to a major arts event.

## **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, **two critical reviews** of 500 and 700 words of events within the performing arts that we have seen for the class and to be completed in the third and fourth weeks, and a **final project** which of some 2000 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.

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%	First critical notice
20%	Second critical notice
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 (whether on or off site) must be attended. Absence will only be accepted on grounds of sickness. Sickness must be notified in advance in person (by phone, note or email) either to Susie or Mary. A signed note must be provided within one week. Any unexcused absence will affect your grade. See attendance policy for details.

### **Excursions**

There will be two half-day visits for this course. Both two half days will be in London. This is in addition to visits taken by all students in the programme

We shall visit:

- The British Museum
- The National Theatre – back stage tour

### **Cultural Visits**

During the course we shall hopefully attend at least once

- The theatre
- A classical concert
- A current art gallery show
- A dance event

### **Guest Speakers**

It is likely that the following guests will talk to the class:

- Susannah Clapp – Theatre Critic, The Observer newspaper
- Amanda Holloway – Music Critic and Feature Writer
- Judith Mackrell – Dance Critic, the Guardian Newspaper
- Richard Cork – Former Visual Arts Critic, The Times

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**This will depend on events available at the time**

### **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. All students are to attend these sessions.

### **READING**

*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 2: 'Introduction'

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will be required to select one object while visiting the British Museum and to write and research a 600 account of their research and how it relates to the object that they have chosen from the museum's collections.

### **SCHEDULE**

#### **Session 1:**

Introduction: Broadcast Journalism in the UK

**Session 2:**

Introduction: Print and Online Journalism (Part 1)

**Session 3:**

Introduction: Print and Online Journalism (Part 2)

Class time visit: The British Museum (assignment above to be discussed in class next week)

**WEEK TWO – 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**

*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 2: ‘Writing News’

Students will also be required to read and discuss at least one arts story published within the week of the course. These stories and arts reviews will be given as class handout.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

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

**SCHEDULE**

**Session 1:**

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

Seminar: Dance in the UK

Review: Dance DVDs

Review: first writing assignment

**Session 2:**

Review: assigned reading (*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 2: ‘Writing News’)

Review: handouts

Seminar: Finding a Critical Language for Dance

Guest Speaker: Judith Mackrell

Set first writing assignment: due date tbc

Evening visit: Dance event at Sadler’s Wells (to be determined)

**WEEK THREE - THE VISUAL ARTS**

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

**READING**

*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 4: ‘Writing Reviews’

Students will also be required to read and discuss at least one visual arts review published within the week of the course. These stories and reviews will be given as class hand-outs

**ASSIGNMENTS**

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

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Session 1:**

Review: visit to Sadler's Wells and dance event

Seminar: Introduction to the London Visual Arts Scene

Review: handouts

Review: assigned reading (*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 4: 'Writing Reviews')

### **Session 2:**

Review: Week 2 writing assignment

Set third writing assignment: **Due date tbc**

Guest Speaker: Richard Cork

### **Session 3:**

Class time visit: Art Exhibition at Tate Modern

## **WEEK FOUR - 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**

*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 3: 'Writing Features'

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**

Students will be required to write a short music review (700 words) written for a particular UK national newspaper and taking full cognizance of the demographic of that publication.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Session 1:**

Review: visit to Tate Modern

Seminar: Introduction to the London Music Scene

Class time visit: piano recital at Wigmore Hall

### **Session 2:**

Review: Week 3 writing assignment

Review: recital at Wigmore Hall

Seminar: Writing Music Reviews

Review: handouts

Set fourth writing assignment: **Due date tbc**

### **Session 3:**

Review: assigned reading (*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 3: 'Writing Features')

Guest Speaker: Amanda Holloway

Class time visit: Backstage tour of the National Theatre

## **WEEK FIVE - 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. They will also be working on their final written project – an arts feature

### **READING**

*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 5: ‘Style’

Students will also be required to read and discuss at least two theatre reviews published within the week of the course. These will be given as class handouts.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

In this week Students will be required 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

### **SCHEDULE**

#### **Session 1**

Seminar: Introduction to the London Theatre Scene

Review: assigned reading (*Writing for Journalists*, Chapter 5: ‘Style’)

Arts Feature Topics to be chosen

Evening visit: Theatre performance at the National Theatre

#### **Session 2:**

Review: Week 3 assignment

Tutorials for Final Project: **Due date tbc**

Guest Speaker: Susannah Clapp

#### **Session 3:**

Tutorial help with final piece of written work if required

### **COURSE READINGS**

Required:

Hicks, W. with Adams, S. & Gilbert, H. (1999). *Writing for Journalists* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London, Routledge.

Additional:

Adams, S. (2000). *Interviewing Journalists*. London: Routledge.

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

Garrison, B (2009). *Professional Feature Writing*. London: Routledge.

Hodgson, F.W. (2000). *Modern Newspaper Practice*. London: Routledge.

Keeble, R (2004). *The Newspaper Handbook*. London: Routledge.

McKay, J (2004). *The Magazines Handbook*. London: Routledge.

McNair, B (1999). *News and Journalism in the UK*. London: Routledge.

**Standard citation needs to include: APA**