

341M  
316K

Writing in the Arts and Humanities  
(Tentative Course Description)

Topics (four?).  
primary sources

An upper-division course in writing skills, particularly those involving analysis, with readings drawn from classic and contemporary essays and books. More than half of the readings should have been written originally in English, i.e., not be translations, so that the students can imitate effective styles of discussing art, philosophy, literature, popular culture, and other topics. A standard grammar and style book should be assigned. Readings will average one essay or chapter per class meeting for sections meeting three times a week.

The course is intended for all students in the arts and humanities, not merely those majoring in English. Therefore its format and subject matter can explore a range of questions concerning Western history, art, ideas, and languages (European and American civilization, in other words); the instructor leads investigations of the history of music, painting, sculpture, philosophy, and literature--but not simply or primarily literature. Only three weeks should be devoted to the study of specific literary texts and authors; in the other weeks the class studies other areas of intellectual endeavor, as well as the writing skills expected by employers and graduate schools of students who have majored in the arts and humanities. Variant sections can only be accommodated if they offer practice in standard writing procedures (not simply journal-keeping, for example) and close analytical reading.

Textbooks could include books as diverse as the Bible, film criticism by James Agee or Pauline Kael, The Norton Reader, Edith Hamilton's Greek Mythology, Gombrich on art and perception, Leslie Fiedler on archetypes in literature, Ernest Becker's Birth and Death of Meaning.

Learning to look  
" " Listen

Note: The Arts and Humanities subcommittee is having difficulty in steering this proposed course between the twin perils of a "Great Books" course and the already existing E.325M, Advanced Expository Writing. Recommendations would be appreciated.