**Instructor: Christopher John Williams |** [**christopher.williams@qc.cuny.edu**](mailto:christopher.williams@qc.cuny.edu)

**Class Location: Powdermaker Hall Room 351**

**Class Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1:40 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.| Klapper 635**

**course description**

In this course, you will learn the expectations and strategies of academic writing by thinking and writing about visual culture, specifically about the visual artifacts we consider art. Plato, considered the father of Western philosophy, derided art as nothing more than the imitation of real things – what practical function did it serve to have a painting of a vase that could not actually hold water? Despite his skepticism, art continues to not only exist but also proliferate in every human culture. Yet, age-old questions like Plato’s remain: What exactly is “art”? Is it merely imitation or representation? Or is it expression? Is art anything that follows the accepted rules of a particular genre of art? What is the difference between “good” art and “bad” art? What is the value, if any, of art? Should governments support and subsidize the work of artists? These are the types of questions you will explore in this course in academic writing.

In the same way Plato doubted the usefulness of art, freshmen may question the need to develop the skill of academic writing. Why is it important? Your ability to write and understand academic writing is crucial to participating in the many conversations that exist in the intellectual communities at QC and beyond. Therefore, in College Writing I, you learn and practice a dependable, manageable and reproducible writing process that allows you to find and develop your own strong ideas and also express them clearly and persuasively. Over the course of the semester, you will read and discuss texts from a number of fields, complete regular informal reading and writing exercises, and write three longer essays in which you analyze topics related to art. To do so, you will pay special attention to the practices of close reading and analysis, research, collaboration, and revision. My hope is that you will learn to see writing as a means of **discovery**, a process of continual refinement of ideas and their expression. Rather than approaching writing as an innate talent, we will understand writing as a skill that anyone can learn and improve through hard work.

Learning Objectives

In learning to compose academic arguments over the duration of this course, students will:

1. Produce writing that **responds** appropriately to a **variety of rhetorical situations** with a particular focus on academic argumentation.
2. Learn reading strategies to **summarize, synthesize, analyze, and critique other people’s arguments and ideas fairly**.
3. Learn **research practices** that will help strengthen their writing and thinking.
4. **Produce writing that shows how writers may navigate the diverse processes of composing** including revision and collaboration.
5. Produce writing that strategically employs **appropriate language conventions** in different writing situations.
6. **Take ownership of their work** and gain an understanding oftheir own voice, style, and strengths.
7. Utilize authoritative theories about art and visual culture in their own analytical projects.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The syllabus, course description, requirements, other readings, assignments, and links to resources are accessible online via Blackboard/WordPress.

**COURSE POLICIES**

COURSE Evaluation

In English 110, you will learn and practice a reflective, recursive, and collaborative writing process as you develop final drafts of your writing for a public audience. Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Essay 1: Formal Analysis (1500+ words) 20%

Essay 2: Critical Conversation (1700+ words) 25%

Essay 3: Researched Argument (1900+ words) 30%

In-class writing (ICW) 10%

Key Term Presentations 10%

Participation 5%

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

To receive a passing grade (D or above) in this course, a student must at minimum:

* Submit final drafts of the three essays by their deadlines. **NB** **Failure to submit final drafts of all three essays automatically results in failure of the course.**
* Complete in-class writing exercises when assigned.
* Present on the key term assigned to him or her on the scheduled date.
* Attend and participate in 95% of classes.
* Submit all writing assignments via Blackboard/WordPress by stated deadlines.

ESSAY Assignments

The course is organized primarily around three graded essay assignments. For each essay assignment, you will submit and receive feedback on a zero draft and formal draft before you submit the final draft for a letter grade. In each of these essays, you will raise a central question that you will attempt to answer by evaluating and deeply analyzing the sources at your disposal.

**Essay 1: Formal Analysis**

Conduct a formal analysis of one painting or sculpture from the Godwin-Ternbach Museum. Your goal is to identify and interrogate the formal elements of your selected artwork in order to come to a deeper understanding of the art object as a whole. You must also consider how your formal analysis of this artwork illuminates its relevance in the larger exhibition.

**Essay 2: Critical Conversation**

Identify and explore a significant moment of tension between the perspectives of two – at most three – of the authors read for this assignment (Dickie, Kaplan, Lewis, Riggle). Your goal is to analyze the intellectual conversation that exists between your selected texts and contribute to that conversation by evaluating the authors’ arguments and offering your own perspective.

**Essay 3:** **Researched Argument**

Conduct research in order to develop an analytical argument about the functions, significance, limitations, and/or potential of a public artwork in New York City. Your essay must:

1. introduce pertinent facts and contextual information about the artwork
2. include and analyze your own experience(s) visiting the artwork and the location
3. use relevant, expert theories to guide and support your analyses
4. evaluate and respond to existing opinions and arguments about the artwork (which can involve soliciting opinions from visitors, locals, and even QC art faculty)
5. acknowledge and address at least one significant counterargument to your emerging viewpoint

ESSAY GRADING

Each final essay will receive a letter grade from A (or A+) to F. Your final course grade will be computed on the 4.0 scale. Each letter grade signifies the following:

In an “A” essay, the writer has found something insightful and compelling to write about and has taken great care to attend to his or her language, argumentation, and form. The writer clearly introduces the relevant intellectual problem or question the essay intends to address and offers a complex, insightful and original thesis in response. The writer also deeply analyzes pertinent evidence and carefully develops cogent reasons to support and complicate the thesis. Furthermore, the writer organizes his or her ideas in well-sequenced and logically structured sections, paragraphs, and sentences, using appropriate transitions to guide readers though the argument.

A “B” range essay is one that is ambitious but only partially successful, or one that achieves modest aims well. A “B” essay must contain focused ideas, but these ideas may not be particularly complex, or may not be presented or supported well at every point. It integrates sources efficiently, if not always gracefully. “B” essays come in two basic varieties: the “solid B” and the “striving B.” The solid “B” is a good, competent paper. The striving “B” may excel in certain areas, but it is sufficiently uneven to preclude it from receiving an A.

“C” essays reflect struggle in fulfilling the assignment’s goals. This kind of essay may show a fair amount of work, but it does not come together well enough to be a competent paper. A “C” range essay has significant problems articulating and presenting its central ideas, though it is usually somewhat focused and coherent. Such essays often lack clarity and use source material in inaccurate or simple ways, without significant analysis or insight.

A “D” range essay fails to grapple seriously with either ideas or texts, or fails to address the expectations of the assignment. A “D” essay distinguishes itself from a failing essay by showing moments of promise, such as emerging, though not sufficiently developed or articulated ideas.

“D” essays do not use sources well, though there may some effort to do so.

An “F” essay does not grapple with either ideas or texts. It is often unfocused or incoherent, or may be a competently written essay that does not address the minimum expectations of the assignment.

LATE AND MISSED ESSAY DRAFTS

Submitting work late and failing to submit work at all make it much harder for you to do well on your essays since you miss the opportunity to receive timely feedback that can guide your revisions.

* Late drafts will receive minimal written feedback. However, you can come visit me in office hours to discuss your submissions further. **Zero and formal drafts more then 48 hours late will not be accepted.** **Final drafts more than a week late will not be accepted.**
* For late final drafts, your draft grade will be lowered by 1/3 (e.g. from a C+ to a C) beginning the minute after the deadline. The grade will continue to go down by a third of a letter grade every 24 hours until the essay is submitted.
* All work must be submitted via Blackboard/WordPress by stated deadlines in order to be considered “on time.” It is your responsibility to double-check Blackboard/WordPress after you submit assignments to confirm that your work has indeed been submitted. “I really thought I had submitted it!” will never be accepted as an excuse.
* I do not typically give extensions for problems such as computer crashes, conflicts with other course assignments or extracurricular activities, oversleeping or other personal difficulties. I strongly advise you to keep backups of your works-in-progress and to start composing drafts early and to revise them frequently.

HOMEWORK (HW)

You will also complete homework exercises that will help prepare you to submit strong final drafts. I will read all homework exercises submitted on time and at times will provide brief written feedback. You are expected to complete all homework exercises, as they help you do the difficult work required to develop strong formal and final drafts.

SUBMITTING DRAFTS AND HOMEWORK

All assignments and homework, whether due on class days or not, must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents to the appropriate folders in Blackboard. Use the following protocol to name the files you post:

**[Student Last Name][First Initial]\_E[Essay Number]\_[Assignment Name].doc/x**

For example, if Junie Student were posting her final draft for Essay 1, she would name her file: **StudentJ\_E1\_FinalDraft.docx**. If I were posting my response to Exercise 2.1 (i.e. the first homework exercise towards Essay 2), I would name my file: W**illiamsC\_E2\_Exercise2.1.doc**

Unless I specify other guidelines, all writing you submit should:

* be double-spaced, using a 12-point common font on a page with one-inch margins
* include a header on the first page *only.* This should include your name, the course title, my name, the essay/exercise number, a word count (**only** **if an essay draft**) and the date
* include a title on the first page, if a draft of an essay
* have page numbers, *except* on the first page
* be right-ragged (not justified)
* be stapled (if required to be submitted in hardcopy)
* follow the MLA format for citations
* include a self-evaluation of your work at the end on a separate page. (NB **This is only required for essay drafts.**)

See the example of the first page of an essay draft submission below.

Junie Student

College Writing I

Professor Williams

Exercise 1.1

Word Count: 1,625

March 26, 2019

Original Essay Title

This is the beginning of an essay or response that would begin in this space. This is the second sentence…

Incorrectly formatted or named homework submissions will not be considered submitted.

IN-CLASS WRITING (ICW)

To develop as a writer, one must write frequently and reflectively. Therefore, you will complete in-class writing exercises in every class. ICW exercises will include low-stakes free-writing, reflective writing on your writing process and progress, revision of previous work, and peer feedback on drafts. **You receive one point for fully completing an ICW exercise and zero points for incomplete or late submissions.** ICW exercises cannot be made up and often will be assigned at the start of each class session; in other words, you must be present in class to complete an ICW exercise.

PARTICIPATION

More so than with most courses, class participation is critical to passing this course. Participation will be assessed according to the quality of your contributions to discussions and exercises, your preparation for daily class meetings, and the feedback you give in writing workshops and writing groups (written and verbal). Also, I will be considering factors such as attendance and punctuality. Therefore, lateness and repeated absences will make a high grade impossible.

I grade participation according to the following scale:

**A=daily, thoughtful participation in class discussion and groupwork**

**B=Frequent to occasional participation in class discussion and groupwork**

**C=Participation only when called on or prompted, some attendance problems**

**D=Refusal to participate even when called on, attendance problems**

**F=Consistent lack of preparation for class, severe attendance problems**

For example, an “A” participator comes to class almost all the time, has completed the required reading, volunteers to respond a few times each class, stays alert throughout class and the conference hour, and engages productively with his or her peers during group exercises. A “B” participator is partially engaged and alert, but misses more classes, talks less often, and shows less dedication.

If you will miss classes due to religious observance or QC sport activity, please inform me of the dates during the first week of classes. It is your responsibility to catch yourself up with any learning you miss; I suggest contacting peers and reviewing posted materials as a first step. If you want to further discuss class materials or topics covered, you are welcome to visit me during office hours. Please do not write me requesting that I summarize a missed class for you over email. If you plan or expect to miss multiple classes this semester, then you should consider taking another section of English 110 since you will risk doing poorly in or failing this course.

THE CONFERENCE HOUR

The last 30 minutes of each class – the conference hour – is dedicated to small group workshops in which you work closely with a designated writing group of your peers on your developing essays. Writing groups will be decided during the first week of class. Each writing group will meet every Tuesday or Thursday. Attending these small group workshops is mandatory. They provide you with invaluable opportunities to give and receive personalized feedback and instruction that can enhance your learning.

USING ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Writing will be required during every class. For this, you can use either a dedicated writing notebook or your own electronic device with word processing software like Microsoft Word. Laptops, tablets, and other similar electronic devices will be frequently used in class during freewriting, revision, and research activities. However, personal electronic devices should not be open or in use if not required for the current class activity. **If unsure, ask first before starting to use an electronic device**. Lastly, practice professionalism and do not text during class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

College Writing will provide you with strategies for working ethically and accurately with the texts you engage. We will discuss source use practices that prevent plagiarism, a serious academic offense that runs counter to our academic community’s core values of honesty and respect for others. According to the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf>):

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

* + Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
  + Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
  + Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
  + Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.

Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and “cutting & pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.

If you buy and submit “research,” drafts, summaries, abstracts, or final versions of a paper, you are committing plagiarism and are subject to stringent disciplinary action. **Final drafts that contain plagiarism will receive a zero, may result in failure of the course, and the case will be reported to Queens College.**

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION

If you have or develop any condition that might require accommodation in this class—for example, a medical condition—you should immediately contact the Office of Special Services (OSS) in 171 Kiely Hall at 718-997-5870. OSS will ensure you receive any additional support needed to fully participate in and succeed at this course (and QC). You are welcome to inform me if you are comfortable doing so.

CAMPUS WRITING RESOURCES

If you need additional help (beyond my office hours) with your writing, you are welcome and encouraged to utilize any of the following on-campus writing resources:

* *The Writing Center*in Kiely Hall 229 (phone: 718-997-5676) provides free writing support services to all enrolled Queens College students. *The Language Lab*, a tutoring service offered by the Writing Center, provides one-on-one tutoring for multilingual/ESL/ELL students enrolled in English 110 and 130. Email: languagelab@qc.cuny.edu.
* *The Tutoring Center* in Kiely Hall 127 (phone: 718-997-5677) provides free tutoring to students enrolled in many courses offered at QC.

**Course Readings**

Essay 1: Formal Analysis

Selections from *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* by Sylvan Barnet

Essay 2: Critical Conversation

“ART; Is It Art? Is It Good? And Who Says So?” by Amei Wallach

“Defining Art” by George Dickie

“What is Anti-Art?” by George Dickie

“The Most Relevant Art Today Is Taking Place Outside the Art World” by Isaac Kaplan

“How Art Became Irrelevant” by Michael J. Lewis

“Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces” by Nicholas A. Riggle

Essay 3: Researched Argument

“Responsible Criticism: Evaluating Public Art” by Harriet F. Senie

“Public Art and Urban Regeneration: Advocacy, Claims and Critical Debates”

by Tim Hall & Iain Robertson

Readings on Writing

“Motivating Your Argument” by Williams and Colomb

“Breaking into the Conversation” by Mark Gaipa

“Linking Evidence and Claims” by David Rossenwasser et al.

“Starting with What Others are Saying” by Gerald Graff et el.

“Acknowledgments and Responses” by Wayne Booth et al.

Handouts

Summarizing Sources Model Student Introductions

Quoting and Paraphrasing Developing Strong Claims

Rhetorical Situation Transitions

Section Titles and Signposting Strong Research Questions

Argumentation Functions of Sources

Effective Theses Effective Paragraphing

**ONE-TIME NO-QUESTIONS-ASKED PASS**

This is an official, one-time, no-questions-asked pass that allows me to submit the **FORMAL** draft for one progression up to 24 hours late and still receive written feedback.

**ONE-TIME NO-QUESTIONS-ASKED PASS**

This is an official, one-time, no-questions-asked pass that allows me to submit the **FINAL** draft for one progression up to 24 hours late without grade penalty.

NB The pass **must** be submitted at the same time the draft is submitted i.e. you must indicate in your submission that you are utilizing a pass.