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

**Location: Digital Writing Studio | Kiely Hall 061**

**Class Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:05 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.**

**Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. & by appointment | Klapper 635**

*“Writing is a way to end up thinking something*

*you couldn’t have started out thinking.”*

*Peter Elbow*

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**course description**

In this course, you will learn the expectations and strategies of academic writing by writing about visual culture. In simple terms, you will explore in writing how the plethora of visual imagery around us –photography, in particular – influences *and* is influenced by our attitudes, customs, and beliefs. We participate in and contribute to visual culture every time we hunker down with popcorn and Coke in hand to watch the latest blockbuster movie, every time we laugh at or share a meme on Facebook, and every time we post a selfie on Instagram or Snapchat. A 2017 study estimates that “the average millennial” will take around 26,000 selfies in their lifetime. Why so many? What does this all mean, if anything at all? Is this a sign of societal decay (as some fear)? A proliferation of narcissism (as some believe)? Evidence that the age of social media is stripping us of all privacy (as some argue)? Or are all these takes missing the point? These are some of the questions you will explore in order to learn and practice academic writing this semester

Academic writing is crucial to participating in the many conversations that exist in our intellectual communities at QC and beyond. Therefore, in College Writing I, you will 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. “A picture is worth a thousand words” the saying goes. In this course, you will see how a single image can spark interesting ideas and questions that lead to a sophisticated essay. 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. 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. Respond to and critically use authoritative theories about visual culture.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The required text for this course is *Pocket Keys for Writers, 5th Edition* by Ann Raimes and Susan K. Miller-Cochran. We will use this booklet frequently during the conference hour. The syllabus, course description, requirements, essay readings, assignments, and links to resources are available on our WordPress site: [website link].

**COURSE POLICIES**

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

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

* Submit a final draft of the three essays ranging from 1400 to 2100 words, each accompanied by at least one formal draft. **NB** **Students must submit all three final essays in order to pass the class.**
* Attend and participate in classes and the conference hour.
* Prepare reading and writing exercises as assigned.
* Submit all of your writing assignments via our WordPress site by stated deadlines.

Participation

Since English 110 is first and foremost a writing course, your participation will be measured via the writing completed in class and for homework. Only through thoughtfully producing and revising a significant quantity of writing will you improve the quality of your writing. Your completion of such work not only advances your own learning but also contributes to a productive learning environment in the classroom. In other words, the writing work you do will form the basis for the discussions and group work that comprise every class. Therefore:

10% of your final course grade will come from your on-time completion of homework.

10% of your final course grade will come from your completion of in-class writing assignments.

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 the 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.

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 4th class. 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.

Use of Electronic Devices

Writing will be required during every class. For this, you can use either a dedicated writing notebook or an electronic device with word processing software like Microsoft Word. Laptops, tablets, and other similar electronic devices can also be used in class during freewriting or revision activities. You can bring your own devices or use the laptops housed in the Digital Writing Studio. 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.

Assignments

The class is organized into three units or progressions, each culminating in a graded essay assignment. You will also complete in-class and homework exercises throughout each progression. I will read all your homework exercises but will not provide written feedback on every exercise; most times, you will only receive a point for participation. However, you are expected to complete all these exercises, as they help you do the difficult work required to develop strong formal and final drafts.

**Essay 1: Critical Response**

Analyze a personal selfie and the story of how that selfie came to be using specific ideas from “SELFIE: The Revolutionary Potential of Your Own Face.” Your aim is to explore how your selfie reflects *and* resists ideas from “SELFIE.” What does it reveal about “selfie culture” that goes beyond the claims of “SELFIE”?

**Essay 2: Intellectual Conversation**

The essays “In Plato’s Cave,” “In Our Glory” and “SELFIE” make claims about the functions of photographs and what they can (and cannot) do. Put specific ideas from two of these essays into conversation in order to analyze a controversial, contemporary, public photograph. You should aim to develop your own claim about how photographs function in modern culture.

**Essay 3:** **Researched Review**

Research and use a variety of contextual, theoretical, and argument sources to critically review a significant, contemporary photojournalistic essay. You must analyze the composition, placement, and rhetorical effects of specific images in your selected photojournalistic essay, arguing for their necessity to the essay’s success. Lastly, you should aim to develop an insightful argument about the value or contribution of this photojournalistic essay to “visual culture.” In the course of your analysis, you will critically engage with existing opinions about the photojournalistic essay as well as relevant theories. Your essay will be a photo essay itself, containing 6 to 8 images, one of which should come from outside your selected photojournalistic essay (e.g. a personal photograph).

All assignments and homework, whether due on class days or not, must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents to the appropriate Dropbox folders using the links provided on our WordPress site. 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 Jane 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**

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. Therefore, your final course grade will be a combination of your final draft grades and your writing process grade:

**FINAL DRAFT GRADES (75%)**

Essay 1: Critical Response (1400 – 1600 words) 15%

Essay 2: Intellectual Conversation (1600 – 1800 words) 25%

Essay 3: Researched Review (1900 – 2100 words) 35%

**WRITING PROCESS GRADE (25%)**

Homework 10%

In-class writing 10%

Zero & formal drafts 5%

Essay Grading

Each final essay for the progression 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 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 sentences, paragraphs, and sections, 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 expectations of the assignment.

Late and Missed Assignments, Drafts, and Final Essays

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 homework exercises and formal drafts will not receive written feedback. However, you are always welcome to come visit me in office hours to discuss your submissions.
* For late final drafts, your draft grade will be lowered by 1/3 (e.g. from a B- 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. Final drafts will not be accepted if more than 6 days late.
* All work must be submitted via WordPress by the deadline in order to be considered “on time.” (If, for some reason, you cannot submit your work to WordPress, email me your work before the deadline with a brief explanation of the issue you encountered.)
* 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.

Keep in mind that **you must submit all graded assignments in order to pass the 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.

Web sites and businesses set up to sell papers to students often claim they are merely offering “information” or “research” to students and that this service is acceptable and allowed throughout academia. **This is absolutely untrue.** 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 Tutoring Center* in Kiely Hall 127 (phone: 718-997-5677) provides free tutoring to students enrolled in many courses offered at QC.
* *The Language Lab* provides one-on-one tutoring for multilingual/ESL/ELL students enrolled in English 110 and 130. Email: FYW@qc.cuny.edu

**Course Readings**

Essay 1: Critical Response

“SELFIE: The Revolutionary Potential of Your Own Face” by Rachel Syme

Essay 2: Intellectual Conversation

“In Plato’s Cave” by Susan Sontag

“In Our Glory” by bell hooks

Essay 3: Researched Review

“Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and Democratic Public Culture” by John Louis

Lucaites and Robert Hariman

*The Burden of Visual Truth* by Julianne H. Newton

“2017 Best Photojournalism” by TIME Magazine

Readings on Writing

“How to Read Like a Writer” by Mark Bunn

“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

Quoting and Paraphrasing

Rhetorical Situation

Argumentation

Developing Strong Claims

Effective Theses

Mad Libs

Lens Analysis

Visual Analysis

Effective Paragraphing

Functions of Sources

Identifying Problems

Strong Research Questions

Transitions

Section Titles and Signposting

**Course Calendar**

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**ESSAY 1: CRITICAL RESPONSE**

**How to Succeed in this Course**

T 1/30 “SELFIE” (Chapter 1) None

*No Groups*

**How to Read Closely, Carefully and Critically I**

Th 2/1 “SELFIE” (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) Exercise 1.1

*All Groups* “How to Read Like a Writer”

**How to Identify Intellectual Problems and Ask Intellectual Questions I**

T 2/6 “SELFIE” (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) Exercise 1.2

*Group A*

**How to Use Sources I: Summarizing**

Th 2/8 “SELFIE" Exercise 1.3

*Group B* Summarizing Sources Handout

**How to Analyze and Argue I**

T 2/13 Rhetorical Situation Handout **Zero Draft Essay 1**

*Group C* Argumentation Handout

**How to Use Sources II: Paraphrasing and Quoting**

Th 2/15 Quoting and Paraphrasing Handout None

*Group D* “SELFIE”

**Submission Due**

T 2/20 \*\*\* Not a class day **\*\*\* Formal Draft Essay 1**

**How to Analyze and Argue II**

Th 2/22 Developing Strong Claims Handout None

*Group A*Model Essay

**How to Introduce a Problem and a Thesis I**

T 2/27 Effective Theses Handout Exercise 1.4

*Group B*  “Motivating Your Argument”

**ESSAY 2: INTELLECTUAL CONVERSATION**

**How to Read Closely, Carefully and Critically II**

Th 3/1 “In Plato’s Cave” (Sections 1, 2, and 3) None

*Group C*  “How to Read Like a Writer”

**Submission Due**

F 3/2 \*\*\* Not a class day \*\*\* **Final Draft Essay 1**

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**How to Put Sources Into Conversation I**

T 3/6 “In Plato’s Cave” (Sections 4, 5, and 6) Exercise 2.1

*Group D* “In Our Glory”

**How to Put Sources Into Conversation II**

Th 3/8 Mad Libs Handout Exercise 2.2

*Group A* “Breaking into the Conversation”

**How to Analyze and Argue III**

T 3/13 Visual Analysis Handout Exercise 2.3

*Group B*

**Peer Workshop**

Th 3/15 “Linking Evidence and Claims” **Zero Draft Essay 2**

*Group C* Visual Analysis Handout

**How to Analyze and Argue IV**

T 3/20 Rhetorical Situation Handout None

*Group D* “Linking Evidence and Claims”

**How to Develop and Structure Argument I**

Th 3/22 Model Essay **Formal Draft Essay 2**

*Group A* Effective Paragraphing Handout

**Peer Workshop**

T 3/27 Effective Paragraphing Handout None

*Group B* Developing Strong Claims Handout

**Developmental Workshop**

Th 3/29 Model Essay Exercise 2.4

*Group C*

**\*\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\*\***

**ESSAY 3: RESEARCHED REVIEW**

**Submission Due**

M 4/9 \*\*\* Not a class day \*\*\* **Final Draft Essay 2**

**How to Identify Intellectual Problems and Ask Intellectual Questions II**

T 4/10 “2017 Best Photojournalism” Exercise 3.1

*Group D* Identifying Problems Handout

**How to Expand the Conversation I**

Th 4/12 “Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and…” Exercise 3.2

*Group A*  *The Burden of Visual Truth*, Chapter 1

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**How to Research Sources (Library Workshop in Rosenthal Library)**

T 4/17 Functions of Sources Handout None

*All Groups*

**How to Expand the Conversation II**

Th 4/19 “Breaking into the Conversation” Exercise 3.3

*Group B* Identifying Problems Handout

**Project Proposals**

T 4/24 “Motivating Your Argument” Exercise 3.4

*Group C* Strong Research Questions Handout

**How to Introduce a Problem and a Thesis II**

Th 4/26 Effective Introductions Handout **Zero Draft Essay 3**

*Group D* “Starting with What Others are Saying”

**How to Develop and Structure Argument II**

T 5/1 “Acknowledgments and Responses” None

*Group A*

**How to Analyze and Argue V**

Th 5/3 “Linking Evidence and Claims” **Formal Draft Essay 3**

*Group B* Lens Analysis Handout

**Peer Workshopping**

T 5/8 Effective Paragraphing Handout Exercise 3.5

*Group C* Lens Analysis Handout

**Developmental Workshop**

Th 5/10 Transitions Handout Exercise 3.6

*Group D* Section Titles and Signposting Handout

**Presentations**

T 5/15 Effective Theses Handout None

*All Groups*

**Submission Due**

Th 5/17 \*\*\* Not a class day \*\*\* **Final Draft Essay 3**

**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.