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

**Class Location: Klapper Hall Room 708**

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

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

**course description**

Indian writer Amitava Kumar once wrote that “Culture survives in smaller spaces – not in the history books that erect monuments to the nation's grand history but in cafés and cinema houses, village squares, and half-forgotten libraries.” Even though many may not realize it, those countless films that live in the “smaller spaces” of the cinema – and now also in massive online spaces like Netflix and Hulu, to name are few – are where cultural values, movements, and myths are repeatedly reiterated, celebrated, criticized, and even created! Such re-presentation of culture happens both intentionally and unintentionally via the stories films convey and the filmic techniques used to convey them. Why do some films become blockbusters or are revered as classics while others quickly fade into obscurity? Why do certain film scenes, characters, or lines of dialogue stick in our individual and collective consciousness? What do movies ask us and tell us about ourselves? These are the types of questions and conversations you will examine in this course in academic writing.

Regardless if you loved it or hated it, it might be near impossible to watch a film without talking about it. In this course, you will go a step further: you will learn the expectations and strategies of academic writing by writing about how films reflect and shape our culture. 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 film. 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 film 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: Lens Analysis (1700+ words) 25%

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

In-class writing (ICW) 10%

Key Term Presentations 10%

Participation 5%

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

To best ensure a passing grade (D or above) in this course, a student should at minimum:

* Submit formal and 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 actively participate in classes and the conference hour.
* Submit all writing assignments via Blackboard/WordPress by stated deadlines.

NB A student who meets all these expectations typically earns no lower than a C in the course.

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. Final drafts will only receive rubric feedback; if you so wish, you are welcome to meet with me in office hours to discuss rubric feedback further. 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**

Identify and discuss the significance of the audiovisual elements of a single scene from the (short) film screened during class. How do these elements contribute to the meaning and impact of this particular scene? How might your analysis deepen your reader’s understanding of the importance of this scene to the entire film? To develop your argument, you must identify and carefully analyze elements of the “mise-en-scène” and discuss how they work together to create meaning.

**Essay 2: Lens Analysis**

Use ideas from “On Reading a Video Text” and “Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising” as lenses to analyze a video advertisement of your own choosing. How does the advertisement attempt to persuade the viewer to utilize—or not utilize—a product, service, or brand? What story does it tell? What sorts of cultural symbols, values and myths does it draw on? Who is the target audience for this advertisement? You must also consider how your argument complicates or extends ideas from “On Reading a Video Text” and “Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising.”

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

Perform an extensive inquiry into the relevant contexts (e.g. cultural, historical, national, generic, ideological, or aesthetic) of a contemporary film of your own choosing in order to make an insightful argument about its success and/or significance. To what cultural moment does this film respond? What tensions does it reveal? Where does it stand in relation to its creator’s other work? Situate the film within those contexts that help illuminate its meaning, and use apt, credible theories and well-researched evidence to support and develop your insights. A successful essay will not simply repeat an existing opinion about a film but rather would contribute to the existing conversation about the film by complicating, contradicting or extending other credible points of view.

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 nearly 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, if you arrive late you will likely not be able to complete that day’s ICW exercise.

KEY TERM PRESENTATION (KP)

Every student will be responsible for presenting on one key term that has been assigned to (or selected by) him or her. Key term presentations will begin from the second week of class. Key terms will be primarily drawn from “Glossary of Film Terms” (pp. 174—77) in *A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 8th Edition*. Each presentation should be 8 to 10 minutes long, provide and discuss at least one concrete example to aid the class’ understanding of the key term, and should be accompanied with a blog post in which at least three credible sources must be listed.

PARTICIPATION

More so than with most courses, class participation is critical to succeeding in 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

Chapter 3 of *A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 8th Edition* by Timothy Corrigan

Selected movie scenes from “Anatomy of a Scene” in the *New York Times*

Essay 2: Lens Analysis

“[This Bud's For You](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7mSKOtGAjM)” Budweiser Advertisement

“[On Reading a Video Text](https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/reading-video-text)” by Robert Scholes

“Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising” by Jack Solomon

Essay 3: Researched Argument

Chapter 4 of *A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 8th Edition* by Timothy Corrigan

Chapter 6 of *A Short Guide to Writing About Film, 8th Edition* by Timothy Corrigan

“[Why the Last Jedi is More Spiritual than Religious](https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/12/why-the-last-jedi-is-more-spiritual-than-religious/549146/)” by Chaim Saiman

Readings on Writing

“Elements of the Academic Essay” by Gordon Harvey

“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

Lens Analysis Anatomy of a Scene Worksheet

Structuring Your Argument

**Course Calendar**

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**ESSAY 1: FORMAL ANALYSIS**

**How to Succeed in this Course**

T 1/29 Syllabus None

*No Groups* “Elements of the Academic Essay”

**How to Identify and Use Key Terms**

Th 1/31 *A Short Guide to* *Writing About Film*, Chapter 3 Exercise 1.1

*All Groups* [Selected Short Film]

**How to Conduct Formal Analysis I**

T 2/5*A Short Guide to* *Writing About Film*, Chapter 3Exercise 1.2

*Group A* Selection from “Anatomy of a Scene”

**How to Conduct Formal Analysis II**

Th 2/7 “Elements of the Academic Essay” **Zero Draft Essay 1**

*Group B* Anatomy of a Scene Worksheet

T 2/12 \*\*\* Not a class day \*\*\*

**How to Analyze and Argue I**

Th 2/14 Argumentation Handout Exercise 1.3

*Group C* *A Short Guide to* *Writing About Film*, Chapter 3

**How to Provide and Implement Feedback I**

T 2/19 Developing Strong Claims Handout **Formal Draft Essay 1**

“Elements of the Academic Essay”

**How to Introduce a Thesis I**

Th 2/21 “Motivating Your Argument” None

*Group D*

**How to Analyze and Argue II**

T 2/26 Argumentation Handout Exercise 1.4

*Group A*Model Essay

**How to Introduce a Thesis II**

Th 2/28 Effective Theses Handout Exercise 1.5

*Group B*  Model Essay

**Submission Due**

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

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**ESSAY 2: LENS ANALYSIS**

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

T 3/5 “This Bud's For You” Budweiser Advertisement None

*Group C*  “On Reading a Video Text”

**How to Conduct Lens Analysis I**

Th 3/7 Lens Analysis Handout Exercise 2.1

*Group D* “Masters of Desire”

**How to Conduct Lens Analysis II**

T 3/12 Lens Analysis Handout Exercise 2.2

*Group A* “Masters of Desire”

**How to Use Sources**

Th 3/14 Summarizing Sources Handout Exercise 2.3

*Group B*  Paraphrasing and Quoting Handout

**How to Analyze and Argue III**

T 3/19 “Linking Evidence and Claims” **Zero Draft Essay 2**

*Group C*

**How to Analyze and Argue IV**

Th 3/21 Developing Strong Claims Handout None

*Group D*

**How to Develop and Structure Argument I**

T 3/26 Model Essay Exercise 2.4

*Group A* Effective Paragraphing Handout

**How to Provide and Implement Feedback II**

Th 3/28 Effective Paragraphing Handout **Formal Draft Essay 2**

*Group B*

**Developmental Workshop**

T 4/2 Lens Analysis Handout None

*Group C* Model Essay

**ESSAY 3: RESEARCHED ARGUMENT**

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

Th 4/4 *A Short Guide to* *Writing About Film*, Chapter 4 Exercise 3.1

*Group D* “Why the Last Jedi is More Spiritual than Religious”

**Submission Due**

Sa 4/6 \*\*\* Not a class day \*\*\* **Final Draft Essay 2**

*Date Reading due Writing due*

**How to Expand the Conversation I**

T 4/9 Strong Research Questions Handout None

*Group A*  Functions of Sources Handout

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

Th 4/11 *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Chapter 6 Exercise 3.2

*All Groups*

**How to Expand the Conversation II**

T 4/16 “Breaking into the Conversation” Exercise 3.3

*Group B*

**How to Craft Project Proposals**

Th 4/18 “Motivating Your Argument” **Zero Draft Essay 3**

*Group C*

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

**How to Introduce a Thesis III**

T 4/30 Model Student Introductions Handout None

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

**How to Develop and Structure Argument II**

Th 5/2 Structuring Your Argument Handout **Formal Draft Essay 3**

*Group A*

**How to Analyze and Argue V**

T 5/7 “Acknowledgments and Responses” None

*Group B*

**How to Provide and Implement Feedback II I**

Th 5/9 Effective Paragraphing Handout Exercise 3.4

*Group C*

**Developmental Workshop**

T 5/14 Transitions Handout **Final Draft Essay 3**

*Group D* Section Titles and Signposting Handout

**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.