

WRIT 102 Writing Seminar II

IMPORTANT DETAILS

CREDITS – 3

PREREQUISITES – WRIT 101 or by placement

This course emphasizes the development of research skills through exercises in the selection of research topics, the use of a variety of library resources, and the evaluation of research materials, leading to the development of an extensive academic argument. In preparation for this major project, students will explore a selected topic from several disciplinary perspectives through a series of written essays and oral presentation assignments. Throughout the term, instructor-student conferences facilitate individualized criticism of research procedures and the development of the final paper. Non-audit.

Spring 2021 Course Themes

Writ 102.1 & Writ 102.2 (IN-PERSON)

Prof. Kent Worcester T/TH 1:00-2:21 p.m., 2:30-3:51 p.m.

Hollywood Musicals

This course explores one of the most polarizing genres to emerge out of the Hollywood dream factory - the film musical. Drawing on the scholarship of Rick Altman, Arlene Croce, Jane Feuer, and Peter Wollen, the course will focus on the Golden Age of the movie musical, i.e., the period between the early 1930s and the early 1960s. Key themes will include the nexus of music, dance, and storytelling; the utopian dimension of the film musical; key personnel; the studio system; and representations of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Some of the films that will be discussed include 'Footlight Parade' (1933), 'Top Hat' (1935), 'Dance, Girl, Dance' (1940), 'All-American Coed' (1941), 'The Gang's All Here' (1943), 'Stormy Weather' (1943), 'Meet the People' (1944), and 'Singing in the Rain' (1953). Student research projects will investigate the creators, stars, and/or films of this often-maligned genre.

Writ 102.3 (IN-PERSON)

Prof. Judith Benchimol F 8:30-11:21 a.m.

MythBusters: Writing Edition!

For most college first-years, academic writing has no resemblance to the writing we do “for fun.” If academic writing only belongs in the classroom, then what real value does it carry? How can teachers and students work together to build a more meaningful relationship to writing? In this course, we will work towards answering these very questions by reading and responding to texts about the subject of writing (yes, writing is something people study!). Through examining the subject of writing, we will dispel common writing “myths” and interrogate how these writing myths have affected us, opening the possibility for challenging them and re-framing how we approach writing. We will use our study of writing as a tool to utilize and strengthen our critical thinking skills, and as a vessel for crafting a research-based argument. This course aims to help you transfer the skills learned in this class to other academic disciplines as well as “writing moments” outside of the classroom: situations where you must communicate—through writing—an idea, an argument, a proposal, a message. As a result, you’ll develop your voice both within and outside of the classroom.

Spring 2021 Course Themes Continued

Writ 102.4 (ONLINE)

Prof Jon Rachmani M 2:30-5:21 p.m.

Dystopian Film and Fiction

How will the new technologies and social forces of today transform our lives in the decades to come? Is Snapchat watching you? Are the apps on your phone monitoring your private conversations? Where will our social media-driven culture lead us? In this course we will approach dystopian storytelling as a tool for gaining insight into the anxieties, hopes, and preoccupations of the modern world, including those of today's tumultuous cultural climate, and ultimately for imagining a better shared future. Alongside reading and viewing key novels and films of the genre, we will investigate examples of journalism dealing with current "dystopian" political and social issues such as drone warfare, the Uighur minority humanitarian crisis, and corporate data mining of social media. By thinking imaginatively about possible futures and critically about current realities we will explore fresh ways to deepen the insights we make in our own writing. Texts may include such works as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*. We will also hold a series of virtual screenings of films such as *Brazil*, *eXistenZ*, and *Akira*. The final project is a research paper in which you will examine a dystopian novel, film, or television show of your choice, the critical and popular reactions to its vision of the future, and how real-world political and social issues can be more deeply understood through the lens it presents.

Writ 102.5 (IN-PERSON)

Prof Mary Brown TH 5:50-8:41

Exploring MMC's Theatre Archives

Archives are the dictionary definition of primary sources: documents that come from the person or organization that created or gathered them, maintained as much as possible in the original order. Marymount Manhattan College's archive includes the college's own papers on the development of its theatre department and other collections documenting the work of a variety of theatre professionals in many different formats. Assignments for this course include: a review of a set of primary sources, a literature review, and a research paper combining original research with the published scholarship on a topic, presentations of original research and participation in panel discussions with students doing similar work.

Writ 102.6 and 102.7 (ONLINE)

Prof Martha Sledge MW 2:30-3:51 and 4:00-5:21 p.m.

Fairy Tales: Beauties, Wolves, and Warrior Women

In this section of WRIT 102, we will study fairy tales (written and filmed) using a blend of history, psychology, politics, folklore, and film and textual studies in order to understand how cultural is transmitted. We will compare how different societies have produced similar tales, analyze how different societies have used fairy tales for social and political acculturation, and examine the effectiveness of the fairy tale in different media. We will conduct research and produce texts in a variety of genres and for a variety of audiences as we unpack this powerful tool of acculturation.

Spring 2021 Course Themes Continued

Writ 102.8 (ONLINE)

Prof Keith Meatto F 8:30-11:21 a.m.

Climate Crisis

This course will investigate climate change, perhaps the most serious and urgent crisis now facing humanity. How have people radically altered the planet? How have these environmental transformations already affected us, and how will they affect us? How might we take meaningful action to shape the future? Through readings and discussion, students will deepen their knowledge of the topic, and complete a self-directed research project.

Writ 102.9 (ONLINE)

Prof. Anthony D'Agostino MW 1:00-2:21 p.m.

Cyborgs, Clones, and Witches: Feminism and Science Fiction

This course explores the intersection between feminism and sci-fi. We will study not only speculative fiction that challenges our understanding of biology and culture, but feminist thought that draws from science fiction the figures of the cyborg, clone, and witch to reimagine womanhood and gender politics for the twenty-first century. Closely analyzing novels by Joanna Russ and Octavia Butler, comic books by Chris Claremont and John Byrne, and films by Lizzie Borden and John Boorman, this class will investigate the role of imagination in politics, and the relationship between fantasy and justice. This class will culminate in student conceived research projects that address the role of a science fiction trope in political discourse, and how we reimagine ourselves through speculative fiction.

Writ 102.10 (ONLINE)

Prof Monica Colbert TTH 11:30-12:51

American Social Movements: Revolutionary to Black Lives Matter

In this writing intensive course, you will examine American social movements as a means of resistance to oppression and injustices, along with their implications and impact on legislation, culture and change. You will engage in critical examinations of movements from revolutionary times through the 21st century, involving topics, like The Boston Tea Party, Women's Suffrage, LGBTQIA, Occupy Wall Street, Environmental Health, Me Too and Black Lives Matter. You will be encouraged to pursue disciplinary interests while accruing and honing skills in research practices and analytical writing. Texts from various disciplines and genres will be incorporated, such as *A People's History of the United States*, *The Purpose of Power: How to Build Movements for the 21st Century*, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*, among others.

Writ 102.11 (ONLINE)

Prof. Patrick McCarthy MW 5:50-7:11 p.m.

Film and Theatre Criticism

Film and theatre critics in America have historically seen themselves not only as judges of artistic quality, but also as a guiding hand in the growth and direction of culture. Beginning with theatrical reviewers in the 19th century, American critics have eagerly promoted their country's contribution to the performing arts. The invention of Motion Pictures gave them the chance to nurture an original American art form.

Spring 2021 Course Themes Continued

(Film and Theatre Criticism Continued) Writ 102 acquaints students with academic research and documentation techniques that will improve their writing and analytical skills. In this section, students will hone these skills on the topic of Criticism; and will design and write a comprehensive research paper in the subject which may give them an opportunity to practice their own critical observation. Readings will include essays and reviews by James Agee, Brooks Atkinson, Pauline Kael, David Thomson, and other renowned critics, including famous writers who dabbled in the field. We will also view films and television broadcasts. Through analyzing these texts, we will explore the relationship between filmmakers, audiences and critics over the last century, and their struggle for control of the culture. We will examine the progression of the culture from print journalism to television to social media; and ask what influence it will still hold in the future.

Writ 102.16 (ONLINE)

Prof. Wendy Trach TTH 4:00-5:21 p.m.

Rethinking Academic Writing

In this course, *Rethinking Academic Writing*, we will think about, talk about, and write about writing. The course begins by introducing you to several areas of scholarship in writing studies as a starting point to get you thinking about your writing past, your writing present, and your writing future. We will explore what you've previously been taught about academic writing and how that may have positively or negatively affected your relationship with writing. *What "rules" or organizational structures were you taught to follow? Why were these "rules" or organizational structures taught? Is it ever possible to break these "rules," and if so, how? Can academic writing be creative, as well?* In addition to these questions, we will discuss the kind of writer you envision yourself being in the future and how you can bring this "new writer" to various academic, professional, and personal spaces. My hope is that this course not only transforms the way you *think* about academic writing, but also transforms the way in which you *write*. The course requires students to design an original research project related to writing studies or a field of their choosing and consists of scaffolded assignments (*an annotated bibliography, a literature review, a research proposal, and an oral presentation*) that lead to the final research paper.

Writ 102.17 and 102.18 (ONLINE)

Prof Cecilia Feilla F 11:30-2:21 p.m. and F 2:30-5:21 p.m.

Race & American Horror

Horror fiction has been popular since it first emerged more than two centuries ago, and many of today's bestseller lists, Broadway stages, and movie/TV screens draw on devices and themes from the earliest examples of the genre. Far from being a juvenile form, horror has proved to be an important vehicle for addressing some of the most serious themes in the nation's history: slavery, xenophobia, genocide, police brutality, urbanization, among others. Horror is an especially fitting genre to write about race in America. Writers of color have long turned to horror to express their lived experience. In this course, students will develop their writing and research skills as they explore race in American horror fiction from its beginnings in the nineteenth century up to contemporary literature, film, and television. Authors will include Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Shirley Jackson, Richard Wright, Toni Morrison, Matt Ruff, Jordan Peele, and others.

Spring 2021 Course Themes Continued

Writ 102.19 (ONLINE)

Prof Deanna Twain MW 8:30-9:51 a.m.

On Certainty: Religion, science, philosophy, law, love, and the tooth fairy: is anything certain?

In this section of WRIT 102, we will explore the concept of certainty. Can anything actually be proven? How does certainty relate to trust or faith? Is a lack of doubt the same as a sense of denial? In this course students will read texts, view films, and write on this topic, with an eye towards developing an original research paper by the end of the semester.

Writ 102.23 and 102.24 (ONLINE)

Prof Michael Colvin M 10:00-12:51 and W 10:00-12:51

Hispanic New York

Hispanic culture thrives in New York City, and Hispanic New Yorkers of different origins have created distinct cultural identities in this city. In this course students will examine the history of Hispanic migration to New York through literature, film, and popular culture; students will have the opportunity to visit outdoor sites and take virtual tours of 18th-century Sephardic cemeteries in lower Manhattan; the Hispanic Society of America in Washington Heights; the Museo del Barrio in East Harlem, and the Nuyorican Poets' Café in the Lower East Side. Students will focus on a work of literature or film to research and write about the contributions and perspectives of Spanish-speaking residents of New York City.

Writ 102.25 (ONLINE)

Prof. Marnie Brady TTH 2:30-3:51 p.m.

Story, Strategy, and Social Change

Movements are made of stories narrated through different modes such as the personal, the collective, and the political. What do these stories tell us about the people of social movements? What can we learn about the interplay of biography and history? Through an investigation of primary sources such as poetry, posters, films, zines, manifestos, memoir, and oral histories drawn from contemporary U.S. social movements, and secondary sources from social movement scholarship, we will examine how storytelling and strategic narratives shape and express identity, the radical imagination, and differing theories of change. Students will hone research and analytical writing skills through an investigation into a specific movement of their choosing.