

325L Ethnographic Writing (Tu, Th 2-3:15)

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Office EPS 1.138 office hours T, Th 1-2

This is a writing workshop. Students will keep freewriting journals and write four essays, each of which will be built through four versions. We will read one another's writings, learning how to read closely and to give feedback that is most useful for the authors. In class we will proceed through a series of exercises and workshops in doing ethnography, writing and reading. Why does writing matter in ethnography? How do forms of writing change cultural theory? What questions do forms of writing raise about subjects and objects, forms of attention, the possibility of thinking through description? How do you describe a scene, a character, an event, a situation, a collective sensibility, a difference, a world? What does it mean to add density and texture to ethnographic description? What can ethnography do?

Books (at the coop)

Kathleen Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*.

Hugh Raffles. *Insectopedia*.

D. J. Waldie. *Where We Are Now*.

Philippe Bourgois. *Righteous Dopefiend*.

Joao Biehl. *Vita*.

Four reading packets and Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*, are on blackboard.

Requirements and Structure of the class

Everyone starts with 100 points. Points will be subtracted if you fail to complete assignments or show inadequate development in your written essays.

1. Regular attendance and participation. 10% of the grade.
2. Freewriting journals turned in Thursdays except when indicated that there will be no freewriting journal in a given week. 10% of the grade.

This is a process of writing for 10 minutes every day, following the guidelines in Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*.

3. Detailed examples of how a particular part or aspect of a reading helps you develop your writing in a given week. 20% of the grade.
4. Four Descriptive Essays. 60% of the grade.

These are worth 15 points each if they are done adequately and well. Grammar, spelling and punctuation do not count at all. Each one should be written through Elbow's 4 versions model (p. 19). We will do some of this writing in class. Your grade for each essay also includes active participation in the giving feedback to others on their papers (and reading them before class).

Week 1 August 26.

Introductions, ethnographic research exercise, writing workshops on free writing and brainstorming.

Week 2 August 31, September 2.

Read: Elbow. *Writing Without Teachers*, chapters 1-3.

Tuesday. write version 1 of your first paper.

Thursday. write version 2. If you miss these classes any week you will have to bring your versions for me to check. (and you will lose points for absence from class).

Turn in freewriting journal.

Turn in 3 points on how Elbow (ch 1-3) helps you with your writing this week.

Week 3 September 7 and 9.

Read: Elbow. *Writing Without Teachers*, chapter 4 – appendix essay.

Tuesday – Come prepared to talk about the Elbow book in detail.

Turn in 3 points on how Elbow (ch 4-end) helps you with your writing this week.

Thursday – write version 3 in class.

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 4 September 14 and 16.

Read: Writing Creative Nonfiction (a coursepack on blackboard).

By Monday afternoon – email your paper to your group and to I. 5 pages double spaced, 12 point font.

Tuesday – In 2 groups we will give detailed feedback on the papers. Use Elbow's method of metaphorical readings to show how the writing has affected you. Talk about specific paragraphs, sentences, and aspects.

Thursday – **Turn in freewriting journal.**

Turn in 3 detailed, written points about how the reading for this week inspires your writing this week.

Week 5 September 21 and 23.

Read: Kathleen Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*.

Tuesday – write version 1 of your second paper.

Thursday – write version 2 of your second paper.

Turn in freewriting journal.

Turn in 3 detailed, written points about how the reading for this week inspires your writing this week.

Week 6 September 28 and 30

Read: Norton Reader 1 (a coursepack on blackboard).

Write versions 3 and 4 of your second essay (you will have to turn in version 3 with your final version 4)

Thursday - **Either email me or drop off at my office (put it under my door) 1) your freewriting journal, 2) your version three and 3) your 3 points about how the reading this week helps your writing this week.**

Week 7 October 5 and 7

Read: Norton Reader 2 (a coursepack on blackboard).

By Monday afternoon – email your paper to your group and I. 5 pages double spaced, 12 point font.

Tuesday – In 2 groups we will give detailed feedback on the papers.

Thursday – **Turn in 3 detailed, written points about how the reading this week inspires your writing.**

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 8 October 12 and 14

Read: Hugh Raffles. *Insectopedia*.

Tuesday - **Turn in 3 detailed, written points about how the reading this week inspires your writing.**

Thursday - **Turn in freewriting journal.**

Week 9 October 19 and 21

Read: Philippe Bourgois. *Righteous Dopefiend*. (1st half)

Thursday - **email me (or put under my office door) 1) 3 carefully thought out, very specific points about how the reading helps you and 2) your freewriting journal.**

Week 10 October 26 and 28

Read: Philippe Bourgois. *Righteous Dopefiend*. (2^{cd} half)

Tuesday – write version 1 of your third paper.

Thursday – write version 2 of your third paper.

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 11 November 2 and 4 (**no class Tuesday. I will be out of town**).

Read: Joao Biehl. *Vita*. (1st half)

Thursday – write version 3 of your third paper.

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 12 November 9 and 11

Read: Joao Biehl. *Vita*. (2^{cd} half)

By Monday afternoon – email your paper to your group and I. 5 pages double spaced, 12 point font.

Tuesday – In 2 groups we will give detailed feedback on the papers.

Thursday – **Turn in 3 detailed, written points about how the reading for this week helps you develop your writing.**

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 13 November 16 and 18

Tuesday – write version 1 of your fourth paper.

Thursday – write version 2 of your fourth paper.

Turn in freewriting journal.

Week 14 November 23

Tuesday – Write version 3 of your fourth paper.

No freewriting journal this week.

Week 15 November 30 and Dec 2

Read: D. J. Waldie. *Where We Are Now*.

Monday afternoon – email your paper to your group and I.

Tuesday – feedback on fourth paper

Thursday – Turn in 3 points on the Waldie book.

No freewriting journal this week.