Course Objectives

Through practical application and the exploration of cultural reporting and documentary approaches to communication, we will consider questions that surround the interpretation of cultural experience. The bulk of our time will be spent analyzing New Journalism/Literary Journalism as a means to better understand how cultural critics write about and locate themselves in political, social, and cultural debates. Course materials provides important models for cultural studies fieldwork that exemplifies the ways in which people struggle to understand and explain the contradictions and instability of contemporary (and historical) cultural life in the United States. We will work from these models to become more skilled at producing our own critical and creative analyses of contemporary life in the United States.

Three important questions will guide our journey through the course material: How are people attempting to understand and explain cultural shifts in the United States? How do cultural reporters and documentary producers explore relationships among self, experience, interpretation, and culture? What role should “objectivity” play in journalism/documentary?

The goal of the Perspectives on Inquiry course is to engage students in college level inquiry through which they will develop fundamental intellectual habits, will understand how to integrate various perspectives on knowledge, and will begin to learn how to meet changing needs of a global, technological, diverse, and environmentally sensitive society.

More specifically this course will:

* Engage students as active learners through inquiry into interdisciplinary questions
* Help students learn how knowledge from a variety of perspectives can be integrated to provide richer and more complex insights.
* Introduce students to the intellectual habits of: critical thinking; critical reading; accuracy and thoroughness; creativity; use reason and evidence to support arguments; thoughtful consideration of others’ ideas and positions; effective oral written, and visual communication; and textual, empirical, and other kinds of research.
**Required Texts**

Course readings are accessible via a password protected website.

You are required to print each day’s reading and bring the article with you to class. You are encouraged to print all of the articles and take them to Office Max for binding. This will allow you to refer to earlier readings as we move through the semester. Also, a course reader will help you keep your readings organized. Binding usually costs around $4.

**Course Assignments**

- Attendance and class participation: 10%
- *Field Reports (4 reports 1-2 pages each): 10%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Paper #1 (3-5 pages): 20%
- Paper #2 (3-5 pages): 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

* I will calculate your total points for four field reports and divide that number by four.

You are required to complete the reading assignments **before** you attend class. This will lead to more fruitful discussion.

Each student is required to write two papers this semester. Both papers will be evaluated for its ability to critically examine issues from course readings and illustrate their relevance to a concrete instance of contemporary life.

**Papers** should be 3-5 double-spaced pages in length. You are required analyze a set of readings and make an argument that intervenes creatively in the conversation. While I want your papers to cover a specific theme (i.e. the relationship between self, society, and religion), your approach to the topic should reflect your own theoretical interests. Your paper must make an argument. Merely summarizing a reading or stating that a reading is “correct” because it speaks to your own personal experience is not an argument. (See the syllabus addendum for further information about writing for this course.) Papers must be turned in no later than seven days after we cover the readings (e.g. If you’re writing about David Samuels’ “Bringing Down the House” then your paper would be due **September 26th**). The first paper must cover a reading from the section “Finding a Place.” The last day to turn in a paper for the first assignment is **October 17th**. The
second paper must cover a reading from "The Individual and Society" or "Popular Culture." This paper is due by December 10th.

Pop quizzes will be short answer and will allow me to gauge how well you understand the arguments made in the readings. Unlike your papers and class discussion, where I am interested in your opinions about the issues and the strength of the writer's argument(s), the quizzes are designed for you to state the author's argument only. In other words, I am not striving to understand what you think about the issues; rather, I am interested in how well you understand the construction of the author's argument. If we do not understand what s/he's saying then our critique of her/his work will not be properly grounded.

I will provide a list of essay questions for the Final Exam. You will answer two questions (length of answers TBA). Exams are due December 17th by Noon. Note: The information in this syllabus and the syllabus addendum about writing assignments applies to the final exam as well.

A separate handout will be distributed for each Field Report.

Written Assignment Requirements
All papers should be typed, double spaced, and use a consistent style (i.e. MLA, APA, etc.). Use one-inch margins and 12-point font. Further details on written assignments can be found on a separate handout.

Course Policies

Attendance and Active Participation are expected and required. Excessive absences will result in a lower final grade.

Promptness is expected as a general rule. If you are consistently late to class then your grade will be negatively affected.

All assignments are due on assigned days. There will be NO MAKE UPS. Documented illness or documented emergencies are the only exception to this policy. Changes in work schedules, personal celebrations (i.e. birthdays), transportation problems, etc. are NOT considered to be legitimate reasons for missing assignment deadlines or class meetings. If you miss a quiz and have documentation for your absence then you will take the quiz on the next date you attend class.

If you have a cellular phone turn it off. If you have a pager set it to vibrate or turn it off.
# Perspectives on Inquiry
## Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Herbert Gans, “Some Functions of Journalists”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8/31   | Tom Wolfe, “The Feature Game”  
Library Tour—meet in the library 1st floor |
| 9/3    | Labor Day |
| 9/5    | Tom Wolfe, “Like a Novel”  
**Field Report #1 Due** |
| 9/7    | Tom Wolfe, “Seizing the Power” |
| 9/10   | Gay Talese, “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold” |
| 9/12   | Gay Talese, “When Frank Sinatra Had a Cold”  
**Finding a Place** |
| 9/14   | Joan Didion, “Getting the Vegas Willies,” Esquire May 1977 32 |
| 9/17   | Tom Wolfe, “Las Vegas (What?) Las Vegas (Can’t hear you! Too noisy)  
Las Vegas!!!” |
| 9/19   | David Samuels, “Bringing Down the House” |
| 9/21   | Gay Talese, “Of Things Unnoticed” |
| 9/24   | Gail Sheehy, “Cleaning Up Hell’s Bedroom” |
| 9/26   | Bill Buford, “Lions and Tigers and Bears”  
**Field Report #2 Due** |
9/28-10/3  
*The Cruise* (film screening)

10/5  
David Eggers, “Hitchhiker’s Cuba”

10/8  

10/10  
Michael Herr, “Khe Sanh” (Section I and V only)

**The Individual and Society**

10/12  
Hunter S. Thompson, “The Hoodlum Circus and The Statutory Rape of Bass Lake”

10/15-10/17  
Tom Wolfe, “The Unspoken Thing”

**LAST DATE FOR PAPER #1**

10/19-10/22  
*The Gods of Times Square* (film screening)

10/22  
Jonathan Lebed’s Extracurricular Activities”

10/24  
Terry Southern, “Twirling at Ole Miss”

10/26-10/29  
JoAnn Wypijewski, “The Secret Sharer”

10/31-11/2  
**No Class**  
National Communication Association Convention

11/5  
Brent Staples, “Mr. Bellow’s Planet”

**Field Report #3 Due**

11/7-11/9  
Mark Singer, “Predilections”

11/12  
Michael Pollan, “Why Mow? The Case Against Lawns”

**Popular Culture**

11/14  
Hunter S. Thompson, “The Kentucky Derby is decadent and depraved”

11/16  
TBA

11/19-11/23  
**Thanksgiving Break**

11/26-11/30  
Audio Documentaries (Scott Carrier, Daniel Makagon, Mark Neumann)
12/3  Susan Orlean, “The Illustrating Man”
12/5  Richard Goldstein, “Gear”
12/7  Richard Meltzer, “Rock-Crit Blood ‘n’ Guts” and “Meltzer at the Met”  
     Field Report #4 Due

Critique
12/10  Michael J. Arlen, “Notes on the New Journalism”  
     LAST DATE FOR PAPER #2
12/12  David Eason, “The New Journalism and the Image-World: Two Modes of  
     Organizing Experience”
12/17  FINAL EXAMS DUE BY NOON
Student: ______________________
Course: UN 1001 Fall 2001

Attendance/participation 10% _____ (pts.) X .10 = _____
Field Reports 10% _____ (pts.) X .10 = _____
Quizzes 20% _____ (pts.) X .20 = _____
Paper #1 20% _____ (pts.) X .20 = _____
Paper #2 20% _____ (pts.) X .20 = _____
Final Exam 20% _____ (pts.) X .20 = _____

Field Report #1 ______
Field Report #2 ______
Field Report #3 ______
Field Report #4 ______

400 = ______

Final Grade= ______