Syllabus

Journalism 5590/7590
Cannes 2016
Critical Writing and Reviewing

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Introduction

As the catalogue course description states, this is a class devoted to writing reviews about the popular arts. It is also intended to be a survey of arts criticism. Assignments will require students to cover a number of live arts events, movies, and television programming.

You will be expected to read reviews on-line and in a variety of publications, including international newspapers. In your reviews, you should draw on your general knowledge of the arts, culture, society, and the relationship between arts production and arts criticism. In addition to your idiosyncratic personal tastes, you should take into consideration issues such as race, class, gender, and nationalism and engage various discourses, such as the modern, the postmodern, the postcolonial, and the romantic.

As this is a concentrated Maymester, we will limit ourselves to reviewing movies that you will see at the Cannes Film Festival.

Readings

There is no required text for the course. However, there is a READING PACKET that I will give to you before we leave for France and which you should begin reading as soon as you get it.

You will also be required to read the International Herald Tribune daily, and to read on-line reviews at these and other sites:

www.rogerebert.com
http://www.salon.com/ent/index.html
http://www.guardian.co.uk/reviews/
http://www.observer.co.uk/review/
http://www.culturekiosque.com/nouveau/rh1nouv.htm
http://newyorker.com/THE_CRITICS/
http://www.iht.com/
Assignments

You will each write 9 reviews during the program. I will present you with a list of acceptable publications, taken mainly from publications and web-sites represented in the reading packet, and you should tailor each review to one of those publications.

You should submit all assignments in journalistic form, computer-printed, double spaced, with 1.25 inch margins all around. Insert any proof-reading corrections neatly. Presentation of your work must meet professional standards. There will be absolute deadlines for each assignment, mirroring the professional industry with hard publication dates. You will have the opportunity to rewrite your work based on my comments.

Each review should be 750 words in length and should contain a credit block listing the director, writer, key actors, distributor and film length.

You will also write a daily blog that chronicles and critiques each day of the 12 day festival. These blogs should detail your festival experiences, reflecting on the nature and purpose of festivals, profiling industry professionals you encounter, and discussing the films and panel discussions that you attend.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. The class is run as a workshop in which reviews are read and discussed. You are expected to participate in class discussions and to present and defend your work and points of view. The range of ideas and opinions is what makes this class fascinating, so be prepared to speak up.

Grading

All assignments will be graded by professional criteria, emphasizing the originality of your ideas, clarity of expression, and how well your review reflects the style of the publication you are writing for. Your final grade is based on the aggregate grades of your reviews, class participation, and your improvement as a writer during the class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Improvement</td>
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Rules of the Game:

1. Freedom of Expression is practiced here. No subject, theme, story, or vocabulary will be excluded in and of itself as inappropriate in this class.
2. Writing is a process of discovery.
3. You should care deeply about your subject(s) or theme(s).
4. You must be willing to take creative risks and stretch your abilities.
5. The more you write, the better you write.
6. You never stop learning to write.

Boiler Plate

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Schedule

First Meetings: May 9-10. Introduction to writing movie reviews.

May 11-22. At Cannes Film Festival. We will meet each morning during the festival and from time to time with a filmmaker at the festival who will discuss his/her work with us. The balance of the time will be spent viewing movies, attending festival seminars and panel discussions, and meeting with filmmakers and international journalists at the festival. You are expected to view a minimum of two feature length films each day.

May 23 – June 1. In class. Workshop for movie reviews, in class discussion of the festival, lectures on the art and craft of writing, rewriting, and polishing reviews.

Useful websites for researching movie reviews: