

Course: LS 816, fall 2024
Instructor: Sasha Colby
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Course Schedule: Zoom Weds. 6:00 - 8:50 p.m.
x 12 weeks and Sat. Oct 5th, 19th & 26th 10-11:30 a.m.

LS 816: The Art of Writing
Form and technique – academic writing, literary non-fiction and fiction

In the practice of most arts, technique is widely discussed. Outside of writing programs, however, there is often surprisingly little discussion of writing itself, with a primary focus on *what* is being said (content) rather than *how* this is achieved (form). In this course, we will reverse this emphasis, traversing academic writing, literary non-fiction, and fiction to explore the common characteristics of notable writing (voice, detail, atmosphere, etc.) as well as qualities specific to each genre.

To do this, we will *slow-read* each text - including some foundational GLS works - exploring writing techniques and strategies to better understand the elements of form. We will also embark on a hands-on application as students write one sustained piece of academic writing, literary non-fiction or fiction according to preference. This work will then be workshopped by class participants and the instructor in a rigorous and respectful application of the principles we have studied. ***Writing discussion will be supplemented, this term, by a 3-part Saturday morning seminar series on academic writing, literary nonfiction, and fiction in coordination with our partners at Oxford.***

At the end of the course, students will re-write their work for publication, with final projects appearing on *The GLS Journal* portal of *The BC Review*. The overriding goals of the course are to emerge with an advanced understanding of literary form, a polished piece of published writing, and an effective writing tool-kit for future academic and creative writing endeavours.

Writing and story:

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. U of Chicago Press, 2018.

Hodgins, Jack. *A Passion for Narrative*. McClelland and Stewart, 2001.

King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. U of Minnesota Press, 2008.

A note on writing guides: These are helpful volumes about writing. They are not sacred texts. They are there to offer suggestions and remind you of important elements. But they should in no way inhibit you and you are welcome to disagree with the advice, which is to say they are also there to generate debate.

Reading (supplemented by articles on Canvas):

Academic Writing:

Turabian and selected examples of academic writing – the good, the bad, and the unpronounceable

Literary Non-Fiction:

Didion, Joan. *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008.

Baldwin, James. *Notes of a Native Son*. Penguin, 2018.

Fiction:

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Penguin, 2011.

Greene, Graham. *The Quiet American*. Vintage, 2019.

Assignments:

3 posts to Canvas: 20%

Workshop Participation: 20%

Draft submission: 20%

Final Assignment: 40%

*Note: All assignments must be completed to achieve a passing grade.