

Fall 2021
San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 242, Nonfiction Writing Workshop

SCHEDULE

Aug. 25 Introduction to Nonfiction

Introductions, lecture, and assigned readings

Exercise: Cookies

Reading: Crying In H Mart, Zauner

Discussion post: A picture tells a thousand words/intro

1. Memoir

Sept. 1

Discuss Zauner

Report: "Between the World and Me"

Exercise: "Fairy Tale Princess By Choice" - Imbach

Begin first project, Montaigne

Read: Lauren Hough, "I Was a Cable Guy."

Sept. 8

Discuss Hough

Report: Gurba, "Mean"

Exercise: Names

Read: "Enjoli"

Sept. 15

Discuss "Enjoli"

Report: Lindy West, "Shrill."

Exercise: Montaigne Exercises, debrief

Read: "Here For It."

Poss: guest

Sept. 22

Discuss: excerpt from "Here For it."

Report: Laymon, "Heavy"

Exercise: Location

Read: "Frank Sinatra Has A Cold," Talese

2. Reportage

Sept 29

Discuss Talese

Report: "Electric Kool-aid Acid Test"

Exercise: interview

Read: Tom Wolfe essay (TK)

MONTAIGNE ESSAY DUE

Oct. 6

Discuss: Tom Wolfe

Report on Wolfe

Present Montaigne essays/New Assignment presented

Read, Joan Didion, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem" (essay)

Oct. 13

Discuss Didion

Report on Olivia Laing, "The Lonely City"

Exercise: Discuss 33 1/3rd proposals

Read, (excerpt from) "Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail"

Oct. 20

Discuss Hunter S. Thompson

Report on Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail

Exercise: Voice mimicking

Read, Smith: Going Down on the Replacements

Oct. 27

Discuss Going Down on the Replacements

Report on "Let's Talk About Love"

33 1/3 proposals

Read: Snowfall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek/Tolentino

Nov. 3

Discuss Snowfall/Tolentino

Exercise: Rewrite Romeo

Report: "Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self Delusion." Tolentino

New Assignment/Final Project

Read: Greil Marcus, excerpt from History

3. Criticism/Analysis

Nov.10

Discuss Greil, history (possible guest?)
Report "The History of Rock In Ten Songs" Marcus
Present 33 1/3rd proposals to class
Read: Hanif Abduqirrib, "In Defense of Trap Queen."
Poss: guest

Nov.17

Discuss Trap Queen
Exercise: video critiques
Present 33 1/3rd proposals to class

Nov.24 THANKSGIVING BREAK: (OFF)

Dec. 1: Group Work on Final Projects – research strategies
Ex: every picture tells a story

Dec. 8: Group Work on Final Projects – submission strategies

Dec. 15 PRESENT FINAL PROJECTS

Essays/Memoir:

"Crying in H Mart" Michelle Zauner (from "Crying in H Mart").
<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/crying-in-h-mart>

"I Was Cable Guy" – Lauren Hough (From "Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing.")
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/cable-tech-dick-chenev-sex-dungeon_n_5c0ea571e4b06484c9fd4c21

"Enjoli"—Kristi Coulter (From "Nothing Good Can Come of This.")
<https://humanparts.medium.com/https-medium-com-kristicoulter-the-24-hour-woman-3425ca5be19f>

R. Eric Thomas: (From: 'Here For It.")

Hanif Abdurriqib "In Defense of Trap Queen."
<https://sevenscribes.com/in-defense-of-trap-queen-as-our-generations-greatest-love-song/>

Reportage:

“Snowfall, The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek”

<https://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/index.html#/?part=tunnel-creek>

“Going Down With the Replacements” by RJ Smith

<https://www.villagevoice.com/2020/11/12/going-down-with-the-replacements/>

“Slouching Toward Bethlehem,” Joan Didion (From “Slouching Toward Bethlehem”) PDF

“Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail” Hunter Thompson PDF

“Frank Sinatra Has A Cold” -- Gay Talese

Tom Wolfe, excerpt from “Kandy Kololed”

Greil Marcus – PDF

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment # 1.

Read one essay by Montaigne and comment on it in the form of an essay of your own on the same topic. Make sure that you include Montaigne’s thoughts and remember to raise the stakes.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm>

Assignment #2:

Read one 33 1/3rd book, choose your own subject and write a book proposal for your own choice.

Suggested read: “Let’s Talk About Love: A Journey to the End of Taste.” Carl Wilson

<https://333sound.com/how-to-submit/>

FINAL ASSIGNMENT:

Write an essay for publication, using the genre of your choice: reportage, interview, criticism, narrative nonfiction or memoir. Submit query letter as well as essay.

3000 plus word

BOOKS

Choose ONE book to purchase/read and report on

Ta Nehisi Coates, "Between the World and Me." *

Myriam Gurba, "Mean."

Lindy West, "Shrill."

Kiese Laymon, "Heavy"

Tom Wolfe, "The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test"

Hunter S. Thompson, "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas"

Olivia Laing, "The Lonely City"

Greil Marcus, "The History of Rock n' Roll In Ten Songs"

Carl Wilson, "Let's Talk About Love." *

Michelle Zauner, "Crying In H Mart" (suggested)

Lauren Hough, "Leaving Is Not The Hardest Thing" (suggested)

Kristi Coulter, "Nothing Good Can Come of This" (suggested)

Jia Tolentino, "Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self Delusion)

R. Eric Thomas, "Here For It." (suggested)

Joan Didion, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem" (suggested)

* required