

Fall 2011
IDC 1001H NWH, "The Arts in New York City"
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Honors College Seminar 1: The Arts in New York City

This seminar introduces students to cultural events and performances that illustrate the richness of the arts in New York City. Classroom analysis and contextualization of central works focus on highlights of the current New York season. By writing frequently about examples of the visual, performing, and literary arts, students develop their analytical and communication skills. In addition to experiencing these art forms as an audience, students meet with arts professionals to examine performances and exhibitions from the multiple perspectives of scholarship, creativity, and production. All the classes convene as a unit several times during the semester, meeting with distinguished faculty and members of the diverse artistic communities, to reflect on the City as an international center for the arts.

Prerequisite:

Acceptance into the Macaulay Honors College, CUNY.

Course Requirements:

- Class participation (in class, on-line, on field trips, at all times) 33.3%
- Reporting work (reviews, blurbs, interviews, podcasts) 33.3%
- Creative work ('Art is where you find it') 33.3%

Attendance & Events:

You must attend all class meetings, class field trips, and common events. There is a maximum of two excused absences from class sessions before you are withdrawn from the class.

Some group events will occur in evening or daytime hours outside of the scheduled class period. If you have a schedule conflict with any of the planned group events, please discuss with me ASAP.

In addition to group events, you are required to independently attend at least eight outside events. To find arts events on your own, consult print or online sources such as the Calendar pages from the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *Village Voice*, and *Time Out New York*. All of these list thousands of cultural events across the city every week, many of them free. Post items of interest to the class blog.

Last but not least, you must attend at least one of the Macaulay *Meet the Artist* events scheduled this semester.

Reading:

Required text: Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

All students must read the New York Times' Arts section in full, every week (either print or electronic version), and post weekly comments on their content to the class blog.

Articles and essays will be distributed during the semester and you are expected to read and have ideas about them.

You will be reading each other's work and commenting constructively on both the content (what it says) and the form (how it says it) of each other's writing.

Academic Honesty:

I expect that you will be handing in your own work. Any research must be acknowledged and properly documented. Reports of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Dean of Students' office. **Breaches of academic integrity will result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially failure for the entire course.**

For more info see: www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html

Semester Schedule

- Wednesday 8/24: Jonathan Safran Foer reading (MHC Common Event)
- Wednesday 8/31: Class meeting - Introduction to the class
- Wednesday 9/7: Class meeting - Tech work with Kiersten Greene (blogs), bring laptops fully charged
- Wednesday 9/14: Class meeting - Discussion of *Extremely Loud & Close* & Blurb 1 due
- Wednesday 9/21: Class field trip to Chelsea galleries, Review due
- Wednesday 9/28: *No class meeting*
- Wednesday 10/5: Class meeting, Creative Work 1 presentations
- Sunday 10/11: Snapshot NYC
- Wednesday 10/12: Class meeting, Blurb 2 due
- Tuesday 10/18: Jhumpa Lahiri reading, Baruch College
- Wednesday 10/19: Class meeting, Technology work with Kiersten Greene (sound and podcasts)
- Wednesday 10/26: Class meeting, Illustrated Feature due
- Thursday 10/27: Daniel Hope and "East Meets West" performance, 92 St. Y (uptown Manhattan)
- Wednesday 11/2: Class meeting, Creative Work 2 presentations
- Thursday 11/3: Don Giovanni performance, Metropolitan Opera (Lincoln Center)
- Wednesday 11/9: Class meeting, Technology work with Kiersten Greene (video), Blurb 3 due
evening: American Ballet Theater performance, City Center (midtown Manhattan)
- Wednesday 11/16: Class meeting, Interview due
evening: King Lear performance, Public Theater (downtown Manhattan)
- Wednesday 11/23: Class meeting, Creative Work 3 presentations
- Wednesday 11/30: Class meeting, Blurb 4 due
- Wednesday 12/7: Class meeting, Your Choice Reporting due
- Wednesday 12/21: Creative Work 4 presentations
(final exam period)

Schedule current as of 8/30/11. Subject to change.

Reporting work: Dispatches from art's front lines

In addition to class field trips you will be visiting art events on your own throughout the semester. Use your Cultural Passports to visit galleries, museums, concerts, plays, readings, performances, etc. Or find free sources! Participate in at least **eight** events during the semester.

You will write about each event. For **four** of the eight events, write a 'blurb' or paragraph-length piece to provide a general sense of the event. The deadlines for the 'blurbs' will be:

- September 14
- October 12
- November 9
- November 30

Post your 'blurbs' to the class blog only (save a tree). I will grade all four blurbs together at the end of the semester. **Your blurbs constitute 1/5, or 20%, of your reporting work grade.**

You will create three of the four blurbs as multimedia pieces (podcasts or video) as well as written text. More info will be forthcoming.

For the other **four** events, write a longer-form piece (approx. 500-1000 words, two-four pages). Use the reporting you read for class to guide you in your writing. The deadlines for the longer-form pieces will be:

- September 21 (Review)
- October 26 (Illustrated Feature story - podcast)
- November 16 (Interview - podcast/video)
- December 7 (Your choice - podcast/video)

Post your work to the blog. Also, print your work (double-spaced, 10-12 pt type) and submit the printed copy to me for a grade. I will grade each piece individually. **Your longer-form pieces constitute 4/5, or 80%, of your reporting work grade.**

You will create three of the four reviews as multimedia pieces (podcasts or video) as well as written work. More info will be forthcoming.

Read each other's writing on the blog. Comment meaningfully on each other's writing throughout the semester. **Your presence on the class blog is an integral component of your class participation grade.**

Creative work: Art is where you find it

This project has four parts, each designed to allow for meaningful creative exploration using the values, approaches, and vocabularies of the arts. In each part, you will create original works of art that grow from your daily experience. The last part also includes an opportunity for overview and re-presentation. More information on each part will be presented and discussed in class.

(Dis)orientation – Pay attention, August 31 through September 7

Part 1 – Image, due October 5.

Part 2 – Language, due October 26.

Part 3 – Narrative, due November 23.

Part 4 – Your choice. Create a work or works that develop from the previous three explorations. Present this work to the class, and present all earlier works as a creative portfolio. Due December 21.

Feel free to use your computers, as well as your minds, bodies, or whatever else you dream up to create, record, or present your work. In all cases be mindful that you are creating your work for an audience. The class is your audience. **You are creating an experience for us.**

As this is art there is arguably no 'right' or 'wrong' way to do this. Still, there are generally end results that are more successful than others. So, I offer the following suggestions:

If you know and care about your subject, and are able to put your ideas and feelings into your work, you will tend to find greater success. So be sure to work with subjects that engage you.

Audiences are often willing to go along with your weirdness, even if they don't share it, if they believe that your weirdness is genuine. We might even find your weirdness compelling.

Pay attention to the works you experience during the semester – identify strategies that artists employ to engage, enchant, instruct, irritate, or otherwise involve you – and try to employ such strategies in your work. Artists have always ~~stolen~~ borrowed from each other, from the world around them.

Creative work will be evaluated based on achievement of technical and creative goals, thoughtfulness, attention to detail, effort, and originality of approach. Take risks and try new things. Have fun with it. Make something great. Oh, and, nobody who worried about his or her grade ever made good art.
