**University of Wyoming**

**English 2035-01**

**“Writing for Public Forums:**

**The Role of the Critic”**

**Course Prerequisites:** COM 2

**Course Description**

Often when we hear the phrase “Movie Critic” or “Art Critic,” visions of bespectacled, supercilious gentlemen spring to mind (think Anton Ego, the irascible restaurant critic, in *Ratatouille*). We resent such characters, partly because they wield a special kind of power, and partly because they probably know something we don’t.

At the same time, on a Friday afternoon, when you and a friend are wondering what movie to see that evening, you might offer a suggestion (say, *Parasite*). Since neither of you has seen this movie, one of you will invariably ask, “Well, what are the critics saying about it?”. Soon both of you are flipping through several screens of movie reviews from critics whose opinions you trust.

That, in a nutshell, is how we feel about critics: on the one hand, we may dislike them, but on the other, we *need* them to save us time and money as we navigate our way through a myriad of entertainment choices that occasionally uplift our souls.

The fact is that critics are ubiquitous, often useful, and sometimes quite influential. Their informed opinions can make or break a show, a career, or even a genre. But they can only do these things by writing and speaking to their respective publics. That’s what makes them relevant to this class, *Writing for Public Forums*.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Since the sub-title of our course is “The Role of the Critic,” we’ll have several learning outcomes related to this theme. Specifically,

1. To appreciate, and articulate, the value and impact critics have in contemporary society;
2. To recognize how critics cultivate long-term relationships with their respective publics.
3. To become a critic yourself, preparing and performing acts of criticism across various media forums.

In addition, since this is a COM 2 course, students will also meet the COM 2 goals:

Students will develop skills in written, oral, and digital communication as appropriate to specific disciplines and courses at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced level. Through repeated instruction, practice, and feedback, the communication sequence will emphasize and progressively develop transferrable skills for students’ academic work and future professions. Intermediate courses (COM2) will emphasize foundational oral and digital communication skills and continue to build on writing skills. *Written communication* is the set of abilities required to compose, critically analyze, and present information through writing. *Oral communication*is a set of abilities required to compose, critically analyze, present, and deliver information through oral interaction. *Digital communication*is a set of abilities required to compose, critically analyze, and present information through electronic media.

Translated to Learning Outcomes, that means:

**Com 2 Student Learning Outcomes**

* + - Develop and communicate written, oral, and digital messages through a variety of assignments that include discipline-based or interdisciplinary purposes, forms, and audiences.
    - Find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately using a variety of sources.
    - Understand the different purposes of written, oral, and digital messages and employ appropriate organizational strategies, including developing thesis statements and main ideas.
    - Make effective use of multiple drafts, revisions, progressive assignments, computer technology, peer and instructor comments, and collaboration in the achievement of a final work of communication.
    - Observe the accepted conventions including spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery and documentation in oral, written, and digital messages.
    - Deliver prepared presentations in a natural, confident, and conversational manner, and display nonverbal communication that is consistent with and supportive of the oral message.
    - Interact effectively with audience members, engage opposing viewpoints constructively, and demonstrate active listening skills.

**Required Text**

*Arts Reviewing: A Practical Guide*, by Andy Plaice. (2018, Routledge, paperback);

Other readings throughout the semester as assigned.

**Requirements and Assignments**

1. **Participation.** Class participation is a critical key to success in this class! It includes coming to class fully prepared, with the assignment carefully read and/or viewed, and actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully contributing to discussions and group work. Of course, it also includes acting professionally at all times. Our room amplifies side conversations, so avoid those. And for those who are comfortable speaking in class, please keep your comments on point, and allow others to speak who may be less comfortable doing so. **50 points.**
2. **Warm-Up Exercises.** You’ll engage in a series of three short written exercises to help sharpen our critical abilities. Specifics to follow. **50 points.**
3. **Critical Analysis Paper.** 5-7 pages, draft due 2/28, final due 3/13. This assignment asks you to write an original critical review of a particular entertainment experience. **100 points.**
4. **Background Module with Discussion.** Due date varies. This is a group project in which your group will prepare a WyoCourse module introduces an entertainment genre, sets it within a key aspect of its historical and cultural context, and offers a profile of the life and work of a prominent critic within that genre. This will be posted at least 24 hours in advance and read by your classmates BEFORE class. In class, you will pose and lead discussion on two questions that connect your module with the genre. **100 points.**
5. **Multi-Modal Project.** In this assignment, you will choose an entertainment experience that is important to you – in the genre of your choice – and prepare an insightful and well-researched critical review of that experience. You will then present your review to both an academic audience through a traditional critical research paper, and a public-facing audience, through a You Tube video. **Paper, 100 points; Video, 100 points.**

Entertainment choice and annotated bibliography, due 3/27;

Draft of critical research paper (8-10 pages) due 4/10;

Final version of critical research paper, due 4/24;

Video (6-8 minutes) due 5/4, 5/6, 5/8, or 5/15.

**Grading Breakdown Points Your Score**

**Critical Analysis Paper 100**

**Background Module with Discussion 100**

**Multi-Modal Project, Paper 100**

**Multi-Modal Project, Video 100**

**Warm-Up Exercises 50**

**Participation 50**

**Total 500**

**450-500 A; 400-459 B; 350-399 C; 300-349 D; less than 300 F.**

**Course Policies**

**Attendance**: The single most important factor in academic success is going to class.  Since this is a discussion-based class, being here and **participating** is even more important.  After three unexcused absences, your grade will be penalized 20 points for each additional absence.   For the policy on university-excused absences, please consult the Dean of Students' website.

**Late Papers:** Occasionally, late papers are unavoidable. **However, all late papers must be cleared with me at least 24 hrs.** in advance. Non-extended late papers will be penalized at 10 pts. a day.

**Communication:**I will use the class-list email and announcements through WYOCOURSES for class updates, so please make sure your WYOCOURSE email account is the one you actually use (you can also set WYOCOURSES for text notifications if that works better for you). For communicating with me, email is great for quick questions that are not answered on the syllabus; it also works for making an appointment, letting me  know you are ill, and rescheduling a conference.  For anything more substantive, please come see me.

**Academic Dishonesty:**  I have a take-no-prisoners policy on academic dishonesty. According to UW Regulation 2-114. Academic dishonesty means *anything that represents someone else’s ideas as your own without attribution.*It is intellectual theft – stealing - and includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, plagiarism (use of any amount of another person’s writings, blog posts, publications, and other materials without attributing that material to that person with citations), or fabrication of referenced information.*Facilitation of another person’s academic dishonesty is also considered academic dishonesty and will be treated identically.*If you plagiarize (from a printed or internet source, a friend, or in any other way) ANY assignment or draft in this class I WILL FAIL you in this class. I WILL ALSO REPORT THE OFFENSE TO STUDENT LIFE. IT MAY EFFECT YOUR SCHOLARSHIPS AND IT WILL BECOME A PART OF YOUR PERMANENT RECORD. JUST DON’T DO IT. If you find yourself in a bind or panicked over a due date, PLEASE come see me rather than turn to the internet. See the Honors Policy on Academic Dishonesty.

**Classroom Statement on Diversity:** “The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning. “

**Classroom Behavior Policy**

"At all times, treat your presence in the classroom and your enrollment in this course as you would a job.  Act professionally, arrive on time, pay attention, complete your work in a timely and professional manner, and treat all deadlines seriously. You will be respectful towards you classmates and instructor.  Spirited debate and disagreement are to be expected in any classroom and all views will be heard fully, but at all times we will behave civilly and with respect towards one another. Personal attacks, offensive language, name-calling, and dismissive gestures are not warranted in a learning atmosphere.  As the instructor, I have the right to dismiss you from the classroom, study sessions, electronic forums, and other areas where disruptive behavior occurs.

Electronic devices such as mobile phones should be set to silent.  Laptops are allowed for note-taking purposes only.  No video or audio recording during class is allowed to protect the privacy of your fellow students."

**Duty to Report:**

"UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University’s non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member MUST report information you share about the incident to the university’s Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>

You do not have to go through the experience alone. Assistance and resources are available, and you are not required to make a formal complaint or participate in an investigation to access them."

**Course Resources**

Your first resources are me (your instructor) and your fellow students. I encourage you to communicate with me regularly. I am here to help.  If you need to schedule a meeting with me outside of my posted office hours, please just let me know and I am confident we’ll be able to find a mutually agreed upon time.  Also remember that your classmates are your resources, too.  While ultimately you will be held accountable for the quality of your work, conversation, brainstorming, and collaborative work is welcome.

**STEP Tutor Center** is open Sunday-Thursday from 5-9pm and is located in Coe Library.  Sessions are drop in (no appointments) and are 30 minutes in length.  Please visit the STEP Tutor Schedule for days and times: [www.uwyo.edu/step](http://www.uwyo.edu/step).

**eTutoring**  allows you to submit a draft of your paper to a tutor, ask for specific feedback, and receive a tutor's response within 24-48 hours.  More info on eTutoring is available here: bit.ly/UWetutoring.

**UW Writing Center**in Coe 302 is able to help writers at any stage of the writing process.  With a focus on teaching and learning, the Writing Center is not a "fix-it" shop; instead they help writers identify, articulate, and implement possible solutions for struggles they face in their writing.  The Writing Center is generally open M-F, 9am to 4pm, and you can make an appointment by stopping in or calling 307-766-5250.

**Student Educational Opportunity**: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent her/him from fully demonstrating her/his ability should contact the course instructor as soon as possible so that the student and instructor can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation. It is recommended that students with disabilities also contact the University Disability Support Services (UDSS) at <http://www.uwyo.edu/uds>

**Substantive Changes to Syllabus:**

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus as circumstances dictate. I will, however, notify you when I do, accompanied by a rationale.

**Schedule at a Glance**

(Empty spaces will be filled-in as we approach them)

**M 1/27** Introductions, Pt.1

**W 1/29** Introductions, Pt. 2

**F 1/31 Field Trip: Artifacts from the African American Experience**

**M 2/3** Critiquing Super Bowl Ads

**W 2/5** Could You Make a Living as a Critic?

**F 2/ 7** Read *Joker* review; work in pairs to answer discussion questions

**M 2/10** R&D Ch. 1, “The Role of the Critic,” in our text, *Arts Reviewing* (AR)

**DUE: 3-pg. review of the African American Experience or Super Bowl Ads**

**PRESENT: Analysis of *Joker* Review**

**W 2/12**

**F 2/14**

**M 2/17** R&D Ch. 2, “A History of Arts Criticism,” *AR*

**W 2/19 Guest Lecture: Prof. Alan Riach, Univ. of Glasgow**

**F 2/21**

**M 2/24** R&D Ch. 2, “A History of Arts Criticism,” *AR*

**W 2/26** R&D Ch. 3, “Preparation and Research”

**F 2/28**

**M 3/2** R&D Ch. 4, “Writing the Review, Part One,” *AR*

**W 3/4**

**F 3/6 Due: Draft of Critical Analysis Paper**

**M 3/9** R&D Ch. 5, “Writing the Review Part Two,” *AR*

**W 3/11**

**F 3/13 Due: Final Version of Critical Analysis Paper**

**Week of March 16th: Spring Break!**

**M 3/23** R&D Ch. 6, “The Impact of Criticism,” *AR*

**W 3/25**

**F 3/27 Due: Entertainment Choice and Annotated Bibliography**

**M 3/30** R&D Ch. 7, “Legal and Ethical Boundaries,” *AR*

**W 4/1**

**F 4/3**

**M 4/6** R&D Ch. 8, “Everyone’s a Critic,” *AR*

**W 4/8**

**F 4/10 Due: Draft of Critical Research Paper**

**M 4/13** R&D Ch. 9, “Breaking Into the Business,” *AR*

**W 4/15**

**F 4/17**

**M 4/20** R&D Ch. 10, “The New Reviewer: Making it Pay,” *AR*

**W 4/22**

**F 4/24 Due: Final Version of Critical Research Paper**

**M 4/27**

**W 4/29**

**F 5/1**

**M 5/4** Present and Discuss Your You Tube Videos

**W 5/6 “ “ “ “ “ “ “**

**F 5/8 “ “ “ “ “ “ “**

**FINAL: Friday, May 15th, 10:15 AM – 12:15 PM**

**Present and Discuss Remaining Videos, & Wrap-up Class**

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED!**