

## College Writing: Representations of Disaster

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Reforming Arts, Inc.  
Winter Quarter 2017

Fridays 3<sup>rd</sup> Track

### Course Description:

This course is a writing seminar designed to give you many opportunities to practice your critical thinking and writing skills. We will do this by engaging representations of disaster, such as hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Haiti & 9/11. Is there such a thing as “natural disaster”? How does human response (or lack thereof) complicate the notion of “natural” in relation to disaster? What are the ethical implications of representing disaster? What is the difference between violence and destruction when we talk about disaster? To engage these questions, we will look at a variety of genres but will focus on poetry.

### Learning Outcomes:

**Rhetorical Knowledge:** You will learn how audience, purpose, genre, and content shape the meaning and effectiveness of all writing.

**Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing:** You will learn to use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating. You will learn how to integrate your original ideas with the ideas of others.

**Writing Process Strategies:** You will develop strategies for generating ideas, revising, and editing your writing through successive drafts. Those strategies will include collaborating with others, including giving and receiving feedback.

**Knowledge of Conventions:** You will have extensive practice in writing and will develop knowledge of academic writing conventions including organization, development, style, incorporation of materials from sources, grammar, formats, and documentation.

### Required Texts:

Danticat, Edwidge. *Create Dangerously the Immigrant Artist at Work*. New York: Vintage Books, 2011. (0307946436) —**selections will be provided**

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2010. (039393361X)

Smith, Patricia. *Blood Dazzler: Poems*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2008. (156689218X)—**selections will be provided**

Additional readings will be provided.

## **REFORMING ARTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Philosophy on Education and Learning:** Each Facilitator and participant is respected as both teacher and a learner. The women participating in this class are seen as experts of their own lives who will develop their own solutions to problems as they define them, not as passive participants needing to be “saved” by the facilitator.

**Anti-Racism/Sexism/Classism/Ageism/Heteronormism/Ableism:** Reforming Arts does not support oppression. Therefore, this curriculum is infused with ideology that recognizes the inherent dignity and equality of every person. No one is considered superior or inferior to others because of race, sex, economic class, age, religious beliefs, sexuality, physical or mental characteristics, education level, or criminal justice classification. Therefore, participants are encouraged to enter into discussions with an open mind and to listen to each other. An important part of maintaining such an environment is the commitment to protect the health and safety of every member of the class. Belligerent, abusive, profane, threatening and/or inappropriate behavior on the part of students is a violation of this compact. Students who are found guilty of such misconduct may be subject to immediate dismissal from the class.

### **Lock Down**

If a student misses a class because she was in lockdown, she will be required to provide a two-page explanation of how her actions contributed to being locked up before returning to class. A student who receives a DR because of violence will be removed from the roster and required to reapply to the program.

## **CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Class sessions will consist of lectures, class discussions, numerous in-class assignments, and written assignments to be completed outside of class.

### **Attendance**

- You are expected to come to every class. More than two unexcused or three excused absences will result in a participation rather than completion certificate for the class.
- If you miss class, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what you missed. I suggest you trade name and contact information with a class member to provide you with information on what you missed, but it is not their responsibility to get the information to you.
- **Please let me know—as soon as possible—if you will miss class.**

### **Missed Assignments**

- Missed in-class quizzes, insights, in-class assignments and activities **may not** be made up.
- Missed homework\written assignments due to an absence will not be made up without prior arrangements with the instructor or an excused absence (medical condition or court appearance, for example). Homework is due on the assigned date whether or not you are in class.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise.
- The instructor may choose to create new assignments and tests for students eligible for makeup work.
- All assignments must be completed and submitted in order to receive a completion certificate.

## **Disability issues**

If you have any form of disability or impairment and need any special assistance, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. I cannot help you if you do not talk to me. I assure you that anything you tell me in confidence will remain in confidence.

- Arrive **on time** and stay until dismissal.
- Bring your **textbook** and notebook to every class.
- Come to class **prepared** to take notes, participate in the discussion, and complete activities/assignments.
- No **sleeping** or heads on the desk.
- **Engage!** Be an active learner.
- **Be respectful of your instructor and classmates and remain open to diverse perspectives. We are all different and we are all learning!**
- Be a courteous listener and present your ideas in a way that shows respect for your colleagues.
- Read the assigned material and be prepared to participate.
- **Keep copies of all your written work.**

## **COURSE COMPONENTS**

**Weekly reflection:** Each week I would like a written response of 2-3 pages for the assigned readings for that week. The writing can be an informal reaction to the readings.

### **Final Presentations and Papers**

Each student will submit a final paper at the end of the quarter. These papers will analyze a subject presented in the readings and will be 8-10 double spaced pages in length. A rubric will be developed and distributed for this assignment.

#### **A Note About Writing Assignments:**

Writing skills are essential and will be practiced in many of your classes. Writing is a developed skill and each student will be expected to improve their skills in each class.

### **Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated based on the quality and effort demonstrated in the weekly reflections, class discussion, final presentations, and final paper. Each student is encouraged to put serious and consistent effort into the class by reading slowly and often. A certificate of completion will be given to each student at the end of the quarter that has demonstrated an understanding of the materials, has turned in all assignments, and meets the attendance requirement. Certificates of completion count for 2 hours of credit within Reforming Arts' internal tally. A certificate of participation will be given to students who do not meet all requirements but shows effort. Certificates of participation do not carry any credit hours and students will be expected to repeat the course.

### **Course Calendar**

This calendar is tentative and may be amended. You will be notified of any changes.

Date	Main Topic	Readings* Due	Assignments Due
01/06	Introductions Review Syllabus In-class writing: What does writing mean to you? You can answer this question in any way you see fit. There is no right or wrong answer!	<i>They Say / I Say</i> 1-30 ““They Say”: Starting with What Others Are Saying”	
01/13	Starting the writing process	<i>They Say / I Say</i> 30-42 “Shitty First Drafts” & “Perfectionism” <i>Bird By Bird</i> (21-32)	In class assignment from week 1 & response to <i>Bird by Bird</i>
01/20	In class Film Screening	<i>They Say / I Say</i> 42-53	
01/27		Selections from <i>Blood Dazzler</i>	Response Paper
02/03		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 53-68, 68-78	Response Paper
02/10		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 78-92, 92-103 Selections from <i>Create Dangerously</i>	Response Paper
02/17		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 78-92, 92-103 Poetry TBD	Response Paper
02/24		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 103-121 Poetry TBD	Response Paper
03/03		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 121-139 Poetry TBD	Response Paper
03/10		<i>They Say / I Say</i> 139-161 Poetry TBD	Response Paper
03/17	Final Presentations		Final Papers

\*All assigned readings are expected to be completed before class on the day we will be discussing them. Pop quizzes may be given on due dates of assigned readings before the material is covered in class. Be prepared to discuss the readings when you come to class. This schedule is tentative and subject to change.