

COURSE SYLLABUS



Cultural Journalism

Course code: JRN 260

Semester and year: Fall 2021

Day and time: Wednesdays, 14:45 – 17:30

Instructor: Tony Ozuna

Instructor contact: tony.ozuna@aauni.edu

Consultation hours: Fridays 11:00–12:30 MS Teams

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Intermediate
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	Composition 2, Reporting 2
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	Choose an item. Required/Elective

1. Course Description

This course is an introduction to cultural journalism and reporting, by taking advantage of the rich cultural life of Prague. While there will be a focus on the contemporary art and music scenes, students will also be able to explore the literary and theatre scenes, as well as take advantage of the numerous festivals in the city, particularly for feature and documentary films. An understanding and appreciation of the role of cultural organizations and institutions will be emphasized, and so students will also be given the opportunity to meet with representatives of cultural organizations, as well as artists, musicians, directors, writers and publishers. Field trips to galleries, exhibits and other cultural events in Prague will be an integral component of the course. This activity will be combined with discussions of assigned readings from seminal to contemporary cultural critics and journalists.

The primary site for publishing the work in this class will be the Prague community website Prague Morning, and secondly, the AAU student magazine/website *Lennon Wall*; thus, students will have the chance to publish online and possibly in print. This course, however, is also welcome to students who simply want to learn about the world of cultural journalism.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- To provide students with a wide range of opportunities to write on cultural events and cultural issues relevant to contemporary Prague.
- Students will gain the practical and professional skills necessary to not only write but publish short articles, and reviews for cultural sections of actual publications.
- Students will be introduced to the vast areas of culture (historical and contemporary) in the context of contemporary Prague.

3. Reading Material

Required Textbook

- ***Writing to Deadline: the Journalist at Work***, by Donald M. Murray, Heinemann (2000)

Students are expected to read materials assigned or distributed in class or made available in the college library.

Recommended Materials

Selected readings may be recommended from the following publications among others:

- **Writing for Journalists**, by Wynford Hicks with Sally Adams and Harriet Gilbert, Routledge, 2002 (e-version is posted on the NEO for the course).
- **On Writing Well**, by William Zinsser, 7th Edition, Collins (2006)
- **How to Write About Contemporary Art**, by Gilda Williams, Thames & Hudson (2014)
- **How to Write About Music**, edited by Woodworth & Grossan, Bloomsbury Academic (2015)
- **The Decay of Lying & Other Essays**, by Oscar Wilde, Penguin Classics (first published 1889)
- **Prague—A Cultural History**, by Richard Burton, Interlink Books, 2019 (in Library)
- **Views From the Inside: Czech Underground Literature & Culture (1948-1989)**, texts by Ivan M. Jirous, Paul Wilson, Egon Bondy, and Jachym Topol
- **SPIN: 20 Years of Alternative Music: original writing on rock, hip-hop, techno & beyond**, editor Will Hermes, Three Rivers Press, NY, 2005
- **Jazz Writings** by Phillip Larkin
- **Grown Up All Wrong**, Robert Christgau, Harvard University Press, 1998
- **Listen to the Stories**, Nat Hentoff, Harper Perennial, 1995

- **Texts assigned from mainstream and alternative publications include: *The International New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The New Yorker (print version in AAU Library), The Guardian, Rolling Stone, etc.***

- Students should also read Prague’s local English-language publications (now only websites) including *Prague Morning, Prague.TV, Prague Daily Monitor, etc.* to keep up with current events, and for the sake of originality—not to repeat what has already been produced in local media.

▪ **NOTE:** Students can access **The New York Times Digital Edition** through an Academic Site License.

▪ To get started, follow these simple steps:

- **While physically on campus and connected to your network**, go to nytimes.com/grouppass.

Note: You cannot activate your Pass while off campus or via a proxy server.

- **Create a free NYTimes.com account** using your school email address. If you already have an NYTimes.com account using your school email address, you may log in with those credentials.

- **You have successfully claimed a Pass when you see the *Start Your Access* screen.**

Now you can enjoy seamless, full access to NYTimes.com, INYT.com and NYT mobile apps from any location, on or off campus, just by logging into your NYTimes.com account. You may download NYTimes mobile apps at nytimes.com/mobile.

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4. Teaching methodology

Classes will consist of short lectures examining journalistic texts on subjects related to later course site visits. Short introductory lectures on weekly subjects relevant to current cultural exhibitions or events in Prague will be followed by more in-depth discussion of the historical context and/or particular artists, music groups (scenes), festivals, etc. depending on the cultural calendar. The second half of the session will include excursions into the city to visit gallery and museum exhibits, or other relevant cultural events, such as the Febio Fest (film festival) or The Prague Writer's Festival. Guest lecturers will be invited on occasion. Writing and editing skills will be developed best through one-on-one consultations. Students should submit (complete) two articles, and at least one (though ideally both) with an aim toward publication. Articles will require various amounts of research, writing and editing. The final cultural reporting assignment (written as an article) will be counted as the final exam.

Please note: in recent semesters this course has reverted to online with necessary changes.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Week 1 Sept. 1	Topic: What is Cultural Journalism? Description: Who is good at it? Cultural journalists vs. entertainment news Site Visit: "Vladimir 518 – Fall" DSC Gallery (till Sept 2). Reading: handouts/examples will be provided in class and posted on NEO Assignments/deadlines: Cultural CV assignment given
Week 2 Sept. 8	Topic: Crash course in journalistic writing vs. academic essays / Explore the Local Scene Part 1. Description: Review of the inverted pyramid and the 5 W's for journalists Site Visit: "Professor Bene's Cabinet of Mysteries" Museum Montanelli Reading: Power-point handout (by CP Bowen) Assignments/deadlines: Cultural CV is due in class/& on NEO
Week 3 Sept. 15	Topic: Music in Czech Culture Description: Czech composers on Animal Themes Site Visit: "Music Menagerie" at Czech Museum of Music Reading: Handouts will be provided and posted on NEO Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles
Week 4 Sept. 22	Topic: Explore the local scene Part 2 – Contemporary Arts Description: International Festival of Contemporary Art Site visit: "4+4 Days in Motion" at New School in Strasnice Reading: Handouts will provided and/or posted on NEO Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently & individually
Week 5 Sept. 29	Topic: The wide world of film history (as an exhibition) Description: Czech film history/film appreciation Site visit: "NaFilm" exhibition dedicated to Czech & international film history Reading: handouts will be provided in class. Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles
Week 6 Oct. 6	Topic: Art across the Centuries till Contemporary Art Description: Classical themes in the Arts Site Visit: "Vanitas" at Dox Centre for Contemporary Art (till Oct. 10) Reading: Handouts provided. Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles
Week 7 Oct. 13	Topic: Music Journalism pt. 1 & more Contemporary Art— Description: Intro to Music Journalism & Visual Artists in sound & videos Site Visit: "Cache" Czech & German Mixed-Media Project at Galerie Rudolfinum (till Oct. 31)

	<p>Reading: Handouts provided and/or posted on NEO Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct. 20</p>	<p>Topic: TBA Description: TBA Reading: Handouts will be provided in class and/or posted in NEO Assignments/deadlines: Article 1 and 5 reflection papers due on this date</p>
<p>Week 9 Oct. 27</p>	<p>Topic: There is no meeting on this date due to our mid-term break Description: TBA Reading: None Assignments/deadlines: none</p>
<p>Week 10 Nov. 3</p>	<p>Topic: Music Journalism pt. 2—contemporary music scene Description: Czech music from 60s till the Velvet Revolution. A Guest (the writer Mark Baker TBC or a musician) will be invited for this session. Site Visit: TBA Reading: Handouts will be provided. Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles Guidelines for the Cultural Journalist Profile will be given on this date.</p>
<p>Week 11 Nov. 10</p>	<p>Topic: Art & Architecture Description: Special Guest: Curator Helena Capkova to lead this session. Site Visit: "Bedrich Feuerstein" at the Czech National Technical Museum Reading: Handouts will be provided in class and/or posted in NEO Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently for articles</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov. 17</p>	<p>Topic: There is no meeting on this date due to Czech National Holiday Description: TBA Reading: None Assignments/deadlines: none</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov. 24</p>	<p>Topic: Film Reviews Description: We will discuss two films and how they have been reviewed: these should be viewed in advance (during week 12). The films are <u>Leto (2018)</u> by director Kirill Serebrennikov, and <u>Punch Drunk Love (2002)</u> by Paul Thomas Anderson. One film might be screened during this session. The other should be watched as a make-up session for Week 12 (individually). Site Visit: N/A Reading: Handouts in class and posted on NEO. Assignments/deadlines: <i>The cultural journalist profile is due on this date. Guidelines given Nov. 3</i></p>
<p>Week 14 Dec. 1</p>	<p>Topic: Summarizing Prague's Cultural Scene Description: Final excursion, visiting sites for the final article/assignment Reading: handouts will be provided in class Assignments/deadlines: students set these independently & individually. Unless already done, the 2nd article is due</p>
<p>Week 15 Dec. 8</p>	<p>Topic: Wrap-up. Description: Last group meeting, and time for last minute consultations. Reading: none Assignments/deadlines: final assignment (as an article) is due by class-time, and the last five reflection papers are also due on this date.</p>
<p>Week 16 Dec. 15</p>	<p>Topic: This date is set aside at the end for last-minute consultations Description: end of semester time for last minute consultations only. Reading: none Assignments/deadlines: none</p>

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6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	15%	Weekly preparedness for class, reading texts, willingness to contribute to class discussion, and reflect on topics thru semester	1, 2
Cultural CV	3h	5%	Shares cultural background with intent to find interests for later writing assignments	2, 3
Reaction papers	40h	20%	Develop deeper, critical-thinking skills on topics related to the weekly site visits in the class	1, 2
Two cultural news articles / reviews	40h Includes meeting & revisions	20%	Compose short texts for potential publication on cultural exhibits/events in the city	1, 2, 3
Cultural Journalist profile	10-15 hr	10%	Show knowledge of one specific cultural journalist	1, 2
Final (3 rd) article / last assignment	10-15h	30%	Exhibit the development of writing and critical thinking skills on cultural topics in general, as well as in the Prague context	1, 2, 3
Students who post 3 articles can waive final assignment		Extra-Credit		1, 2, 3
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Assignment 1: 2 Short articles. 600-800 words

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Accuracy	20
Form	20
Clarity	20
Revision	20
Timeliness/Meets Deadline	20

Assignment 2: 10 Reaction Papers (5 at mid-term, another 5 at the end of the semester)

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Critical and observation skills	50
Ability to formulate opinions thru description and analysis of site visits	50

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Assignment 3: Cultural Journalist Profile

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Reading comprehension of two major cultural journalists	50
Ability to analyse the writing techniques of top cultural journalists	50

Assignment 4: Final Article

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Accuracy	20
Form	20
Clarity	20
Revision	20
Timeliness/Meets Deadline	20

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8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students’ university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams.

Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, “COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question”.

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is expected and encouraged. However, the requirement that students miss not more than 35% of real-time classes is temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student

should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin's White Paper 'The Plagiarism Spectrum' (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.

3. FIND–REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student’s Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at:
<http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when: Tony Ozuna, June 30, 2020

Approved by and when: School of Journalism, Media & Visual Arts 26/7/21