

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**  
Myra Kraft Transitional Year Program

**TYP 9a: Writing**  
**Fall 2016**  
**EXPRESSING AFFLICTION:**  
**THE STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE OF SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Doug Bafford

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**OFFICE LOCATION:** Brown Social Science Center,  
Room 322a

**OFFICE HOURS:** Mondays 9:00-10:00 AM,  
Tuesdays 10:55-11:55 AM, and by appointment

**MAILBOX:** Academic Services, Usdan Student Center

**CLASS MEETING TIME:** Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:20 PM

**LOCATION:** Olin-Sang American Civilization Center,  
Room 124

**TUTOR:** Shayna Jones

**EMAIL:** [shjones@brandeis.edu](mailto:shjones@brandeis.edu)

**OFFICE HOURS AND LOCATION:** Mondays  
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Academic Services Bridge, Usdan

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course prepares students for the rigors of academic writing by introducing readings and assignments from multiple genres, both scholarly and popular. We will consider the theme of *affliction* in its various manifestations, with special emphasis on how social marginalization influences suffering. Course materials examine the origins and dynamics of racism, class hierarchies, and linguistic power structures. Beyond the emergence of such forms of marginalization, we will investigate and critically examine the means—academic, artistic, and quotidian—with which different communities articulate and, in some cases, thereby cope with suffering. Our inquiry into social inequality will include acknowledgement that formal academic English as practiced at the university carries its own privilege and dominant status. Recognizing the symbolic cachet it carries, we will develop the skills necessary to become more fluent in this variety of American English, including sound organization, insightful theses, extensive editing, and grammatical correctness, while simultaneously allowing space for criticism of its hierarchical position within American society. Throughout the seminar students will utilize primary and secondary accounts of social structural affliction as a medium through which to develop the skills required for two components of the Brandeis writing program: a close reading of a single text and a lens analysis of two texts.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

The following required books are provided by the program. All other required and optional readings will be available online via the course site on LATTE.

Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, Sixth Edition with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates.  
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2010.

Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Scribner. 2000.

William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. 1918. Fourth Edition. London: Longman. 1999.

## **LEARNING GOALS:**

By the end of this semester, you should be able to

- Communicate in a written medium with sound organization
- Produce written essays without substantial grammatical error
- Examine a single cultural text to construct a creative, non-obvious argument
- Integrate information from two sources to better understand the dynamics of human suffering
- Present the sources of social affliction from the perspective of deep-set socio-historical structures
- Think critically about the socially constructed category of race
- Analyze responses to racial and ethnic discrimination through different theoretical lenses
- Explain some of the economic, symbolic, and religious foundations of class hierarchies
- Interpret the power-laden significance given to language differences
- Explore the cultural underpinnings of American academic English
- Engage in productive oral debate drawing on empirical evidence as support
- Consider the social and practical importance of particular modes of writing (i.e., construct well-motivated theses)

## **CLASS POLICIES:**

In order to create the most effective learning environment possible and for the consideration of your fellow students, I ask that we all follow these simple guidelines while in class:

1. Arrive on-time having read the assigned readings and completed any written work due that day. If you come to class after the designated starting time, you will have to produce a convincing excuse, on the spot, related to the day's readings (or the previous day's, if no new readings are due for that class).
2. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic communication devices. This simple step is a common courtesy to fellow classmates and mitigates the temptation to check in with electronics continuously. If you need to have your cell phone on (e.g., you are waiting for an important call or otherwise need use of your device), please let me know at the start of class. This course demands your full presence, undistracted by concerns outside the room.
3. Always have a notebook and writing utensil in front of you. We will be writing in *every class*, and having quick access to something with which to jot down notes will help cultivate a habit of writing, which will serve you well in other coursework. Laptops should not be used except in cases of documented disability (see below in "Students with Disabilities").
4. Allow for an atmosphere of respectful academic discourse. This course covers inherently tumultuous, painful, and potentially controversial themes on which many people (including me) have strong opinions. Try your best to debate respectfully and sympathetically, even when you disagree with your classmates or with me. We want to allow everyone to express his or her

perspective in a safe yet academically critical setting. You may find it helpful to think of it as debating *ideas*, not other people.

5. Ask questions about anything (terms, concepts, history, etc.) you do not know or are unsure of. Even if it seems like a silly question, chances are that other people have the same uncertainty.

### **WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS:**

This course is designed with the expectation that you will spend at least nine hours each week outside of class in preparation for our discussions. The elements of this work may vary at different points in the semester and will include typically combinations of reading assigned texts, drafting or revising written essays, and preparing for other activities. Success in this class is predicated on maintaining this level of effort and engagement throughout the semester. Please let me know if you have any question about this basic requirement or if you are having trouble with time management, as there are resources to help.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Your primary requirements for this class include two major papers: the close reading essay and the lens essay. For the first assignment, you will conduct a close analysis of a cultural “text,” broadly construed. This essay of four-to-five double-spaced pages should engage deeply with a cultural practice, work of literature, essay, or other expression of suffering or hardship that will be selected during class. For the second assignment, you will use one text as a lens through which to view/interpret a second text, called the focus text. Your examination will employ one of the theoretical frameworks introduced in this course to examine critically a group’s response to affliction tied to social marginalization. That is, you will analyze two written works, one of which will tell you something new about the other. This essay will be between six and seven double-spaced pages. More detailed guidelines for both of these assignments are available on LATTE and will be distributed in class.

Since editing is at the heart of good writing, the editorial process for each of these main papers will last longer than the initial writing of it. A first (albeit *complete*) rough draft will be due two-to-three weeks before the final version is to be turned in. After I provide feedback on the **argumentation** of your writing (including the organization of ideas, quality of argument, etc.), you will then produce a second rough draft. I will also be grading this second rough draft and returning it to you to correct **grammatical and mechanical errors**, after which you will submit a polished final version. Since there are only two major essays to write in this class and you will have a significant amount of time to work on each one, my expectations are high. I will provide support at each stage of the process to help you meet these expectations.

In addition to these two primary assignments, you will be asked to write four “mini-essays.” These one-to-two page assignments will be scrutinized less intensively than the close reading and lens essays. They are an opportunity for you to practice your writing skills and to reflect back on course themes. For those who have not written academic essays in a while, they may also serve as a way to get used to writing again. Another requirement that fulfills this function is the set of impromptu written assignments and/or quizzes related to the day’s topics that will be completed during class. There will also be an in-class midterm exam covering the course material discussed in the first half of the term. You will have the full class period to complete a series of short-response and essay prompts.

Finally, to conclude the course, the class will prepare intensively for and stage an oral debate on a question of language policy in U.S. educational settings. Students will be assigned to one of two groups with contrasting positions on the issue. Collaboratively with the other members of your group, you will craft arguments in support for your position and plan counterarguments in response to those of the opposing team. After several weeks of preparation, the debate will be held on our last meeting day of the semester. Before the debate itself, each group will present a written brief of four double-spaced pages that summarizes its most important arguments and sources of evidence. More details about the specific question to be debated and how each student should prepare for this assignment are posted to LATTE and will be discussed in class.

### **PAPER FORMAT AND SUBMISSION:**

The presentation of your written work is an important component of college writing that we will develop in this course. *All* written assignments (with the exception of in-class exercises and exams), even rough drafts, will be expected to conform to the following guidelines. These rules may seem arbitrary or complicated, but they will enhance the professionalism of your work. (We will discuss how to format each one in class.)

Papers must be typed and checked for spelling and grammatical mistakes to the best of your ability. Printed copies should be on white 8 ½-by-11-inch paper with **1-inch margins**, stapled in the upper left-hand corner, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Electronic copies should be in Microsoft Word format (.docx or .doc). Even though Word automatically adds extra space after each paragraph, kindly remove these before submitting. Please also include your last name and the page number in the header of each page. All references to material not your own **MUST** be cited according to MLA format both in the text and at the end (i.e., a “Works Cited” list). Every submitted document should list in order at the top of the first page your name, your instructor’s name, the course number, the date you *finished* the draft, and a unique title. A sample of this format is available on LATTE.

The notation found in the class schedule tells how each draft ought to be submitted. The letter “P” indicates a hard, printed copy is required at the *beginning* of class. The letter “E” means that an electronic copy is **due to LATTE by 12:00 PM noon** that day. Note that this is two hours before class meets; it is helpful for me to be able to glance over these essays prior to our discussion, so please make sure you allow enough time to get your work in punctually. If for some reason you have difficulty submitting through LATTE, send it to me by email. (Assume I did *not* receive it if you do not get a simple email confirmation back from me.)

For each day (or portion thereof) that your paper is late, your grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter (e.g., from B+ to a B). This rule applies to both the rough drafts and the final version. *Please* remember to read through your entire draft at least once before printing it. If I do not think you have spent a reasonable amount of time on a draft, your lack of effort will be reflected in your grade. Extensions are granted *automatically* for circumstances outside your control equal to the number of study days lost, provided you let me know ahead of the due date. If the new date falls outside our class meeting days and you need to submit a paper copy, you may (1) place it in my mailbox or (2) email it to me and submit a paper copy the next time we meet.

## **READINGS:**

In this as in other college classes, you are expected to come to class having carefully read *all* the assigned materials. Due to our small class size, I expect everyone to contribute to discussion at each class meeting. If you have not closely read the materials for the day, it will be noticeable, and your participation grade will be affected. Since most of our readings will be available electronically on LATTE, many students find it helpful to print them out to annotate while they read and to refer to during class. While you are not *required* to print out all the readings, if you do not have them in front of you during class, I expect you to have taken notes on some of the important passages, and I may call on you to answer questions about them. Nevertheless, I want you to see the readings for this course not as a burden but as a chance to connect with people's experiences across gulfs of social difference, even if many of them may be difficult to read (in both senses of the phrase).

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

Attendance at all classes is expected as a basic requirement of the course. You cannot learn this material if you are not present in class, since the core of what we will be covering will be brought out through discussion and many important points are not covered in the readings. Each student will begin with an A in attendance. After the first missed class, each subsequent absence will result in lowering your attendance grade by one-third of a letter (e.g., to an A-, then to a B+, etc.). However, I realize that unexpected things may come up during the semester (e.g., illness, family concerns, etc.) that may prevent you from being in class. Therefore, if you come see me during office hours to talk about the course content that you missed, this reduction in your grade will be waived. Habitual absences will be addressed with the MKTYP director.

Furthermore, while attendance will play a crucial part in determining your grade, there is more to being "present" than simply showing up. Your mental presence at and participation in each class period is a crucial component of this course and your participation grade, which will be calculated separately from your attendance grade. You cannot earn an A for this component simply by showing up; you must earn it through consistent, careful, thoughtful, and eager engagement in class discussions. Careful preparation does not necessarily exclude taking risks; feel free to try new ideas without fear of being wrong. Your participation grade is a function not of correctness but of intellectual boldness and effort exerted. Finally, I understand that outgoing conversation or debate is not a style suited to all learners. Therefore, if you feel you are not able to participate rigorously during class, please let me know so that we can figure out an alternative mode of participation, whether through office hour visits or other activities.

## **WRITING TUTORIALS:**

Each student's writing is unique, and to address your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, you will meet with the assigned tutor individually *at least twice* for each major assignment (close reading and lens essays) and *at least once* for each of the mini-essays (except the fourth and final mini-essay, for which a meeting with the tutor is optional). It is your responsibility to make an appointment with the tutor during office hours (or other times by mutual agreement); feel free to make more appointments than the minimum number. These meetings are considered part of the requirements for this course, and your absence at them will be considered as an absence from class. If you must reschedule a planned meeting, you and the tutor can coordinate to reschedule for another time later in the week or the following week.

However, multiple missed, rescheduled, or tardy meetings will result in a reduction of your attendance and participation grade. Please come to each session with a copy of the draft you are currently working on so that you will be ready to work with the tutor to make the most of your shared time.

**GRADING:**

You will be evaluated based on the quality of your assignments, the degree of improvement throughout the semester, and the value of your participation in class. Written assignments, including the written brief component of the final case study, will be graded according to the assignment rubric, a copy of which is posted to LATTE. Each component of the course will be weighted as follows:

Close Reading Essay .....	20%
Lens Essay .....	30%
Midterm Exam.....	10%
Mini-Essays and In-Class Assignments.....	10%
Final Case Study (Oral Debate and Written Brief).....	10%
Attendance and Participation (including class <i>and</i> tutorials) .....	20%

Your final grade will be calculated based on the average score of all these categories and will fall on the following scale, as defined by the university:

A .....	High Distinction (for exceptional work)
A-	
B+	
B.....	Distinction (for good work)
B-	
C+	
C.....	Satisfactory (for acceptable work)
C-	
D+	
D .....	Passing, but Unsatisfactory (for poor work)
D-	
E.....	Failing Grade

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

An opportunity for extra credit is being offered in conjunction with certain on-campus events. In the spirit of engaging in critical analysis of artistic productions, you may select one exhibit or event and write a two-page reflection paper in response. This brief essay should do more than simply describe the art itself; you should offer a *close reading* in the style we have been developing in class. If you have given serious thought to the topic, you will receive either four extra points on the midterm exam OR an increase of one-third of a letter grade on one of your mini-essays. You may also use this paper to excuse an absence in lieu of coming to office hours. You can find a list of most of the arts events held on campus here,

although other exhibitions and presentations may also be eligible, so feel free to see me for further details about possible topics or whether an event is eligible for this extra credit assignment:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/events/arts.html>

Additionally, the anthropology department offers an opportunity to explore some topics relevant to the themes of our course in greater depth. The Brandeis Anthropology Research Seminar (BARS) is a weekly lecture series in which leading anthropologists are invited to campus to present cutting-edge research along with members of our own department. You may attend one of the lectures and write a two-page reflection paper not just summarizing the speakers' points but analyzing and engaging them. You may earn the same increase in grade for this essay as for the extra credit paper described in the previous paragraph. (You can take advantage of each assignment once per semester.) The anthropology seminar meets certain Fridays from 2:30-4:30 in Schwartz Hall, room 103. Here is a link to the complete list of speakers and dates:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/anthro/events.html>

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately at the start of the semester.

### **COUNSELING SUPPORT:**

This course covers material that may be considered traumatic or difficult to read and discuss. We will write about some of the most challenging dimensions of the human experience, and these class exercises will have different effects on each of us. There is no way to guarantee you will not feel uncomfortable with the themes we encounter in and outside the classroom; however, we can provide as much support as possible for everyone who may feel distressed. Please feel free to reach out to the Brandeis Counseling Center, located on the first floor of Mailman House, at <http://www.brandeis.edu/counseling/index.html>. They provide a host of free therapeutic services for all students, and their sessions are strictly confidential. You are also more than welcome to talk with me or the MKTYP director about any issues concerning your participation in this course or any troubling themes that arise over the course of the semester. If you believe there are sections of this course that would be too difficult to speak openly about, please come to see me privately at any time. Remember that your peers also comprise a stalwart pool of support.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the university's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism (see <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai>). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions, including but not limited to failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

**WRITING CENTER:**

One of the best resources at Brandeis to improve your writing is the on-campus Writing Center, located in the Goldfarb Library, room 232 on the upper level. They offer free 45-minute sessions to help improve the organization, conciseness, and impact of your essays. (They will also work, to a lesser extent, on recurring grammatical concerns.) To register for a session, go to

<http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/register.html>

or stop by during their evening drop-in hours starting at 6:00 PM (Monday through Thursday). If you make an appointment, please be sure to keep it, since they have had problems with some students not showing up in the past. Students who attend a full session will receive an automatic 24-hour extension on ONE of their drafts (either rough draft or final). (Remember to ask for a sheet of paper confirming you were there!)

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

<i>Class Unit</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Writing Due</i>
<b>Week 1: Prologue – Suffering, Catharsis, and Writing as a Process</b>	August 25	None	
<b><u>PART I: Approaching Affliction</u></b>			
<b>Week 2: Introduction – What Is Affliction and Why Is It Important to Study?</b>	August 30	Syllabus  Matthew Desmond, “How Should We Study Social Suffering?”  Renato Rosaldo, “Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage”	
	September 1	Theodor Adorno, “Is Art Lighthearted?”  Gordon Harvey, “A Brief Guide to the Elements of the Academic Essay”  Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , Forewords 1-3, “What Writing Is”  William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Principles 14-19	

<b>Week 3: First Mini Case Study: <i>Guernica</i></b>	September 6	Werner Hofmann, “Picasso’s ‘Guernica’ in Its Historical Context”  W. J. H. B. Sandberg, “Picasso’s ‘Guernica’”  Gilles Peress and John Berger, “How Silent Images Can Break the Silence”	Mini-Essay – An Ideal Writing Course (E)
<b>Week 4: Structural Violence</b>	September 13	Paul Farmer, “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below”	
	September 15	Moises Lino e Silva, “The Violence of Structural Violence: Ethical Commitments and an Exceptional Day in a Brazilian <i>Favela</i> ”  Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , A2 and MLA-1	
<b><u>PART II: Race</u></b>			
<b>Week 5: Race as Biological Fiction</b>	September 20	Jared Diamond, “Race without Color”  American Anthropological Association, “Statement on Race”	Mini-Essay – Analyzing an Artifact (E)
	September 22	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , B1, B2, P1, and P2  Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , “Toolbox”  William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Rules 1-11	
<b>Week 6: Race as Lived Realities</b>	September 27	Michael Baran, “‘Girl, You Are Not <i>Morena</i> . We Are <i>Negras!</i> ’: Questioning the Concept of ‘Race’ in Southern Bahia, Brazil”  <i>(cont’d)</i>	Close Reading Outline (E)

		Karen Brodtkin Sacks, “How Jews Became White”	
	September 29	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i>  Patricia Hill Collins, <i>Black Feminist Thought</i> , Chapter 4  Rhaisa Kameela Williams, “Toward a Theorization of Black Maternal Grief as Analytic”  Dána-Ain Davis, “‘The Bone Collectors’: Comments for Sorrow as Artifact: Black Radical Mothering in Times of Terror” ( <i>optional</i> )	
<b>Week 7: “Structural Oblivion”</b>	October 6	Janet McIntosh, <i>Unsettled: Denial and Belonging among White Kenyans</i>  Victor M. Rios, “Stealing a Bag of Potato Chips and Other Crimes of Resistance”  Philippe Bourgois, “If You’re Not Black You’re White: A History of Ethnic Relations in St. Louis” ( <i>skim</i> )  Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , “On Writing” Sections 1-3	Mini-Essay – Race and Biology (E)
<b>Week 8: Second Mini Case Study: <i>The Jazz Singer</i></b>	October 11	Michael Rogin, “Blackface, White Noise: The Jewish Jazz Singer Finds His Voice”	Close Reading Draft #1 (E)
	October 13	Charles Musser, “Why Did Negroes Love Al Jolson and <i>The Jazz Singer</i> ?: Melodrama, Blackface, and Cosmopolitan Theatrical Culture”	

<b>Week 9: Reconsidering Race</b>	October 18	Geoffrey Pullum, "People of Color"	
	October 20	MIDTERM EXAMINATION	
<b><u>PART III: Class</u></b>			
<b>Week 10: Ideology, Class Consciousness, and the Towering Shadow of Karl Marx</b>	October 27	Karl Marx, <i>Capital</i>  Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>  William Roseberry, "Marx and Anthropology" ( <i>optional</i> )	
	November 1	Paul Willis, <i>Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs</i>	Close Reading Draft #2 (P)
<b>Week 11: The "Working Class" in the Modern World</b>	November 3	Claude Lévi-Strauss, "A Writing Lesson"  Mirco Göpfert, "Bureaucratic Aesthetics: Report Writing in the Nigérien Gendarmerie"  Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , S6 and S7	Lens Essay Outline (E)
	November 8	Michael Taussig, <i>The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America</i>  OR  Max Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>  OR  Patricia Hill Collins, <i>Black Feminist Thought</i> , Chapters 1 and 3	Close Reading Final Draft (E, P)
<b>Week 12: The Historical and Contemporary Complexities of Social Class</b>			

	November 10	Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , “On Writing” Sections 4, 5, and 10  Sample Lens Essay (final draft and original prompt)  Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , MLA-4	
<b>Week 13: Third Mini Case Study: White Trash</b>	November 15	Susan Falls, “‘Redneck Customs’: Race and Class at the Demolition Derby”	Lens Essay Draft #1 (E)
	November 17	Jeff Guo, “Stop. Using. Periods. Period.”  Theodor Adorno, “Punctuation Marks”	
<b><u>PART IV: Final Case Study: Language Policy in Education</u></b>			
<b>Week 14: Background – Sociolinguistics</b>	November 22	Franz Boas, “On Alternating Sounds”  <i>New York Times</i> , Dialect Map Activity  Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , S1, S3, and W5	
	November 29	H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman, “A.W.B. (Articulate While Black): Language and Racial Politics in the United States”	
<b>Week 15: Language, Race, and the Politics of Style</b>	December 1	H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman, “Change the Game: Language, Education, and the Cruel Fallout of Racism”  Stephen King, <i>On Writing</i> , “On Writing,” Section 11  <i>(cont’d)</i>	Lens Essay Draft #2 (P)

		William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , “An Approach to Style,” Sections 5-21  Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , G1 and G3	
<b>Week 16: Language and Education</b>	December 6	Jodi Lundgren, “Interrogating the Popularity of Strunk and White”  Geoffrey Pullum, “50 Years of Stupid Grammar Advice”  Franz Boas, “Race and Progress” (highly recommended)	Lens Essay Final Draft (E, P) – <i>Due Date Extended to December 9</i>
<b>Final Exam Week: Debate</b>	December 12, 6:00 PM	None	Final Case Study Written Brief (E, P)  Mini-Essay – Reflections on Writing Mid-Year (P)

**\*\*\*NB: This schedule and syllabus are subject to change as we move through the semester.\*\*\***

Source for Image on First Page: Pablo Picasso, “Guernica,” 1937