**Cultural Journalism**

**Course code:** JRN 260

**Semester and year:** FALL 2024

**Day and time:** Wednesdays, 15:30 – 18:15

**Instructor:** Tony Ozuna

**Instructor contact:** tony.ozuna@aauni.edu

**Consultation hours:** Mondays-Tuesdays 16:00—17:00 or by appointment - Room 4.02

**Art fee:** 1000 CZK  
**Art fees for this course will be used to cover:** admission fees forsite visits and payments for invited guests

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 |

# 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.

# Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

* Compile a list of cultural interests for use for further writing assignments,
* Demonstrate the ability to critically engage topics related to various cultural exhibits and events (specific to Prague),
* Demonstrate growth in practical and professional journalistic skills on how to write an article or review for the culture section of a publication
* Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge regarding Prague’s historical and contemporary cultural landscape

# 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*,** byWynford 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
* ***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, 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:

1. **While physically on campus and connected to your network,**go to [nytimes.com/grouppass](https://myaccount.nytimes.com/grouppass/access).

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

1. **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.
2. **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](http://www.nytimes.com/services/mobile/index.html).

# 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 One World (documentary film festival) or 4 + 4 Days in Motion (art and theatre). 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.

# Course Schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Class Agenda** |
| **Week 1**  **Sept. 4** | **Topic:** What is Cultural Journalism?  **Description:** Who is good at it? Cultural journalists vs. entertainment news  Site Visit: “The Goose in Kampa” Kampa Museum (closes 8.9) or Leica Gallery  **Reading:** handouts/examples will be provided in class and posted on NEO. And students should watch a BBC documentary film about Prague’s cultural history and its uniqueness (in NEO).  **Assignments/deadlines:** Cultural CV assignment given |
| **Week 2**  **Sept. 11** | **Topic:** Mysterious Prague  Crash course in journalistic writing vs. academic essays  **Description:** Review of the inverted pyramid and the 5 W’s for journalists  Site Visit: Leica Gallery (Dana Kyndrova-Nineties) closes 15.9 or TBA  **Reading:** Power-point handout (by CP Bowen)  **Assignments/deadlines:** Cultural CV is due in class/& on NEO |
| **Week 3**  **Sept. 18** | **Topic:** Explore the International Scene-Contemporary Art  **Description:** International contemporary art, pt. 1.  Visit: DOX Centre for Contemporary Art (exhibit “Kafkaesque”) closes 22.9  **Reading:** Handouts will be provided and posted on NEO  **Assignments/deadlines:** students set these independently for articles |
| **Week 4**  **Sept. 25** | **Topic:** Special topics in Visual Arts - Photography  **Description:** Bruce Weber – My Education  Site visit: “Bruce Weber – My Education” at House of the Stone Bell (till 19.1)  **Reading:** Handouts provided and posted on NEO.  **Assignments/deadlines:** students set these independently for articles |
| **Week 5**  **Oct. 2** | **Topic:** Explore the local cultural scene (journalism & film festival) or TBA  **Description:** Press Play Prague  Site visit: TBA  **Reading:** handouts in class and posted in NEO.  **Assignments/deadlines:** test draft of article 1 (optional) |
| **Week 6**  **Oct. 9** | **Topic:** Music Journalism pt. 1 &/or more Contemporary Art  **Description:** Intro to Music Journalism.  Site Visit: The Czech Museum of Music (or we’ll meet a local musician).  **Reading:** Handouts will be provided in class and/or posted in NEO  **Assignments/deadlines:** students set these independently & individually |
| **Week 7**  **Oct. 16** | **Topic:** Music Journalism pt. 2—contemporary music scene / or back to Art  **Description:** Photographic history exhibition.  Site Visit: Lucia Moholy, “Exposures” at Kunsthalle Prague – closes 28.10  **Reading:** Handouts will be provided.  **Assignments/deadlines:** students can do this anytime during this week |
| **Week 8**  **Oct. 23** | **Topic:** Explore the local cultural scene—Naprstkovo Museum  **Description:** Vietnam – Familiar & Unfamiliar  Site visit: Naprstkovo Museum  **Reading:** handouts in class (film reviews and previews).  **Assignments/deadlines:**  Article 1 and 5 reflection papers due on this date |
| **Week 9**  **Oct. 29** | **Topic:** There is no meeting on this date due to a Midterm Break  **Description:** TBA  **Reading:** None  **Assignments/deadlines:** NONE |
| **Week 10**  **Nov. 6** | **Topic:** Literature – contemporary authors on the local scene or back to Czech Documentary Photography  **Description:** Libuse Jarcovjakova or guest author discusses her/his new book  Site Visit: Veletrzni Palace  **Reading:** Handouts will be provided in class and/or posted in NEO  **Assignments/deadlines:** students set these independently for articles  Guidelines for the Cultural Journalist Profile will be given on this date. |
| **Week 11**  **Nov. 13** | **Topic:** Understanding Film in historical contexts  **Description:** Czech film history/appreciation  Site visit: NaFilm, exhibition dedicated to Czech & international film history  **Reading:** Handouts in class.  **Assignments/deadlines:** students can do this anytime during this week |
| **Week 12**  **Nov. 20** | **Topic:** Film Reviews  **Description:** We will visit a local cinema or watch a film and discuss how it can be reviewed: The film in class option is Punch Drunk Love (2002) by Paul Thomas Anderson, or Site Visit: depending on cinema schedule on this date  **Reading:** Handouts in class and posted on NEO.  **Assignments/deadlines:**  **Assignments/deadlines:** students set these independently for articles |
| **Week 13**  **Nov. 27** | **Topic:** Course Review & Summarizing Prague’s Cultural Scene  **Description:** Final excursion, visiting sites for the final article/assignment  **Reading:** handouts will be provided in class  **Assignments/deadlines:** *The cultural journalist profile is due on this date. Guidelines given Nov. 6th* |
| **Week 14**  **Dec. 4** | **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 |
| **Week 15**  **Dec. 11** | **Assignments/deadlines:** Unless already done, the 2nd article is due and the last five reflection papers are due on this date. **NO CLASS MEETING!** |
|  |  |

# Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Workload (average)** | **Weight in Final Grade** | **Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes** | **Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes\*** |
| Attendance and Class Participation | 42 | 15% | Build on knowledge regarding Prague’s historical and cultural landscape on a weekly basis. | 1, 2 |
| Cultural CV | 3h | 5% | Compile cultural interests for further writing assignments | 2, 3 |
| Reaction papers | 40h | 20% | Demonstrate the ability to critically engage topics related to weekly cultural exhibits/activities | 1, 2 |
| Two cultural news articles / reviews | 40h Includes meeting & revisions | 20% | Demonstrate growth in practical and professional journalistic skills specific for culture sections | 1, 2, 3 |
| Cultural Journalist profile | 10-15 hr | 10% | Demonstrate ability to critically analyze writing techniques of professional cultural journalists | 1, 2 |
| Final (3rd) article / last assignment i.e. the Final Exam | 10-15h | 30% | Demonstrate ability to write a listing for the cultural section in a publication | 1, 2, 3 |
| Students who post 3 articles can waive final assignment |  | Final Exam Waiver -option |  | 1, 2, 3 |
| **TOTAL** | **150** | **100%** |  |  |

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

# 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 |

## Assignment 3: Cultural Journalist Profile

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Reading comprehension of two major cultural journalists | 50 |
| Ability to analyze 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 |

# 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, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of “FW” (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

## 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. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. 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

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc. Examples are:

* **Verbatim plagiarism**: verbatim use of another’s work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
* **Paraphrasing plagiarism**: paraphrasing someone else’s work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
* **Data plagiarism**: use of other people’s data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
* **False quotation**: publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
* **Fictious citation**: quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
* **Inaccurate citation**: citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
* **Ghostwriting**: commissioning work from others and passing it off as one’s own,
* **Patchwriting**: using someone else’s work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
* **Self-plagiarism**: unacknowledged reuse of one’s own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
* **Collaborative plagiarism**: delivering the result of collective collaboration as one’s own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student’s Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make the plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback in order to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above). AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance. A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author’s work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality, and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited. 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.

# 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: Tony Ozuna

Date: 30/4/2024

Approved by: Seth Rogoff

Date: