

The American University of Rome
Department of Communication and English

The learning goals for students pursuing a degree in Communication are meant to develop and enhance their writing skills, whether expository, reflective or analytical; or journalistic; or creative. The program also aims to develop students' conceptual analysis skills and critical thinking; and train them in the use of the appropriate/required tools and technology related to the field of Communication, in selected courses. The Communication degree program also offers students the opportunity to benefit from the Rome location, and prepare them to work and operate successfully in a global environment characterized by diversity and intercultural understanding and respect.

COM/ENG 321 Section B *A Moveable Feast: Writing about Food*

Time: T/TH 10.35 – 12.00
Place: B206
Professor: Dr. Lisa Colletta
Office Hours: W 11.00-1.00 and by appointment
E-Mail: l.colletta@aur.edu
Office: Carini, ground floor
3 Credits. Two one hour and twenty-five minute meetings weekly.

Pre-requisite: Eng 202

Course description:

Food writing is defined in many ways: cookbooks to non-fiction essays, restaurant reviews to travel and personal narratives. This course will examine food writing in its various professional forms and will instruct students in approaches to writing about food for publications. Students will write a restaurant review, a personal essay, and a food analysis and recipe, an analytical/research paper, and short analytical writings that examine the work of professional writers. In part, Rome is our classroom and textbook, so students should be prepared to visit local markets, restaurants, and locales around the city where food plays a role (street vendors, gelaterie, parks, etc).

Course Learning Objectives

1. Course Content:

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

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of the genre of food writing—both as a reader and a writer
- b. Demonstrate the ability to communicate complex ideas effectively in writing
- c. Demonstrate the ability to research and write in the food writing genre
- d. Outline, draft, revise, and polish feature food pieces for newspaper, internet, and editorial queries
- e. To write grammatically correct and stylistically interesting essays and articles

2. Analytical and Intellectual Capacities:

- a. Comfortably and confidently engage in written and oral discussion and debate
- b. Demonstrate the ability to grasp abstract concepts, synthesize them, and apply them to a variety of forms and in a variety of contexts

3. Presentation and Research Skills:

- a. Conduct field and academic research in accordance with requirements of the appropriate style forms (MLA and Chicago)
- b. Present ideas clearly and coherently in presentations and in writing
- c. Participate in collaborative work both inside and outside the classroom

Course Learning Activities

- Weekly readings and lectures: Students will cover the assigned readings and attend class lectures which will provide the specific background knowledge and information in order to contextualize the course's topic and material under study. [1a, 1b, 2b]
- In-class discussions and informal presentations: Students will read critically and become familiar with the various styles and genres of food writing in order to participate in class discussion and effectively express their thoughts and ideas. [2a, 2b, 3b, 3c]
- Frequent in-class writing will require responses to the class readings
- Students will write three professional essays: a personal food memory, a restaurant review, a discussion of an ingredient and a recipe that includes that ingredient.

Assessment tools

1. Three professional essays. Essay #1 will be a personal food memory (1200 words), Essay #2 will be a restaurant review (1000 words). Essay #3 will be a single ingredient history and recipe (1200, two scholarly sources)
2. Presentations: Students will demonstrate the ability to present their ideas to a group and to express his/her own *informed* opinion on a topic. [1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3b, 3c]
3. Pop quizzes/In-class writing: These will be small quizzes that will require students to demonstrate their understanding of the reading and the discussion from the previous day. Students will demonstrate close reading skills (and that they are indeed doing the reading) and an understanding of class lectures and discussions. [1a, 1b, 2a, 2b]
4. One analytical essay: in this essay students will argue a thesis and adequately support the thesis with evidence from four scholarly sources. The topic will be food and film. Students will use skills of close critical reading, analysis, and synthesis to take and stand and argue and claim.

Classroom Policies

Please turn off all mobile phones and arrive ON TIME. **You bring your books to class (and print-outs, if it was an online reading) and have them OPEN on your desk, ready to participate in the classroom conversation.**

AUR grade values

A = 94 to 100 Outstanding Performance	A- = 90 to 93 Superior
B+ = 87 to 89 Excellent	B = 83 to 86 Very Good
B- = 80 to 82 Good	C+ = 75 to 79 Better than Satisfactory
C = 70 to 74 Satisfactory	C- = 70 – 72.99 Less than Satisfactory
D = 60 to 69 Passing	F = 0 to 59 Not Passing

Grade tabulation

Three essays	60% (20% each)
Research Essay	20%
In-class writing/quizzes	10%
Class participation	10%

Course textbooks**Required Texts:**

Diane Jacob, *Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Restaurant Reviews, Articles, Memoir, and More...*

The Best Food Writing 2010. Ed Holly Hughes

David Remnick, ed. *Secret Ingredients: The New Yorker Book of Food and Drink*.

Course Schedule

(NB: This is subject to change)

Course Schedule
WEEK
TOPIC

31 Jan	Introduction to course; what is food writing?
2 Feb	WWFF, Intro and Ch. 1. "What exactly is Food Writing?" Do exercise #1 on p. 19 and bring it to class. "In Defense of Food" (handout)
7 Feb	BFW, Lobrano, "Remembrance of Things Present"; Diane Roberts, "People of the Cake"; SI, Bill Buford, "On the Bay"; Instructions for Personal food Memory
9 Feb	WWFF, Ch. 2 "Characteristics of a Food Writer"; BFW, Novella Carpenter, "Farm City"; Amanda Faison, "Soul Food"; SI, Chang-Rae Lee, "Sea Urchin"
14 Feb	Workshop drafts of Personal food memory
16 Feb	WWFF Ch. 9; "Memoir and Non-Fiction Food Writing"; BFW, Jess Thompson, "A Glutton for Glutton"; Roy Ahn, "My Journey Back to Korean Food"; SI, Trillon, "The Red and the White"
21 Feb	Revision of Food Memory Due ; "Watching Food" (handout); film clip: <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>
23 Feb	WWFF Ch 6, "Secrets of Restaurant Reviewing" SI, Bourdain, "Don't Eat Before Reading This"; BFW, Jonathan Gold, "Fried in East LA"; Adam Sachs, "Kyoto's Tofu Obsession"; Discussion of how to write restaurant review
28 Feb	SI, Gopnick, "Is there a Crisis in French Cooking?"; Michael Steinberger, "Au revoir to All that That"; film clip: <i>Monty Python's Meaning of Life</i> (Mr Creosote) and from <i>The Trip</i>
1 Mar	Restaurant Review Draft due (workshop) ; BFW, Sarah DiGregorio "Gino Cammarata, Gelato King"; Rachel Wharton, "Russ & Daughters"

- 6 Mar** Film clip: *Big Night*; “*Il Timpano*—To Eat Good Food is to be Close to God: Italian American Reconciliation in *Big Night*” (hand out); SI, Hessler, “A Rat in My Soup”; BFW, Jason Sheehan, “Will Work Nights”
- 8 Mar** WWFF, Ch 8; “The Art of Recipe Writing” SI, Kenny, “Your Table is Ready”; Ephron, “A Sandwich”; BFW, Rowan Jacobsen, “Avocado Heaven”
- 13 Mar** **Restaurant Review Due**; film clips: *Babette’s Feast*, *Chocolat*; BFW, Jeff Koehler, “Sardines!”
- 15 Mar** SI, MFK Fisher, “The Trouble with Tripe” and “Nor Censure Nor Disdain”; Discussion Single Ingredient & Recipe essay

20-22 March Spring Break

- 27 Mar** SI, Trillin, “An Attempt to Compile a Short History of the Buffalo Wing” and “The Magic Bagel”; (handout) “One Fish Two Fish”
- 29 Mar** **Single Ingredient History & Recipe Draft due (workshop)**
- 3 Apr** Film clip: *Eat Drink Man Woman*; BFW, Jane Black, “The Kimchi Fix”
- 5 Apr** **Single Ingredient History & Recipe due**; SI, Fisher, “The Secret Ingredient”
- 10 Apr** Film clip, *Ratatouille* and *Julie and Julia*; Handouts from the *New Yorker*
- 12 Apr** Film clip: *My Dinner with Andre*; BFW, SI, McDermott, “Enough”
- 17 Apr** **Food & Film draft due (workshop)**
- 19 Apr** SI, Barnes, “Bark”; V.S. Pritchett, “Two Roast Beefs”
- 24 Apr** SI, Cheever, “The Sorrows of Gin”
- 26 Apr** SI, Delillo, “Sputnik”; Italo Calvino, “The Jaguar Sun”
- 1 May** **Italian Labor Day- no classes**
- 3 May** **Food & Film paper due**; Louis Erdrich, “The Butcher’s Wife”
- 8 May** Recipe testing
- 15 May** **Final Exam**

AUR attendance policy

In keeping with AUR’s mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University’s attendance policy is as follows:

Minimum Attendance Requirements:

Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

Absences

- Students will not be penalized for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
- Students will not be penalized for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
- Students will not be penalized for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus. If the instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement. Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors. *Catalog 2009-2010 p.33*

Class participation makes up a significant portion of your grade; this is born of the philosophy that one learns the most from experience and discussion. Our class discussions will inform your skills, therefore attendance is mandatory. In case of an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. You are expected to be in class **on time** and to turn off mobile phones. My attendance policy allows for **THREE** absences, but after that your grade will suffer. **Every absence after three will lower your grade** by one percentage point each from the final grade. Students more than fifteen minutes late will be marked as absent. Late arrival (less than ten minutes) is marked as such, and three late arrivals are counted as one absence.

AUR Academic Integrity Code & Policy against Plagiarism

"Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the sources from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism." AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

General Guidelines for Workshop:

During the initial discussion of a piece of student writing, the writer will remain quiet and either listen or take notes. Discussion will begin with positive feedback, and then move on to suggestions for improvement. After this, the writer may ask questions of the group and join in the discussion. The spirit of all feedback is to be helpful and encouraging, and to focus on the writing itself, rather than on the writer.