

## First-Year Writing Seminar Coming of Age: Selves, Writers, Societies

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30–1:45 p.m., 7 E. 12th St., Room LL 27

<http://files.nyu.edu/ag174/public/coming-of-age-f11>

Instructor: Andrew Goldstone

### Course Overview

This course explores the inescapably social process of growing up. How can people both become who they want to be and participate fully in society? What do personal development and socio-economic development have to do with one another? How do coming-of-age fictions from Jane Austen to Kazuo Ishiguro reflect on questions of identity, belonging, sexuality, growth, modernization, and citizenship? These questions will be the occasion for intensive work on students' own intellectual development as writers and readers. Three shorter essay assignments—selecting and interpreting textual evidence, responding to a theory, and incorporating a personal motive—build up to the culminating literary-critical paper on the coming-of-age novel. Social-scientific accounts of the development of persons and societies will provide context and counterpoint to the literary works. Readings include works by Jane Austen, James Joyce, and Anne Carson; scholarly essays in sociology, psychology, and literary studies.

This is first and foremost a course in writing the academic essay, which means that we will approach our theme of coming of age as an *occasion for writing*. All First-Year Writing Seminars aim to teach the techniques of thinking, research, analysis, written composition, and revision you will need for your future coursework at Gallatin. Our course materials are, I believe, well worth your sustained attention on their own terms. But our main concern is to develop the craft of the expository essay: how to give the ideas you develop their most persuasive, most complex, most rigorous, most appealing written forms. We pursue this goal in three ways. We will discuss explicitly what good expository writing should be and how to achieve it. We will analyze examples of scholarly prose in several disciplines with an eye to how it works (or doesn't). And—most importantly by far—we will practice, practice, practice, in short exercises as well as the four major papers.

### How to Reach Me

E-mail: [andrew.goldstone@nyu.edu](mailto:andrew.goldstone@nyu.edu)

E-mails received after 7 p.m. will not be read until the next day.

Office hours: Wednesdays 2 p.m.–3 p.m. in 1 Washington Pl., Room 431

No need for appointments during that hour. You can phone 8–7329 to check that I'm free.

### Readings

Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. In *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon*, edited by James Kinsley and John Davie, with an introduction and notes by Claudia L. Johnson. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Carson, Anne. *Autobiography of Red*. New York: Vintage, 1998.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. New York: Knopf, 2005.

Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor, 1999. Also available in an online version at <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/nyulibrary/Doc?id=2002145>; however, if the paperback book is within your budget, that is much preferable.

—. “Autobiography.” [Nobelprize.org](http://nobelprize.org). Distributed as a handout; not in coursepack. Also available online at [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/economics/laureates/1998/sen-autobio.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/1998/sen-autobio.html).

**Included in Coursepack (available from the [course Blackboard site](#))**

Johnson, Claudia L. *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988. Excerpts.

Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. New ed. Translated by Albert Sbragia. London: Verso, 2000. Excerpts.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. Excerpts.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *The Adolescent Idea: Myths of Youth and the Adult Imagination*. New York: Basic Books, 1981. Excerpts.

Turner, Victor. “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*.” Chap. 4 in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967.

### **Optional: Recommended Writing Guides and References**

Williams, Joseph M., and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 10th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2011. Many earlier editions with various publishers.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2009.

*Merriam-Webster's Concise Dictionary of English Usage*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2002. Outstanding guide to usage questions; careful explanations with evidence from good writers, rather than arbitrary prescriptions.

Hacker, Diana, and Barbara Fister. *Research and Documentation Online*. Bedford/St. Martin's. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/>. Summary of source citation and documentation styles, including MLA and Chicago Manual, available through Bobst Library. You may wish to wait for your First-Year Research and Interdisciplinary Seminars to buy a paper research manual, as different instructors have different requirements.

## **Schedule**

Reading assignments are listed underneath the date by which they are to be completed. Some assignments and dates may change as the semester progresses.

Draft workshops: all students will have two opportunities to workshop a full draft of a paper with their peers: once in a whole-class workshop for one of the first three papers, and once in a smaller group for the fourth paper. At the start of term, students will be randomly assigned to a workshop date for paper 1, 2, or 3. Students assigned to a Monday workshop are in an unusual position: their drafts are due a day early, so that there is time to circulate them to the class to read ahead of the workshop. In fairness, such students will be given a one-day extension on any other paper assignment of their choice.

**Week 1: Introduction**

Wednesday, September 7.

Stories of development; what is coming of age?

Course overview: syllabus and policies; survey of assignments and exercises.

**Weeks 2–4: Using textual evidence**

Monday, September 12.

Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, vol. 1 (pp. 3–92).

**Writing goals letter due.**

In-class exercise: One paragraph on one sentence.

Wednesday, September 14.

Austen, vol. 1 and vol. 2 through chap. 8 (pp. 3–139).

**Exercise due: One paragraph on one paragraph.**

Monday, September 19.

Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, complete.

Spacks, *The Adolescent Idea*, 3–18, 158–66.

**Exercise due: Collate two passages, respond in “free” writing for twenty minutes.**

Wednesday, September 21.

Austen, continued; Spacks, continued.

Johnson, *Jane Austen*, chap. 2 (pp. 28–48).

In-class exercise: in-text and block quotation mechanics.

(**Optional** further model of using textual evidence: Christopher R. Miller, “Jane Austen’s Aesthetics and Ethics of Surprise,” *Narrative* 13, no. 3 (October 2005): 236–60, [doi:10.1353/nar.2005.0021](https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2005.0021).)

(Sunday, September 25.)

**Monday workshop drafts must be turned in by 9 a.m.**

Monday, September 26.

**Paper 1: draft due, 3–4 pp.** ([assignment sheet link](#))

Paper 1 workshop: 2 papers. ([workshop preparation guidelines link](#))

Johnson, continued.

Wednesday, September 28.

Paper 1 workshop: 2 papers.

In class: beginnings.

**Weeks 5–8: Responding to a theory**

Monday, October 3.

**Paper 1: final version due, 3–4 pp.**

In class: **Writing reflection on paper 1.**

Wednesday, October 5.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–2.

(Monday, October 10. No class: holiday.)

Wednesday, October 12.

Turner, “Betwixt and Between.”

Moretti, *Way of the World*, introduction (“The *Bildungsroman* as Symbolic Form”) and excerpts from chap. 1: pp. 3–17, 67–73; the preface is **not** assigned for today; pp. 18–28 are **optional**.

*Portrait*, chap. 3.

(Friday, October 14. Midterm grades.)

Monday, October 17.

Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*, chap. 1–2 (pp. 1–45)

*Portrait*, chap. 4.

In-class exercise: précis of a theory.

Wednesday, October 19.

Sen, *Development as Freedom*, introduction, beginning of chap. 1, all of chap. 2 and 12 (pp. 3–14, 35–53, 282–98).

(**Optional**: *Portrait*, chap. 5.)

(Sunday, October 23.)

**Monday workshop drafts must be turned in by 9 a.m.**

Monday, October 24.

**Paper 2: draft due, 3–5 pp.** ([assignment sheet link](#))

Second paper workshop: 2 papers.

In-class style exercise: Information packaging in the sentence.

Wednesday, October 26.

Second paper workshop: 3 papers.

**Weeks 9–11: Incorporating a Personal Motive / Using “I”**

Monday, October 31. (Boo! World population [estimated](#) to reach 7 billion.)

**Paper 2: final version due, 3–5 pp.**

In-class reading and discussion: Sen, “[Autobiography](#).”

**Begin in class: Writing reflection on paper 2.**

Wednesday, November 2.

**Writing reflection on paper 2 due.**

Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, part 1, chap. 1–6 (pp. 3–76).

Monday, November 7.

Moretti, “Preface: Twenty Years Later” in *The Way of the World*.

*Never Let Me Go*, all of part 1 and part 2, chap. 10–15 (pp. 3–183).

Wednesday, November 9.

*Never Let Me Go*, complete.

**Optional, strongly recommended:** Bruce Robbins, “Cruelty Is Bad: Banality and Proximity in *Never Let Me Go*,” *Novel* 40, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 289–302 ([access via Literature Online Database](#)).

In-class exercise: mechanics (requests accepted).

(Sunday, November 13.)

**Monday workshop drafts must be turned in by 9 a.m.**

Monday, November 14.

**Paper 3: draft due, 4–5 pp.** ([assignment sheet link](#))

Third paper workshop: 3 papers.

Wednesday, November 16.

Third paper workshop: 3 papers.

### **Weeks 12–15: The Literary-Critical Paper**

Monday, November 21.

In-class exercises on mechanics: continued.

Wednesday, November 23.

**Paper 3: Extended deadline. Final draft due, 4–5 pp., by 10 a.m.**

Carson, *Autobiography of Red*, prefatory material (pp. 3–20).

**In class: writing reflection on paper 3.**

(Thursday, November 24. Thanksgiving.)

Monday, November 28.

**Class meets in Bobst Library PC2 Classroom (on the first lower level).**

Class on finding and using secondary sources with librarian Laurie Murphy.

Carson, *Autobiography of Red*, pp. 3–75 (through canto XXIV).

Wednesday, November 30.

Carson, *Autobiography of Red*, complete.

(Thursday, December 1.)

**Paper 4 Prospectus due at 12 p.m.**

(Sunday, December 4.)

**Paper 4: draft, 6–8 pp., due at 12 p.m. ([assignment sheet link](#))**

Monday, December 5.

Paper 4 draft workshop in groups.

Wednesday, December 7.

Paper 4 draft workshop in groups, continued.

**Draft-commentary worksheets for each group member's paper due.**

Monday, December 12.

Carson, continued.

In-class work on paper 4: The Argument Clinic.

Wednesday, December 14. (Legislative Day: Monday schedule. This class meets as usual.)

**Final paper due, 6–8 pp.**

In class: end-of-term reflections. Snacks.

(Friday, December 16.) **Final reflection due.**

(Monday, December 19. Exam week begins.)

(Wednesday, December 21. Final grades submitted today.)

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

The instructor and the students have a duty to each other and to our community to abide by norms of academic integrity and responsibility. We are also bound by Gallatin School policy. Violations of the code of academic integrity will have severe consequences in accordance with the Student Discipline Rules. For a full statement of the school's policies and procedures regarding academic integrity, please refer to the Student Handbook or the following webpage:

<http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html>

You are always welcome to ask me questions about this policy.

## Grades

Your course grade will be calculated as a weighted average of letter grades for participation and the four papers as follows:

20% Attendance, participation, ungraded exercises

15% Paper 1

20% Paper 2

20% Paper 3

25% Paper 4

For averaging purposes, the numerical equivalents of the letter grades will be on the four-point scale (A is 4.0, B 3.0, etc.) specified by Gallatin School policy. No matter the numerical average, all assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Grades will not be recalculated to fit a specified distribution (or “curve”).

## What Is Class Participation?

You are expected to attend and participate seriously in every class. Serious participation includes preparing reading and writing assignments carefully, bringing textbooks to class, making appropriate contributions to both whole-class and small-group discussions, and listening attentively to your classmates and your instructor. Work on ungraded writing exercises and preparation for draft workshops will also be factored into the participation grade.

I will take attendance in every class. Habitual lateness will affect your participation grade. You may miss up to two non-workshop classes without penalty, but any further absence except for reasons of documented serious illness, family emergency, or religious holiday will seriously affect your grade. Four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. If you must miss a class, please notify me in advance.

## Grading Standards

Each paper has somewhat different requirements, which will be explained at the time of the individual assignments. In general, my grading standards are as follows:

A range: Insightful, surprising, original argument; systematic, copious, and convincing use of evidence; effective use of sources; clear writing in good style; few typographical errors.

B range: Clear but less interesting argument; substantial evidence, but in need of further analysis; some necessary evidence not considered; some problems at the level of style.

C range: Unfocused or over-general argument; inadequate or incorrect use of evidence; significant problems of writing mechanics or citation.

D range: Work completed but unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F: Unsatisfactory, incomplete, or missing work.

## Incompletes

I cannot grant requests for incompletes in this course. If you believe your circumstances are truly exceptional, please consult with both me and your academic adviser well in advance of the end of term.

**Late Assignments**

As you will be completing frequent writing assignments, and you will often have to share your work in class, late work seriously disrupts both your own learning and your classmates'. Lateness, including late drafts, will normally result in penalties of one step on the grading scale (B to B-minus, etc.) per day. Except for reasons of documented serious illness, family emergency, or religious holiday on the date due, I cannot give extensions.