

JRN343/543: LITERARY JOURNALISM & THE 1960s

Dr. Molly Yanity, but much of this syllabus was gleaned from Dr. Joe Bernt, Ohio, 2010

SYLLABUS/READING LIST

TEXTS (Required Reading of Six Bestsellers)

Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood* (1965)

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963)

Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (1977)

Norman Mailer, *The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, the Novel as History* (1968)

Joan Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968)

Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1969)

Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream* (1971)

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The 1960s stand out as a particularly turbulent era of change in 20th-century America, whether as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, political assassinations, the Vietnam War, expanded access to higher education, the rebellious "counterculture" and the social agenda of President Lyndon Johnson.

It was also an era that changed the character of reporting – especially in magazines – from traditional ideals of writers' objectivity to more subjective and fictionalized forms of journalism. Often overlooked in popular presentations of "The Sixties" are the journalistic writings of a generation of popular non-fiction scribes who came of age in the United States following World War II.

Throughout the 60s and 70s, these writers and journalists wrote in a personal style that quickly became known as "Literary Journalism," or "The New Journalism." Their work and subjective form of writing influenced a new generation of writers who now dominate "long-form journalism" in popular magazines and newspapers.

This directed readings course will offer students for analysis the contemporary views of major Literary Journalists' writing during the 1960s about major issues and movements associated with this "revolutionary" period: mass murder (Truman Capote), racism and the Civil Rights Movement (James Baldwin), drug culture (Hunter Thompson and Tom Wolfe), Vietnam War (Michael Herr), anti-war protests (Norman Mailer) and 60s Counterculture (Joan Didion and Wolfe.)

Essentially, the readings will provide an overview of the evolutionary (and revolutionary!), movements and trends of this transformative era through the eyewitness accounts of writers who invented a new form of non-fictional prose. At the same time, those students interested in writing marketable non-fictional magazine features, or long-form essays and books will be introduced to new narrative devices.

WRITTEN COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There will be no examinations. Students will write seven 750- to 800-word essays in the reaction to the readings in this course. (Graduate students enrolled in JRN543 must write an additional 1,000-word essay that synthesizes – gives some interpretative order to – the seven books they read.)

Each essay should describe what the reader has learned from each book about the events, philosophies, effects of the 60s generation on American culture and viewpoints. Additionally, each essay should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each book from the reader’s perspective, and each essay should address the author’s use of fictionalized and subjective reporting in the book – much of which you will learn from reading the biographical information provided in each module. In other words, you will describe what you learned about the 1960s, the style of Literary Journalism employed in each book and the author. **There are specific prompts on Blackboard for each book.**

NOTE: These papers must *NOT* rehash the book, or simply describe what happens. It’s not a book report – trust me, I’ve read them all.

HOW I GRADE

Each essay will be submitted in its corresponding module via BlackBoard. Readings and essays may be completed before the due date, but any essay arriving after the due date—without prior permission—will drop 10 percent for the first 24 hours and an additional 10 percent over the next 24 hours. Essays submitted more than 48 hours after the due date will receive a zero.

The final grade will be an average grade of all the essays.

Essays should demonstrate how carefully books are read and considered, be thoughtfully written and well edited. A copy of the best essay or essays on each book will be sent to all students each week.

GRADING SCALE

<u>Grade %</u>	<u>Grade</u>		
≥ 93	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	<59	F

Assistance

If you have health or educational needs, please inform me ***within the first week of the semester***. Consistent with its responsibilities, Quinnipiac University also provides [reasonable accommodations to promote equal educational opportunity](#). If you require assistance beyond what I can provide, please contact John Jarvis, Coordinator of Learning Services at 203-582-5390 or John.Jarvis@Quinnipiac.edu.

Supplemental Assistance

Understanding and using the basics of grammar, punctuation and writing structure are expected. If you are having difficulty with this, please seek assistance from the QU Learning Center at TH 119, or call (203) 582-8628.

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with Quinnipiac University's policy on Academic Integrity. ([Available in full here.](#)) *Along with the University's policy, understand that made-up sources, made-up quotations will result in failing and/or lower grades.*

UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Quinnipiac University has established Essential Learning Outcomes and learning paradigms.

They include **Interpersonal Proficiencies:** Written communication, oral communication, responsible citizenship, diversity awareness & sensitivity and social intelligence, as well as **Intellectual Outcomes:** Critical thinking & reasoning, scientific literacy, quantitative reasoning, information fluency, creative thinking and visual literacy.

More on these outcomes is [available here](#).

The Department of Journalism states that its mission is “to prepare journalism professionals who reflect and can effectively report on the diversity of the human experience.”

Students who graduate with a degree in Journalism should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to research, report, write and edit news stories that conform to professional journalism standards, including the ability to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
2. Demonstrate command of the techniques used to produce and present news in print, broadcast and digital environments, and understand the interconnectedness of these systems.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the history of journalism, its social responsibility and the underpinnings of its practice in a culturally and racially diverse society.
4. Understand the implications of the First Amendment and the role journalism plays in democracy.
5. Engage in the ethical practice of journalism.