WRITING FOR ARTISTS

(GRAPHIC DESIGN EMPHASIS)

AVT 395:002

MW 9:00-10:15 a.m., AB 1005

3 credits, Spring 2016

Prerequisite: ENGL 302/ENGH 302 or permission of instructor.

Prerequisite enforced by registration system.

Professor Lynne Scott Constantine

703-993-8898 (SOA office—messages only)

Email: lconstan@gmu.edu

Blackboard: mymasonportal.gmu.edu

2017 Art & Design Building

Office Hours: By appointment

MW noon-1 p.m.

TR 9:30-10:30 a.m.

The need for designers to be able to communicate not only visually, but also verbally, has only grown over the years, to the extent that no professional designer today can afford not to develop the necessary skills.

- Richard Grefé, AIGA executive director

A basic structural design underlies every type of writing.

- Strunk and White, The Elements of Style

Becoming a writer is about becoming conscious.

- Anne Lamott, Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life

Writing can teach us the dignity of speaking the truth, and it spreads out from the page into all of our lives, and it should.

- Natalie Goldberg, Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing for Artists is the required writing-intensive course for students in the School of Art. In Writing for Artists, you learn to apply the lessons learned in ENGH 302 to the specific writing challenges you will face in your professional life. This section was specifically created to tailor the content of the course to the needs of designers.

Designers use writing in multiple ways: as a tool for finding and retaining business, as a key aspect of design work itself, as a tool for communicating with clients, and as a way of letting the public and members of the design profession know about your work, your commitments, and your perspective on design. During your work in this course, you will have the opportunity to explore several modes of writing with helpful feedback from your instructor and your peers. Our time this semester will be spent focused on communicating informally as a designer (blog...
assignments); evaluating design (the design critique); building an identity as a designer (design short bios); asking for work as a designer (design proposal); and reflecting on design as a force in culture (design advocacy).

**WHAT HAPPENS IN A WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE?**

A writing intensive course has four primary characteristics: 1) whatever the specific content of the course, the instructor spends significant class time teaching students about writing and gives feedback on the quality of student writing (not just on the content); 2) course assignments include at least two writing assignments and total at least 3500 words of graded writing; 3) at least one of the writing assignments must require the student to rewrite the paper based on the instructor’s comments; and 4) grades on writing assignments must make up a substantial portion of the student’s grade for the course.

Our course takes writing as its primary subject, and as such it will meet and exceed these requirements. You will write regularly throughout the term, and all assignments of 500 words or more will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. All written work is expected to get substantively and noticeably better with each draft.

**A FEW WORDS ABOUT REVISION AND THE VALUE OF “CRITICAL FRIENDS”**

Revision is the most important part of the writing process. More words are rewritten than are ever written in the first place. Revision not only allows you to hone the communicative point of your writing, but it allows you to get clearer for yourself about what that point is. Writing is a thinking process, not just a mechanical intermediary between brain and paper. As the novelist John Updike once wrote, “Writing and rewriting are a constant search for what one is saying.”

When you receive comments on your drafts, it won’t be enough to “fix” what isn’t working or what is specifically pointed out; you will need to bring thought and attention to each step in the revision process. I recall many times during my professional career as a consultant and writer-for-hire when a client would say something vague, like, “This part just doesn’t flow.” As irritating as I often found such comments, and as uninformative as they were about what I needed to fix, I learned to be grateful. The client was, in fact, always right—if not about the problem’s cause, then at least about its location. Often the lack of “flow” was caused by a different problem entirely than that the words sounded clunky. Perhaps I was trying to slide past an uncomfortable fact or a hole in my research, or perhaps I hadn’t worked through the logic of the paragraph or page.

To help you build a strong revision practice during this course, you will have more than just me to help you. Each student will be assigned one or more “critical friends,” with whom you will be sharing your first draft of each assignment throughout the term. A critical friend is a peer who will offer you two much-needed writing aids: support and feedback. Why support? Because writing is hard. It’s hard for everyone. Writing is hard because thinking is hard, because creativity takes work, and because telling what you know takes grit and persistence. And why feedback? Because you have to get outside your own head, your own perspective, to see whether what you write communicates what you intend. Sometimes your critical friend will have very specific suggestions for you, and that will be nice. (You aren’t required to take them word for
word, but you are required to consider them.) Sometimes your critical friend will be like my client—he or she won’t know what’s wrong, but will know something isn’t quite right, and that will give you an important clue to where you need to work harder. Your critical friend doesn’t have to be a better writer than you are—all she or he needs to do is to give your writing serious attention and take pains to give you useful and helpful feedback. Full instructions for your critical friend work are included on Blackboard.

If you know that you have significant issues with writing, you may need help beyond what your critical friends, your instructor, and your own resources can provide. In such cases, I encourage you to contact the Writing Center early in the semester. The Writing Center can provide you with any help you may need related to the assignments in this course, or with the ongoing challenges of writing in English that some students have when English is not their first language. Contact the Writing Center early in the term, and use them often. Their website explains their services: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
Students who actively participate in this course will:
- Improve written communications skills
- Continue development of critical thinking and design thinking skills
- Strengthen critical reading and editing skills
- Build needed skills for accomplishing day-to-day writing tasks in the business of design, all of which are translatable into skills for other types of jobs
- Explore writing as a vehicle for critical thinking and dialogue about design as a force in culture and about design artifacts, practice and theory.

**COURSE TEXTS**

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
No textbooks are required for this course. I will make all required readings available to you via files or links on our Blackboard site. Any PDF files distributed in this way may be password protected—I will provide you with the password in class, and it is also provided in a PDF file at the top of the Course Content page on our Blackboard site.

From time to time, I may substitute or supplement the assignments on the schedule with other materials (articles, websites, etc.), as the need arises or materials become available. If and when I do so, you will receive instructions for accessing the material by e-mail and on Blackboard.

**RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS**

**A STELLAR RESOURCE**
If you are serious about pursuing graphic design for print publications, or becoming a person to reckon with in the field of design, or perhaps in pursuing an MFA in graphic design to teach, research, or write about the profession, I urge you to purchase and study the following book by one of the true practitioner/scholars of the field, Steven Heller: *Writing and Research for*
**Graphic Designers: A Designer's Manual to Strategic Communication and Presentation** (Rockport Publishers, 2015). I have asked the bookstore to order a small number of copies, but you can also find it online at many booksellers.

**Other Books on Writing**
Books on writing abound. If you have a good book on writing that has helped you, keep it and use it often. If you haven’t found any favorites, I highly recommend these. They are available in the Mason library and from online booksellers. They will help you improve your writing, and (in several cases) make you a better person as well.

Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. Expanded edition, Shambhala, 2005. Goldberg inspires writers to find an authentic voice and to view all writing—even the most mundane business task—as an opportunity for self-transformation.

Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *A Pocket Style Manual*. Seventh Edition. Bedford/St. Martins, 2014. MLA, APA, Chicago, AP—you name it, this little guide can help you with proper citations and the important distinguishing characteristics of these major style guides. Despite its compact size, the book covers most of the situations that the average writer will want help with.

Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor, 1994. Although written for aspiring creative writers, the advice in this guide can help anyone become more confident and resourceful when faced with a writing task.


William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. Illustrated by Maira Kalman. Penguin, 2005. This is an elegant little handbook that has gone through many editions. I recommend this edition in particular because of the delightful, clever and helpful illustrations by the wondrous Maira Kalman.


**Design Writing and Design Theory Resources**
This is an exciting time for design writing. In the last two decades, graphic design has emerged as a field worthy of critical thought and historical exploration, and design criticism has become a staple of the web. While not every design practitioner need be a scholar, a life-long examination of design through reading and writing can enrich a designer’s work. In addition, clear written and spoken communication wins clients, leads to promotions, and enhances a designer’s profile in the broader professional community. Read the following to learn from the best.

*Fresh Dialogs*. Volumes 1–6. AIGA and Princeton Architectural Press.

**Writing-Related Design Business Practices**

Writing is an integral part of a successful design business. Look at the following books for help integrating clear and persuasive writing into common tasks—proposals, bids, job costing, client communication, and many others.


**Important Design Periodicals**

There are many design periodicals, but only a few that make the list of “indispensable.” Find them in the Fenwick Library reading room; they may have websites and digital newsstand versions, but there’s nothing like thumbing their pages (especially if you are a print-oriented designer).

*Print* and *Communication Arts* are U.S.-based publications that provide the latest in design and design writing—*Print* does theory and history a bit better, *CA* is more business- and advertising-oriented.
*Emigré*, 1984–2005, documented the graphic design profession as it was revolutionized (more than once) by technology.
*Eye* and *Baseline* are the best of the British graphic design magazines. Both are available in Mason’s periodical room. *Eye* is similar to *Print* but has a more international outlook, and both UK magazines take more of an interest in vernacular design than their American counterparts. *Baseline’s* focus is typography.
A SELECTION OF EXCELLENT DESIGN WEBSITES AND BLOGS
The web is awash in design blogs. Here are 15 of the best. You may know many of them already. If you don’t, take a look.

- Business Tips for Graphic Designers http://graphicdesignblender.com
- Communication Arts http://www.commarts.com
- Cool Hunting http://coolhunting.com
- Creative Bloq http://www.creativebloq.com
- David Airey, Graphic Designer http://www.davidairey.com
- Designing Magazines http://www.designingmagazines.com
- Designmodo http://designmodo.com
- Design Observer http://www.designobserver.com/
- Eye Magazine http://eyemagazine.com
- FastCompany: Design http://www.fastcodesign.com
- The LogoSmith http://imjustcreative.com/blog
- Paste Magazine: Design http://www.pastemagazine.com/design
- Print Magazine http://www.printmag.com
- Voice: AIGA Journal of Design http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/voice
- You The Designer http://www.youthedesigner.com

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE

DON’T MISS CLASS, DON’T BE LATE, DON’T LEAVE EARLY.

Much of the learning in this course takes place in the classroom and cannot be gleaned merely from reading texts or completing assignments. Therefore, each absence beyond THREE over the course of the term will lower your final grade by 5 points; significantly more than three absences may cause you to fail the course regardless of your grades on particular assignments. Each late arrival or early departure will count as ½ absence. Late arrival means arriving after I have taken the initial roll. Early departure means leaving before the scheduled end time of the class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to sign the “late arrival” sheet that I will set out in the classroom when I have completed the initial taking of the roll.

In case of absence, you are responsible for finding out what happened in class by consulting a classmate. If we have in-class assignments or presentations when you are late or absent, this work cannot be made up.

If you are absent on the day that we do our “critical friend” work in class (i.e., the day on which draft 1 of each assignment is due), your final grade for the project will be reduced by 5 points. The only exception to the critical friend deduction is in the event of illness documented by presentation of a doctor’s note.
Please understand: there are no “excused” absences. I permit three absences that will not count against you, so be sure that you preserve them for use during illness, unavoidable personal issues, or other situations that require you not to be present. If a serious issue arises that may affect your presence or participation for a longer period of time (serious personal illness, family illness, etc.), consult with me immediately and we will determine what you should do.

### Special Note: Mason Closures and Unforeseen Instructor Absences

#### Mason Closures

Please be sure you are signed up for Mason Alerts to receive notification of unanticipated university closures or delays caused by campus emergencies, weather issues or other unforeseeable problems. In the event of such an alert, we will follow the university’s decisions for whether our class will meet. I will also send an announcement as soon as possible via Blackboard to confirm, and will follow that as soon as possible with a second announcement to let you know how we will adjust our schedule and assignments.

I understand that inclement weather may involve special challenges for some students who drive long distances on secondary roads or who have children whose schools may open late when Mason is open. Do not risk your safety or the safety of your children; in these circumstances, keep me informed, and we will discuss what to do.

#### Unforeseen Instructor Absences

If I ever have to cancel class because of illness or a personal emergency, I will send an announcement via Blackboard as soon as I am aware of the issue. If you miss the announcement, you will see a note on the classroom door when you arrive. I will follow my announcement as soon as possible with a second announcement to let you know how we will adjust our schedule and assignments.

### Prepared Participation

Consistent class participation is expected of all students. I expect you to read and/or view carefully all assignments and come to class prepared to discuss the day’s materials. On draft review days I will also expect courteous behavior in discussions; that is, respectful exchanges (even in heated disagreements) and enough self-awareness to keep yourself from monopolizing the discussion.

Your participation will be considered “adequate” (C-level) if you are paying attention, adding a comment now and then, and following my instructions for in-class activities. “Good” (B-level) participation includes all of the C-level expectations plus active interaction with teacher and students on a regular basis about the works we read or the projects we’ve done. “Excellent” (A-level) participation includes all of the B-level expectations plus out-of-class enrichment activities, such as bringing to class the URL for a website that is relevant to the class discussion. D-level participation grades result from disruptive behavior, texting or using social media during class.
discourtesy, inattention or sleeping in class, or lack of involvement in group work. F-level participation grades result from excessive absence and/or egregious D-level behaviors.

REQUIRED COMMUNICATION VIA MASON EMAIL AND BLACKBOARD
Please note that because of university policies, I can only communicate with you via your Mason e-mail address. You will be expected to check your George Mason University e-mail and the Blackboard site for this course frequently during the term. Updates to the syllabus and other vital course information will be sent to you at your George Mason University e-mail address and via the Blackboard site. You will be responsible for having read whatever I send you via these means.

ABSOLUTE BAN ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND NON-CLASS-RELATED COMPUTING DURING CLASS
It is extremely rude to be engaged outside the classroom while class is in session—especially in a small room where we are all packed together and can see each others’ actions. Phones and social media distract other students, and they distract me too. PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY and deactivate social media apps on your tablet or computer during class time.

Computers and tablets may ONLY be used during class time if the work is DIRECTLY related to what we are doing at the moment. NEVER work on assignments for other classes during our class time. One violation will result in a warning; more than one violation will affect your grade, because I will mark you absent for that class.

ASSIGNMENTS
Students will demonstrate their mastery of the course learning objectives by completing the assignments listed below. Detailed instructions for each project, including the multiple due dates associated with the project, will be posted on a project assignment sheet on Blackboard and explained thoroughly in class. Due dates are also incorporated into the schedule in this syllabus.

• Project #1: Communicating Informally as a Designer: Blog post (approx. 250 wds.)
• Project #2: Evaluating Design: The Design Critique (approx. 500 words)
• Project #3: Building an Identity as a Designer: The Design Short Bio (in two versions). (approx. 500 words)
• Project #4 —Design Business Proposal (approx. 1500 words)
• Project #5: Design Advocacy: Design as a Force in the World (approx. 750 words)
• Project #6: The Writingfordesigners.com Blog (weekly activity)

TURNING IN YOUR WORK
All work for my review will be turned in via Blackboard. Due dates for every draft and stage in the process for each project are specified in the individual project’s assignment sheet and in the schedule appended to the end of this syllabus.
• On the due date for the first draft of any project, post the file to the appropriate assignment
drop box on Blackboard and bring TWO printed copies to class.

- On the due date for the second draft of any project, post the file to the appropriate assignment drop box on Blackboard and bring ONE printed copy to class.
- On the due date for the final draft of the assignment, post the file to the appropriate assignment drop box on Blackboard. No printed copy is required.

NOTE: If your deadline is approaching and Blackboard is experiencing problems, send your submission to me via e-mail so that you can meet the deadline, and then post it to Blackboard at your first opportunity.

**ASSIGNMENT LATENESS PENALTIES**

Late final drafts: Any final version of an assignment that is turned in after the announced due date and time will be marked down one letter grade as a lateness penalty, with an additional one letter grade deducted for each subsequent class period until the assignment is turned in. Work that is more than two weeks late will not be graded, but it is to your advantage to turn it in anyway: a paper or project that is accepted but ungraded counts into your term grade as an F, while a paper or project not received at all counts into your term grade as a zero.

Late process drafts: Late submission of your first or second drafts or of any other preliminary assignment will result in a 5-point penalty against your final grade for each instance of lateness.

Please note: no work will be accepted for a grade after 9 p.m. on Wednesday, 5/4. NO EXCEPTIONS.

**WEIGHTING OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Course assignments and requirements will be weighted as follows in determining your final grade:

- Project #1: Blog Post 10%
- Project #2: Design Critique 15%
- Project #3: Designer Short Bios 10%
- Project #4: Design Proposal 20%
- Project #5: Design Advocacy 20%
- Writingfordesigners.com 10%
- Attendance & Participation 15%

Note that excessive absence or failure to turn in any of the major assignments may result in failure of the course regardless of these weightings. For further explanation, please see the sections above on “Attendance” and “Assignment Lateness Penalties.”

**EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS**

Project grades will be determined upon presentation of the final draft, using the following criteria:
• **CONCEPT AND CONTENT:** Evidence of engagement with the topic and an attempt to find personal solutions; clear engagement with ideas about voice, audience, and communicative effectiveness; an effort to carry the assignment as far as possible; evidence of drawing upon the materials studied in class, additional research and other resources to expand understanding and enrich content; overall quality of thinking and writing. (50%)

• **PROCESS:** Evidence of a clear understanding of the assignment; timeliness at each stage of the process; fulfillment of stated requirements; responsiveness to the expectations for each stage of the process; openness in responding to constructive criticism from your instructor and from your fellow class members; evidence of improvement from draft to draft; engagement with critical friend work (35%)

• **TECHNICAL:** A concern for craft and for mastering technical challenges of the assignment; attention to grammar, spelling and mechanics; general care in manuscript preparation; appropriate use of citations. (15%)

For some assignments, I may issue a rubric that further specifies these criteria.

In general, a paper in the A range shows SUPERIOR mastery of these criteria (exploring the possibilities of the assignment well beyond what’s required, with significant success); a paper in the B range is STRONG (showing ambition and effort beyond the bare requirements, with some success); a C or C+ paper is COMPETENT (meets all criteria adequately); a C- or D paper is FLAWED (missing the mark on several important criteria); an F paper is SEVERELY FLAWED, INCOMPLETE, or MORE THAN TWO WEEKS LATE. A paper that is not submitted receives a zero.

**COURSE GRADING CRITERIA**

Final grades reflect how well you accomplish the objectives of the course. Possible grades for this class are A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F.

In calculating your final grade, I will apply the following equivalencies:

- A+: 98 and above
- A: 95-97
- A-: 90-94
- B+: 88-89
- B: 85-87
- B-: 80-84
- C+: 78-79
- C: 75-77
- C-: 70-74
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 and below

Note: Scores are rounded one decimal place to the nearest whole number. Thus 93.5=94; 88.467=88.

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**Academic Policies**

As a courtesy to others in the class, and in accordance with George Mason University policy, please turn off all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion.

**Commitment to Diversity**
This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran’s status, or physical ability.

**Resource for University Policies**
The University Catalog, [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu), is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs. Other policies are available at [http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/). All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

**Important Deadlines**
- Last Day to Add/Last Day to Drop with no tuition penalty: February 1
- Last Day to Drop: February 19
- Selective Withdrawal Period: February 22–March 25
- Incomplete work from Fall 2015 due to instructor: March 25

Once the add-and-drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the School of Art office (or in the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed). Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT/School of Art majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, College Hall C211.

**Official Communications via Mason E-Mail**
To comply with university, Virginia and federal student privacy requirements, I am only permitted to exchange e-mail communications with you via your MasonLive e-mail account. You are responsible for the content of all university communication sent to your MasonLive e-mail account, so be sure to activate and check it regularly.

**Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**
As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Academic Integrity**
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously, and violations are handled as grave matters.

What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), please ask for guidance and clarification.

No grade is important enough to justify Honor Code violations, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the Mason Counseling and Psychological Services staff.

**Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences**
If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through ODS. http://ods.gmu.edu

**The Collaborative Learning Hub (CLUB)**
Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual-monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects. Macs are also available, as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.

**Other Useful Campus Resources**
- *For help with writing:* The Writing Center, A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200 or http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
- *For help with research:* University Libraries “Ask a Librarian” service; send a text message to 703-291-1468 or go to http://library.gmu.edu/ask
- *For help with academic problems or with personal problems affecting academic performance:* Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS); (703) 993-2380 or http://caps.gmu.edu
School of Art Enrichment Opportunities

ArtsBus
The dates for Spring 2016 ArtsBus trips are February 20, March 19, and April 9.

The ArtsBus is an all-day trip to New York City’s art districts via chartered buses. School of Art faculty members accompany the trip and offer 2-hour guided tours of various museums and galleries when you arrive. If you choose to join one of the tours, you will have several hours of free time on your own afterwards (typically starting at about 1 p.m.) to have lunch, to visit additional art venues or to explore the city.

• AVT 300 is a 0-credit course open to students in any major; the course has no tuition charge but does have a course fee. The course fee covers the cost of your seat on the bus, plus the administrative costs of running the ArtsBus program. The fee is less than the cost of a ticket purchased at the general box office rate.
• Each SOA major must have up to five AVT 300/ArtsBus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.
• If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: http://artsbus.gmu.edu "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.
• Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need ArtsBus credit for graduation BUT may need to go on the ArtsBus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center for the Arts.

Please go to the ArtsBus website: http://artsbus.gmu.edu "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

Visual Voices Lecture Series
Visual Voices is a yearlong series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater. The Spring 2016 schedule includes four lectures:

January 28  SoA Graduate Students  “Loading Content”
February 4  Kevin Wylie  “Looking backwards before we design forward. Learning to question fashion before we build.”
February 18  Bibiana Obler  “Jewelry/Art/Performance”
March 3  Sonja Mejcher-Atassi  “The Book as Document in Iraq”
March 17  Carrie Schneider  “Lucida Obscura”
Publishing Work Completed for This Class in *The George Mason Review*

*The George Mason Review*, Mason's journal of undergraduate student scholarship, publishes excellent undergraduate scholarship and creative research from across the disciplines. Every year *The George Mason Review* recognizes outstanding student work with a total of $900 in awards. For more information, talk to me or visit the GMR website at [http://gmreview.gmu.edu/](http://gmreview.gmu.edu/)
AVT 395:002  
Topic and Assignment Schedule  
Spring 2016

This schedule is subject to change. Updates will be announced in class and/or by e-mail and will be made available on Blackboard.

Please note: when the schedule says “review the contents of” a folder on Blackboard, this means “read the included files, follow the included links, think about what you have read and seen, and come to class ready to discuss.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Activity</th>
<th>Readings and assignments due on this date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Introductions, review of syllabus and course learning objectives; photos</td>
<td>1/20: Read the syllabus thoroughly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explain importance of attendance and promptness, and impact on final grade.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Why work on improving your writing? (Writing as a thinking tool, writing as a work requirement, writing as expression.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss correctness vs. competence; explain function of the Writing Center</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explain critical friend work</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/25-1/27</td>
<td>NO CLASSES—SNOW CANCELLATION</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/1-2/3</td>
<td>Introduce the Writingfordesigner.com blog and the semester-long Project 6</td>
<td>2/1: review assignment sheet for project 6 and find a blog post you like from the lists of excellent posts in the Project 6 folder; post your selection to Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce project 1, Blog Post</td>
<td>Read the critical friend peer review instruction sheet, posted on Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What makes for a strong blog post?</td>
<td>Read the selection from Anne Lamott’s <em>Bird by Bird</em> and the selection on “Mindmapping” in the 1/27 folder on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical friend suggestions taken in class</td>
<td>Read the assignment sheet for Project #1, Blog Post, and review the contents of the Project 1 folder on Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to improve your writing (part 1—Ideation):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognize the three stages of writing (Ideation, Reconstruction, Refinedement)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand focused attention vs. diffuse attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- For ideation: diffuse focus thinking, free writing, mindmapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project 1, Blog Post, draft 1 workshop: Critical friends work together on draft 1; general remarks</td>
<td>2/3: <em>Draft 1 of Project 1, Blog Post, due by 7 a.m. today</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to improve your writing, part 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Harness the power of focused attention (the Pomodoro technique)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reverse-engineer your structure</td>
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### AVT 395:002
#### Topic and Assignment Schedule
#### Spring 2016

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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8-2/10</td>
<td>Project 1, Blog Post, draft 2 workshop— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time</td>
<td>2/8: <em>Draft 2 of Project 1, Blog Post, due by 7 a.m. today</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to improve your writing, part 3: -Edit away the most common issues -Read it aloud</td>
<td>Review the contents of the “Improving your Writing” folder on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce Project 2, Design Critique</td>
<td>2/10: <em>Post final draft of Project 1, Blog Post, to Blackboard by 7 a.m. today</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review information on writing the Design Critique</td>
<td>Read the assignment sheet for Project 2, Design Critique, and review the contents of the Project 2 folder on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss design writing</td>
<td>Review the contents of the 2/10 folder, “Design Writing,” on Blackboard</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>By Thursday 5 p.m., post your finalized Blog Post to the writingfordesigners.com blog (counts as post #1).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2/15-2/17</td>
<td>Presentation of Project 2, Design Critique ideas</td>
<td>2/15: <em>Post a paragraph describing the topic of your Project 2, Design Critique essay to Blackboard by 7 a.m. today.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More on design writing</td>
<td>Proposed idea will be presented in class today (required).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review contents of the 2/15 folder, “More Design Writing,” on Blackboard</td>
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|            | **Project 2, Design Critique, draft 1** workshop: Critical friends work together on draft 1; general remarks | **2/17:** *First draft of Project 2, Design Critique, due by 7 a.m. today*  
*By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #2 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on four posts by others.* |
| **Week 6** | **Project 2, Design Critique, draft 2 workshop**— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time | **2/22:** *Second draft of Project 2, Design Critique, due by 7 a.m. today*  
*By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #3 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.* |
| 2/22-2/24  | **Introduce Project 3, Designer Short Bio**  
*Review information on writing the design short bio and the sample designer bios* | **2/24:** Read the assignment sheet for Project 3, Designer Short Bios, and review the contents of the Project 3 folder on Blackboard  
*By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #3 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.* |
| **Week 7** | **Discuss Design Thinking**                                                                 | **2/29:** *Final draft of Project 2, Design Critique, due by 7 a.m. today*  
*Review the contents of the 2/29 folder, “Design Thinking,” on Blackboard* |
| 2/29-3/2   | **Project 3, Designer Short Bios, draft 1 workshop** Critical friends work together on draft 1; general remarks | **3/2:** *First draft of Project 3, Designer Short Bios, due by 7 a.m. today*  
*By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #4 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.* |
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/7-3/9</td>
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<td>NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Explore more on Design Thinking</td>
<td>3/14: Review the contents of the 3/14 folder, “More on Design Thinking,” on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14-3/16</td>
<td>Project 3, Designer Short Bios, draft 3 workshop— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time</td>
<td>3/16: Second draft of Project 3, Designer Short Bios, due by 7 a.m. today</td>
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<td>By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #5 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.</td>
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<td>3/21-3/23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduce Project 4, Design Proposal. Review examples and Issues.</td>
<td>3/23: Final draft of Project 3, Designer Short Bios, due by 7 a.m. today</td>
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<td>Read assignment sheet for Project 4, Design Proposal, on Blackboard and review the contents of the Project 4 folder on Blackboard.</td>
<td>By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #6 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.</td>
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<td>Grade posted for Part 1 of Project 6, writingfordesigner.com blog project.</td>
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| Week 11    | **Presentation of Design Proposal ideas; further discussion of how to create a successful proposal** | 3/28: **Post a paragraph describing the topic of your Design Proposal to Blackboard by 7 a.m. today.**  
Proposal idea will be presented in class today (required). |
| 3/28-3/30  | **Project 4, Design Proposal, draft 1 workshop: Critical friends work together on draft 1; general remarks** | 3/30: **First draft of Project 4, Design Proposal, due by 7 a.m. today.**  
**By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #7 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.** |
| Week 12    | **Project 4, Design Proposal, draft 2 workshop— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time** | 4/4: **Second draft of Project 4, Design Proposal, due by 7 a.m. today** |
| 4/4-4/6    | **Additional workshop for draft 2 of Project 4, Design Proposal— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time** | 4/6: Review the contents of the “Examples of Design Advocacy” folder on Blackboard.  
**By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #8 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.** |
|            | **Introduce Design Advocacy**                                                  |                                                                                                             |
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| **Week 13**| **4/11-4/13**  
Introduce Project 5, Design Advocacy                                                                 | **4/11**: Final draft of Project 4, Design Proposal, due by 7 a.m. today, via Blackboard.  
Read assignment sheet for Project 5, Design Advocacy, on Blackboard and review the contents of the Project 5 folder on Blackboard.  
Presentation of Project 5, Design Advocacy ideas; further discussion of how to generate and structure the essay  
**4/13**: Post a paragraph describing the topic of your Project 5, Design Advocacy essay to Blackboard by 7 a.m. today.  
Proposal idea will be presented in class today (required).  
By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #9 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others. |
| **Week 14**| **4/18-4/20**  
Project 5, Design Advocacy, draft 1 workshop: Critical friends work together on draft 1; general remarks | **4/18**: Draft 1, Project 5, Design Advocacy, due by 7 a.m. today. |
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<td>Additional strategies for writing improvement; editing exercise (review of common mistakes to catch).</td>
<td>4/20: Review again the contents of the “Improving Your Writing” folder on Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>By Thursday 5 p.m., create post #10 on the writingfordesigners.com blog and comment on two posts by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Project 5, Design Advocacy, draft 2 workshop— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time</td>
<td>4/25: Draft 2 of Project 5, Design Advocacy due by 7 a.m. via Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/25-4/27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade posted for part 2 of Project #6, writingfordesigners.com blog project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional workshop for draft 2 of Project 5, Design Advocacy— group review of selected drafts, then in-class work and consultation time</td>
<td>4/27: none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Consultation and in-class writing</td>
<td>5/2: none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2-5/4</td>
<td>Consultation and in-class writing</td>
<td>Final draft of Project 5, Design Advocacy, due on Blackboard by 9 p.m. on Wednesday, 5/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No work will be accepted for a grade after 9 p.m. on Wednesday, 5/4. NO EXCEPTIONS.</td>
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