

This is a draft syllabus (4/21/21) subject to modification by the instructor

English 114, Section B  
Summer 2021

Instructor: Paul Franz (paul.franz@yale.edu)  
M, W, F 6–8:15pm EST

Office hours: by appointment (over Zoom).

## MOURNING OR MELANCHOLIA

How have creative writers, thinkers, and artists responded imaginatively to the experience of loss? How have their responses varied by historical moment, culture, political outlook, gender, genre, or individual sensibility? This course will consider such questions through the lens of texts from across the globe and more than two thousand years. Pursuing the question of loss through love, war, politics, the mind, time, and everything in between, we will find ourselves continually coming back to the same vexed question: What is it about loss that makes it so paradoxically rich in imaginative gains? In the process of exploring such questions, students in this course will gain familiarity with the history of thinking about and representing death and loss in European and non-European cultures, and will develop techniques of analyzing theoretical arguments, artistic texts, and contemporary social phenomena.

### Required Course Materials (Available for Purchase Online)

Denise Riley, *Say Something Back & Time Lived, Without Its Flow* (NYRB Books): [\\$14.72](#)

James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Vintage Classics): [\\$12.88](#)

Birkenstein, Cathy and Graff, Gerard. [\*They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing\*](#), 4th ed. W. W. Norton & Company, 2018. ISBN: 978-0393631678.

### Course objectives

This writing-intensive summer course will attempt to:

1. Contribute to your “writing toolkit” by focusing on your individual writing process and encouraging you to examine, expand, and reinvent it where useful;
2. Enable you to construct a compelling argument by identifying a **problem**, making a defensible **claim**, supporting that claim with **evidence and warrants**, and successfully communicating a **motive** for your writing and your broader intellectual endeavors;
3. Allow you to approach writing from a variety of disciplines with confidence and excitement;
4. Cultivate your creativity and empower you as a persuasive, engaging, and lucid writer with a unique voice
5. Develop and complicate your notions of what “life writing” might entail, in ways that enrich your own academic and creative work and allow you to contribute to your intellectual and personal communities.

## Assignments and Assessment

### Grading Distribution:

Essay 1 (3-4 pages)	<b>15%</b>	
Essay 2 (4-5 pages)	<b>25%</b>	
Essay 3 (8-10 pages)	<b>30%</b>	(A 1-page research proposal with a working bibliography will be worth 5%; a peer review and partial draft will be worth 10%; the paper itself will be worth 15%)
Final presentation	<b>15%</b>	
Participation	<b>15%</b>	(Attendance and class participation will make up 10% of this. At the beginning of our course, you will set individual writing objectives with and aim to meet them as the semester progresses; you will assess yourself at course's end for the remaining 5% of the participation grade.)

### Due Dates:

Essay 1, draft: Thursday, July 15, 12pm EST  
**Essay 1, final:** Monday, July 19, 12pm EST  
Essay 2, draft: Thursday, July 22, 12pm EST  
**Essay 2, final:** Tuesday July 27, 12pm EST  
Essay 3, prospectus and bibliography: Friday, July 30, 11.59pm EST  
Essay 3, partial draft: Tuesday, August 3, 11.59pm EST  
Essay 3, peer feedback exercise: Friday, August 6, *in class*  
Essay 3, full draft: Saturday, August 7, 11.59pm EST  
**Essay 3, final:** Wednesday, August 11, 11.59pm EST  
Oral presentations: Friday, August 13, in class

**A note on deadlines:** Please note that the deadline for the drafts of Essays 1, 2, and 3 will be extremely strict: due to our compressed schedule, I will aim to have your drafts back to you before start of class the next day. If your paper is not in at 12pm EST, I will not return it until the weekend, which will significantly cut into your revision time.

## Course requirements and policies

1. **Attendance.** Attend all classes. The discussion and workshop elements that are at the center of this course cannot be made up, so attendance is vital. Please be on time. We will take a 5-minute break in the middle of class. I am quite happy for you to eat or drink during class, so long as the item under consumption is not your main source of attention.
2. **Preparation and Participation.** Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and participate in writing exercises and workshops. Make notes on what you read, even if only in the margins. In-class peer revision will provide you with valuable opportunities to give and receive feedback on writing assignments. Aside from the final presentation you will make during our final class, I will also ask you to **kick off our discussion of the text** in one of our classes. This will be part of your participation grade.

3. **Remote Learning and Zoom Etiquette:** The live discussion sessions will be held through Zoom. To access live sessions, click "Zoom" on the left side of [our class' Canvas page](#). Once you click the link, you may be prompted to install a small application necessary for Zoom. Once you do so, you will be taken directly into the Zoom meeting room. You can then use the audio and video settings menu (bottom left corner) to ensure the correct input/output sources are chosen. For more detailed information of Zoom operation, refer to the user guide in the [Technical Support page in the "Modules" tab](#) on Canvas. Remember: a headset with microphone is recommended in the live sessions, this will help reduce audio feedback from participants. Additionally, be sure you are in a quiet location for the live sessions allowing you to focus on the discussion. Unless your internet connection is struggling, I ask that you **keep your camera on**. I would also like you to **keep yourself unmuted**.
4. **Writing.** Each 114 student will produce 15-19 pages of polished writing (not including drafts). This will take the form of **three major papers**. The sequence of papers teaches the most fundamental skills early in the semester and then refines and augments those skills in more complex essay assignments later in the term. The course will also require the submission of drafts of each paper for workshopping, by peers and with the instructor. Think of drafts as the best possible piece of writing you can do at the time. The stronger the draft, the more helpful will be the feedback you receive. The assignments are as follows:

#### Essay 1: Close Reading Analysis (3-4 pages)

The foundational skill of literary analysis—and most other academic writing—is the ability to derive larger meanings from the smallest parts of a text (written, visual, a data set, &c.). The goal of this assignment is to have you engage a literary work at the level of its language: locating a meaningful problem, articulating a claim that takes a stance on that problem, and analyzing relevant textual details to defend that stance.

#### Essay 2: Lens Essay (4-5 pages)

One of the most productive things you can do as you sharpen your thinking on an issue is enter into conversation with a new perspective or voice. In our second assignment, you will identify the ways in which encounter with one text (keep in mind the broad definition of “text” we used above) amplifies, complicates, deepens, or challenges understanding of another text. We will be using a text as a *lens* for considering another, and for considering our own writing. Thinking of the word “lens” as literal can be quite helpful here: we will be looking *through* the eyes of a new perspective to consider an earlier reading, or *through* the context of an earlier reading to ask questions about a new one.

#### Essay 3: Researched Argument (8-10 pages)

Researched arguments can take several forms. You can write an essay in which you place your reading of a text or your understanding of a problem in conversation with the accounts of a few other scholars. Or you might choose to write a “text in context” style essay in which you relate a text to the culture that produced it or to larger philosophies about one of its themes. Whichever approach you choose, you should construct a **bibliography** of secondary literature to put your own thoughts in conversation with the work of scholars in the field. In this way, the research essay will prepare you for the kind of high-level thinking required by any academic field, and introduce you (or increase your familiarity with) the conventions of academic writing.

#### Assignment 4: Presentation (5-10 minutes)

The final assignment (2–3pp) will draw on concepts from the course to offer an **opinion (op-ed)** about an aspect of contemporary culture relevant to the course. On the last day of class, students

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will give brief presentations on their final assignments; these presentations will count towards your participation grade.

## Expectations

### Essay Submission

Please use the standard page setup: 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced, numbered pages. Papers should be submitted by email to me in MS Word format (please, no pdfs: I'll be commenting using tracked changes). All assignments are due at noon on the day listed. Late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade for each day late.

### Academic Honesty

One of the goals of this course is to help you understand how to use published research – the final product of someone's hard work – to support your own thinking. Plagiarism, in brief, is the submission of work that contains uncited instances of language and ideas that are not your own. Any instance of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, such as unauthorized collaboration, will not be tolerated. If you are unsure about how to cite something, or have any other related doubts, it is better to ask me than to risk intellectual dishonesty. Please also acknowledge any legitimate help you have received on your papers in a footnote – these will most likely be from the Writing Center. Feedback from a friend or classmate also counts! [You can consult Yale's policies on academic honesty here.](#)

### Access

If you need some form of accommodation not already provided, have a medical condition, or have any other medically related information that you feel I should know, please inform me immediately either in person after class or, more privately, in an email. Additional information and resources are available [at the website of Student Accessibility Services](#). You can always ask them to contact me directly on your behalf, too.

### Writing Support

Yale's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning offers a range of assistance to student writers. They are there to support you, and I encourage all of you to make use of their services and expertise. [You can sign up for online tutoring at this link](#). You need to upload a draft through this same scheduler at least 90 minutes before the tutoring session, so that your Writing Partner can read it beforehand. Drop-in session times are: Thursdays 6:30-8pm EDT; Saturdays 1:30-3:00pm EDT; Mondays 11:30am-1:00pm EDT.

## Schedule of Meetings

**This schedule is subject to change as we work our way through the semester.**

### UNIT ONE: MODELS AND MYTHS

**Monday, June 29**

Session 1, 6pm-7:10pm

Group Introductions, Course Introduction, and Syllabus Review

Handout: Introduction to Key Terms

Handout: Essay 1

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Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Exercise: Close Reading Claims

Class Discussion: Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, "The Five Stages of Grief"

Handout: Reading Scholarly Texts

Handout: Finding a Good Essay Question (Poorvu Center)

**Wednesday, July 1**

Session 1, 6pm-7:10pm

Handout: Discussion Questions

Discussion: Sigmund Freud, "On Transience"

Virgil, *Georgics*, Book IV

Rainer Maria Rilke, "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes."

Exercise: Summarizing vs Analyzing

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Handout: As She Herself Puts It

Exercise: Staying with a Quote

Handouts: Working with Quotations 1-3 (Poorvu Center)

**Thursday, July 2**

**ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY 1 DUE, 12PM EDT**

**Friday, July 3**

Session 1, 6pm-6:40pm

Discussion: Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy*, Chapter 1,

"Interpreting the Genre: The Elegy and the Work of Mourning"

Session 2: 6:45-7:25pm

Writing Skills Lecture—Bringing it all together: Strong Body

Paragraphs and Their Structure

Handout: Body Paragraphs

Handout: Recursive Writing (Poorvu Center)

Peer Review Workshop, Paper 1 (paragraph-level revision)

Session 3: 7:30-8:15pm

Introduction to Introductions

Handout: Introductions (Poorvu Center)

*Writing Time and Individual Instructor Consultations*

UNIT TWO: CHALLENGES TO THE NORMATIVE MODEL

**Monday, July 6**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm

Setting Our Terms of Discussion

Discussion: Denise Riley, "A Part Song" (poem)

Melissa F. Zeiger: Introduction to Beyond Mourning (pdf)

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

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Exercise: Placing Sources in Conversation

Handout: They Say, I Say

Handout: Conversation Verbs and Clauses (Poorvu Center)

Handout: Essay 2

**ESSAY 1 (FINAL DRAFT) DUE, 12PM EDT**

**Wednesday, July 8**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm

Denise Riley, *Time Lived, Without Its Flow* (memoir)

Exercise: Developing Transitions

Handout: The Segue in Scholarly Conversations

Handout: Stitching—Signal Words (Poorvu Center)

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Writing Skills Lecture—Changing the Lens

**Thursday, July 9**

**ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY 2 DUE, 12PM EDT**

**Friday, July 10**

Session 1, 6:00-6:40pm

Yiyun Li, “Do Not Let Mother Dear Find Us” (*A Public Space*);

Dear Friend, From My Life, I Write To You in Your Life (excerpt)  
(novel/memoir)

Exercise: Introductions—Setting the Stage and Stakes

Session 2: 6:45-7:25pm

Peer Review Workshop, Paper 2 (introductions)

Session 3: 7:30-8:15pm

A Glance at Conclusions

Handout: Conclusions (Poorvu Center)

*Writing Time and Individual Instructor Consultations*

**UNIT THREE: GRIEVING IMAGES**

**Monday, July 13**

Session 1, 6:00-6:10pm

André Bazin, “Ontology of the Photographic Image” (article)

Francesca Mari, “Mourning in Cyberspace” (article)

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Exercise: What Motivates Us?

Picking A Research Topic and Developing a Proposal

Handout: Motivating Moves (Poorvu Center)

**Tuesday, July 14**

**ESSAY 2 (FINAL DRAFT) DUE, 12PM EDT**

**Wednesday, July 15**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm

Alice Munro, “Lichen” (story)

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Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm  
Library Visit: Identifying Sources  
Handout: Essay 3  
Handout: Working with Sources (Poorvu Center)

**Friday, July 17**

Session 1, 6:00-6:40pm  
Nan Z. Da, “The Angelus” (essay)  
Sheila Heti, “A Common Seagull” (memoir)

Session 2: 6:45-7:25pm  
Writing Skills Lecture—Establishing Your Voice  
Handout: “And Yet”—Distinguishing What You Say

Session 3: 7:30-8:15pm  
Building the Research Paragraph  
Handout: Research Paragraphs (Poorvu Center)  
*Writing Time and Individual Instructor Consultations*

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY  
DUE, 11.59PM EDT**

UNIT FOUR: LOVE AND LOSS

**Monday, July 20**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm  
James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room, Part One (pp. 3–71) (novel)

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm  
Exercise: Keeping It Complicated—Destabilizing Interlocutors  
Handout: “Skeptics May Object”: Planting a Naysayer

**Tuesday, July 21**

**ESSAY 3 (PARTIAL DRAFT, WITH INTRODUCTION, CLAIM,  
AND AT LEAST 3 BODY PARAGRAPHS) DUE, 11.59PM EDT**

**Wednesday, July 22**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm  
James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room, Part Two (pp. 75–169) (novel)

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm  
Writing Skills Lecture—Strategies for Revision: Linger-  
ing, Deepening, Cutting, and Expanding  
Handout: Revising Efficiently and Effectively (Poorvu Center)

**Friday, July 24**

Session 1, 6:00-6:40pm  
Angelina Weld Grimké, “El Beso”  
Rachel Eliza Griffiths, “Aubade to Langston”  
Ocean Vuong, “Aubade with Burning City”

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Session 2: 6:45-7:25pm

Peer Review Workshop, Paper 3 (structure, transition, claim)

Session 3: 7:30-8:15pm

So What? Saying Why It Matters

Handout: Funnel In, Funnel Out

Handout: Presentation Assignment

*Writing Time and Individual Instructor Consultations*

**Saturday, July 25**

**ESSAY 3 (COMPLETE DRAFT) DUE, 11.59PM EDT**

UNIT FIVE: DON'T MOURN, ORGANIZE!

**Monday, July 27**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm

Concision, Clarity, Polish

Exercise: Lean Prose

Handout: Lean Prose

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Douglas Crimp, "Mourning and Militancy" (pdf)

Heather Pool, "The Politics of Mourning" (Optional) (pdf)

Judith Butler and Brandon M. Terry, "The Radical Equality of Lives" (interview)

Handout: Presentation Assignment

**Wednesday, July 29**

Session 1, 6:00-8:15pm

Jonathan Lear, "We Will Not Be Missed!" (article)

Roy Scranton, "Learning to Die in the Anthropocene" (op-ed)

**ESSAY 3 (FINAL DRAFT) DUE, 11.59PM EDT**

**Friday, July 31**

Session 1, 6:00-7:10pm

Presentations, Panel One

Session 2, 7:15-8:15pm

Presentations, Panel Two

Class Conclusion