

English Course for PhD students at ATREE – 2013

Instructor: Samuel Thomas

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Office hours: Any time before and after class on the days the classes are scheduled.

Credit: 1 (16 class hours)

Class schedule: Three days a week (1-1.5 hour classes; 2 hour final assessment)

22 October to 19th November

Tuesdays: 11:00-12:30

Thursdays: 11:00-12:30

Fridays: 11:00 – 11:50

Grading Type: Pass/fail

I would encourage all the PhD students to take the course, but an exemption test will be held after the first session for those wanting to opt out. Other ATREE staff members are also welcome to join.

Exemption test: 23rd October 2013 (3:00pm – 5:00pm)

Course objectives: This course is aimed at helping you hone your writing skills as you identify the elements of effective writing for various purposes and audiences. It will consist of short spontaneous writing exercises and longer assignments that are meant to help you reflect on the creative process, critique your work and the work of peers, and refine your writing. In addition to the list of readings below, you will be given other readings and world literature in English to read, appreciate and comment on. In short, the course objectives are to help you:

- explore and reflect on the creative process through reading various texts and writing assignments
- reinforce revision skills, not only of language but also of ideas
- appreciate the formal, stylistic and aesthetic qualities of texts
- learn to critique (and be critiqued) constructively

Clearly, all this cannot be achieved in 16 hours of class work and interaction. We could continue to interact as a virtual group and I can share articles and links of interest and comment on your writing (if you wish to share them).

What the course is not: This is *not* a set of grammar lessons or reading of canonical texts.

Materials: Course material, mostly readings and adapted exercises, will be shared with students in the class. Other reading material and online resources will be shared using online file storage.

Evaluation:

There will be two written assignments of 20 marks each, and a writing test for 50 marks at the end of the course. 10 marks will be assigned for class participation.

Schedule

Class	Date	Focus	Class activity	Duration	
1	Tue 22 nd Oct	Introduction to the course and personal learning goals	Introductions Sharing general and specific problems with writing Reflections on the language we use	1 hour	
	Wed 23 rd Oct	Course exemption test (3:00pm-5:00pm)			
2	Thu 24 th Oct	Thinking about writing	Reading and response: 'Why I write' (Orwell) Writing: Brainstorming and speed writing	1.5 hour	
3	Fri 25 th Oct	Developing your argument	Reading and response: 'Is our love of nature writing bourgeois escapism?' and 'In defence of nature writing'. Writing: Developing an argument in the student's own field of interest (Start to assignment 1).	1 hour	
4	Tue 29th Oct	Constructive criticism	Reading and response: Selection from 'Of birds and birdsong' (M. Krishnan) Writing: Peer review of drafts and revision (Assignment 1)	1.5 hours Homework: Complete Assignment 1	
5	Thu 31 st Oct	Appreciating the writer's craft	Reading and response: Selection from 'A people's history of the United States' (Howard Zinn) + Music; Poetry Writing: Study and comment on extract	1.5 hour	

6	Tue 5 th Nov	Appreciating the writer's craft	Reading and response: Selection from 'River monsters: the ones that did not get away' (J. Wade) Writing: Study and comment on extract	1 hour
7.	Thu 7 th Nov	Free writing	Reading and response: Selection from 'Tripwire for a tiger' (FW Champion) Writing: Writing based on personal experience – any form (Assignment 2)	1.5 hours
8.	Fri 8 th Nov	Free writing	Writing: Writing based on personal experience. Sharing and feedback session (Assignment 2)	1 hour Homework: finish assignment 2
9.	Tue 12 th Nov	Writing a news report	Reading and response: Selection from 'Environmental issues in India: a reader (Ed: Mahesh Rangarajan). Writing: Working in pairs on a story idea; outlining the story idea and going out to collect information	1.5 hours
0.	Thu 14 th Nov	Writing a news report	Reading and response: 'The new nature writing' (J. Cowley, Granta 102) Writing: Writing and presenting the story	1.5 hours
11.	Fri 15 th Nov	Writing together	Output: The Class of 2013 Newsletter	1 hour in class; group work over weekend
12.	Tue 19 th Nov	Assessment	Written test –	2 hours