



Harvard Summer School
HARVARD DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

EXPO S-20d

Writing about Social and Ethical Issues

Summer 2023

Course Information

CRN: 33881

Section Number: 1

Format: On campus only

Credit Status: Undergraduate

Credit Hours: 4

Class Meetings: Mondays, Wednesdays, June 21-August 4, 12:00pm-3:00pm, Barker Center 114

Course Description: Students read varying viewpoints on controversial current issues, such as medical ethics, poverty, the environment, race, ethnicity, immigration, privacy, and labor, and learn how to analyze and present conflicting opinions. They learn how to critically analyze texts and write papers in a social science context. They also learn to transform their own assertions and viewpoints into coherent arguments.

Instructor Information & Office Hours

Matthew Cole

Email: mbenjamincole@fas.harvard.edu

Mode of Attendance & Participation Policy

Our class meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 12-3 PM in Barker Center 114. Attendance in class is expected. Please arrive on time and be prepared to engage appropriately with course content and your peers. Your active participation in classroom discussions and activities is an essential part of the course.

Please note that the class will not meet on Monday, July 3rd, and will have a make-up class on Friday, July 7th, from 12-3 PM in Barker Center 114. Attendance at the make-up class is strongly encouraged. See the Class Meeting Schedule for more information about the individual section meetings and how to prepare.

Please be sure to review important information on [Student Responsibilities and Policies](#).

Writing Program Policies

Attendance

Because Writing Program workshops are collaborative and discussion based, your presence and active participation are essential to their success and to your growth as a writer. While I urge you to attend all class meetings, I can excuse one absence during the Summer term. If your absences exceed this limit, I will be obliged to document them and tell you that additional absences may result in [exclusion](#) from the course or a final grade of E. The attendance rule applies even if you miss the first class meeting because you are changing courses during the first week of the term in accordance with Division of Continuing Education rules.

Deadlines

This course is a planned sequence of writing; meeting assignment deadlines is crucial. Failing to meet deadlines may disrupt the workshop schedule and impede the course's progress. It may also result in [exclusion](#) from the course or a final grade of E.

First-Day Writing Sample

I will ask you to complete—in person (in on-campus courses) or with your camera on (in online courses)—a brief skills-check writing sample during our first meeting. While the sample provides only a snapshot of your writing, it can help us determine if the course will be a good fit for you. Therefore, the sample must be submitted during class, at a time

I specify. It won't be graded, but I am not permitted to accept it after the deadline. If you submit the writing sample after the deadline, you must contact me to schedule a time to complete a new writing sample (in response to a different prompt) before our next meeting. Note that the Writing Program deadlines policy applies to the writing sample. Note also that if your sample suggests that you would benefit from a lower-level course, I may recommend that you drop my course.

Dual Submission

Harvard requires that all work submitted for a course be original and produced solely for that course. A writing course is an opportunity to develop your skills; submitting the same writing assignment twice for credit undermines that opportunity and may result in disciplinary action. If you wish to continue to develop an essay or story that you began in another course, you must receive written permission for your plan from your instructors.

Grading & Grade Definitions

Grading

- 10%** Class Participation
- 20%** Essay 1 (**Due 07/06**)
- 20%** Essay 2 (**Due 07/18**)
- 20%** Essay 3 (**Due 08/01**)
- 30%** Writing Portfolio (**Due 08/04**)

Grade Definitions

Students registered for undergraduate or graduate credit who complete the requirements of a course may earn one of the following grades:

A and A– Earned by work whose superior quality indicates a full mastery of the subject—and in the case of A, work of extraordinary distinction. There is no grade of A+.

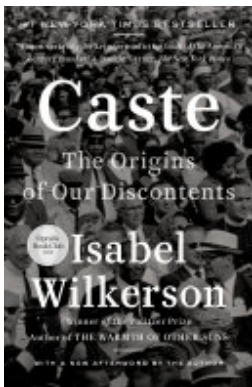
B+, B, and B– Earned by work that indicates a strong comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course materials, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities.

C+, C, and C– Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course materials, and that indicates that the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.

D+, D, and D– Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit.

E Earned by work that is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit. This grade may also be assigned to students who do not submit required work in courses from which they have not officially withdrawn by the withdrawal deadline. Zero or E grades are assigned to students for missing work. These grades are included in the calculation of the final grade.

Course Materials



Caste

ISBN: 9780593230275

Authors: Isabel Wilkerson

The Pulitzer Prize–winning, bestselling author of *The Warmth of Other Suns* examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions.

Publisher: Random House Trade Paperbacks

Publication Date: 2023-02-14

My Monticello

ISBN: 9781250848536

Authors: Jocelyn Nicole Johnson

A young woman descended from Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings driven from her neighborhood by a white militia. A



university professor studying racism by conducting a secret social experiment on his own son. A single mother desperate to buy her first home even as the world hurtles toward catastrophe. Each fighting to survive in America.

Publisher: Holt Paperbacks

Publication Date: 2022-10-11

Academic Integrity Policy

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Summer School policies on [Academic Integrity](#) and how to use sources responsibly. Violations of academic integrity are taken very seriously. Visit [Resources to Support Academic Integrity](#) and the [Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#) to review important information on academic citation rules.

Accessibility Services Policy

The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The [Accessibility Services Office \(ASO\)](#) is responsible for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. Students must request accommodations or adjustments through the ASO. Instructors cannot grant accommodation requests without prior ASO approval. It is imperative to be in touch with the ASO as soon as possible to avoid delays in the provision of accommodation.

DCE takes student privacy seriously. Any medical documentation should be provided directly to the ASO if a substantial accommodation is required. If you miss class due to a short-term illness, notify your instructor and/or TA but do not include a doctor's note. Course staff will not request, accept, or review doctor's notes or other medical documentation. For more information, email accessibility@extension.harvard.edu.

Publishing or Distributing Course Materials Policy

Students may not post, publish, sell, or otherwise publicly distribute course materials without the written permission of the course instructor. Such materials include, but are not limited to, the following: lecture notes, lecture slides, video, or audio recordings,

assignments, problem sets, examinations, other students' work, and answer keys. Students who sell, post, publish, or distribute course materials without written permission, whether for the purposes of soliciting answers or otherwise, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including requirement to withdraw. Further, students may not make video or audio recordings of class sessions for their own use without written permission of the instructor.

Class Meeting Schedule

Week 1

June 21 (Wed.): Introduction to Writing About Social and Ethical Issues - "*Declarations*"

In the first meeting, we'll introduce ourselves and review the schedule, goal, assignments, and expectations for the class. We'll discuss a few short readings that introduce the key themes of the course and, before the section ends, you'll complete the first piece of writing for your portfolio.

Readings:

[The Declaration of Independence](#) (1776)

Tracy K. Smith, "[Declaration](#)" (2018)

Isabel Wilkerson, "[American Life is Still Defined By Caste](#)" (2023)

Week 2

June 26 (Mon.): "*A Fourth of July Oration*"

In this class, we'll discuss and begin to write about the key source for your first essay: the abolitionist Frederick Douglass' iconic speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" We'll also consider Douglass' vision of a post-abolition America and try out some strategies for using "supporting sources" to advance your written arguments.

Readings:

Frederick Douglass, "[What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?](#)" (1852)

_____ "[Emancipation, Racism, and the Work Before Us](#)" (1863)

_____ "[Composite Nation](#)" (1867)

Suggested: Michael Hawley, "Light or Fire? Frederick Douglass and the Orator's Dilemma" (2023)

June 28 (Wed.): "A Spirit of Revolution"

In this class, we'll discuss Fourth of July speeches by three other American radicals: the suffragist Susan B. Anthony, the socialist Eugene Debs, and the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. We'll draw connections with Douglass' speech and try out some strategies for using comparison and contrast to extend your written arguments. For your writing portfolio, you'll have the opportunity to write your own short Fourth of July speech.

Readings:

Susan B. Anthony, "[Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States](#)" (1876)

Eugene Debs, "[The Fourth of July](#)" (1894)

_____ [Independence Day Address](#) (1901)

Martin Luther King, Jr., "[The American Dream](#)" (1965)

Week 3

July 3 (Mon.): No Section Meeting

No section meeting today. You should use the time to work on your first essay draft.

July 5 (Wed.): Workshop Day #1

Before class meets at noon, you should upload your "discovery draft" to Canvas and print two copies of your essay draft to bring to class. On workshop days, you'll exchange drafts with two peer-reviewers and give each other constructive feedback on the draft. We'll also review and discuss some draft excerpts together. Your revised draft will be due by the end of the day on **Thursday, July 6th**.

July 7 (Fri): "The Architecture of Human Hierarchy"

In this class, we'll get acquainted with the key source for your second essay: journalist Isabel Wilkerson's acclaimed *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents*. We'll consider how Wilkerson defines caste, how caste relates to race and class, and apply her theory to the issue of mass incarceration in the United States using excerpts from Ava DuVernay's

documentary [13th](#). For your portfolio assignment, you'll practice introducing and defining a "key concept" in your writing.

Readings:

Isabel Wilkerson, "[America's Enduring Caste System](#)" (2020)

_____ *Caste* (2020) (selections)

Week 4

July 10 (Mon.): "The Resurgence of Caste"

In this class, we'll continue our exploration of *Caste*, focusing on Wilkerson's argument that we are experiencing a "resurgence" of the American caste system. We'll consider what Wilkerson's theory can tell us about the history and present of anti-immigrant politics in the United States using the PBS Frontline documentary [Zero Tolerance](#). For your portfolio assignment, you'll practice deploying both "confirmatory" and "complicating" evidence in your writing.

Readings:

Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste* (2020) (selections)

July 12 (Wed.): "Abolition Democracy"

In this class, we'll conclude our discussion of *Caste* by asking whether and how caste systems can be unmade. In addition to Wilkerson's own suggestions, we'll consider what Daniel Martinez HoSang calls "abolition" and "reconstruction" in the context of racial justice organizing. For your portfolio assignment, you'll practice "conversational" moves that emphasize dialogue and debate among sources.

Readings:

Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste* (2020) (selections)

Daniel Martinez HoSang, *A Wider Type of Freedom* (2021), Chapter 2

Week 5

July 17 (Mon.): Workshop Day #2

Before class meets at noon, you should upload your "discovery draft" to Canvas and print

two copies of your essay draft to bring to class. On workshop days, you'll exchange drafts with two peer-reviewers and give each other constructive feedback on the draft. We'll also review and discuss some draft excerpts together. Your revised draft will be due by the end of the day on **Tuesday, July 18th.**

July 19 (Wed.): "We Are Descendants"

In this class, we'll begin to discuss the key source for your final essay: Jocelyn Nicole Johnson's acclaimed novella "My Monticello." We'll consider how fiction can illuminate our past, present, and future, and, in our portfolio assignment, try out some key maneuvers for "interpretive" writing.

Readings:

Jocelyn Nicole Smith, "My Monticello" (2021) (I-VI)

Week 6

July 24 (Mon.): "We Fight!"

In this class, we'll conclude our discussion of "My Monticello," drawing out connections between Johnson's novella and recent events such as the George Floyd protests of summer 2020 and the attack on the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021. Your portfolio assignment will challenge you to imagine your own possible futures by extrapolating from current events.

Readings:

Jocelyn Nicole Smith, "My Monticello" (2021) (VII-XIV)

July 26 (Wed.): "A Third Reconstruction"

In this class, we'll draw together the major themes of the course by asking what it would mean to make America a "multiracial democracy" for the first time in its history. For your portfolio assignment, you'll practice some key maneuvers for "reflective" writing.

Readings:

Danielle Allen, "[Charlottesville Is not the continuation of an old fight. It is something new](#)" (2017)

Matt Ford, "[Our 250-Year Fight for Multi-Racial Democracy](#)" (2021)

Steven Levitsky, "[The Third Founding](#)" (2022)

Week 7

July 31 (Mon.): Workshop Day #3

Before class meets at noon, you should upload your "discovery draft" to Canvas and print two copies of your essay draft to bring to class. On workshop days, you'll exchange drafts with two peer-reviewers and give each other constructive feedback on the draft. We'll also review and discuss some draft excerpts together. Your revised draft will be due by the end of the day on **Tuesday, August 1st.**

August 2 (Wed.): Writing Portfolios

For the final session, you'll work independently on your writing portfolios. This gives you an opportunity to review, revise, and reflect on some of your favorite pieces of writing from the semester. Additional instructions will be provided on how to write, edit, and format your portfolios. Your completed writing portfolios will be due by the end of the day on **Friday, August 4th.**