Course Name: Critical Reviewing  
Course Number: WR449  
Term Offered: Spring 2018, Thursday, March 18, through Monday, April 9  
Credits: 4  
Instructor name: Thomas Strini  
Instructor email: strinit@oregonstate.edu  
Link to instructor bio or website: https://www.linkedin.com/in/striniwriter/

Course Description:
Write and edit critical reviews of books, television programs, advertising, architecture, music, films, plays, and more for an online magazine, The Corvallis Review. Read, evaluate and share published criticism. Win readership through basic social media and search engine optimization techniques. Prerequisite: Upper-division standing.

Communication
Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please contact me via Canvas message for matters of a personal nature. I will reply to course-related questions and email within 24 hours except for Sundays, which I take off. I will strive to return your assignments and grades for course activities to you within three days of the due date.

Course Credits
This course combines approximately 90 hours of instruction, online activities, and writing and editing assignments for 4 credits.

Technical Assistance
If you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact 24-7 Canvas Support via chat, phone, or e-mail through the Help link within Canvas. If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, or need assistance logging into a course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the OSU Computer Helpdesk online.

Learning Resources
All course material will be available online, either free or at very minimal cost. Exceptions include admission to shows, concerts, museums etc.

Canvas
This course will be delivered via Canvas where you will interact with your classmates and with your instructor. Within the course Canvas site, you will access the learning materials, such as the syllabus, class discussions, assignments, projects, and quizzes. To preview how an online course works, visit the Ecampus Course Demo. For technical assistance, please visit Ecampus Technical Help.
**Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to

1. Write clearly and efficiently on short deadlines;
2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in written and/or video formats;
3. Work successfully within cooperative writer-editor relationships;
4. Observe performing, literary, visual and other arts with a penetrating eye and describe them accurately and vividly;
5. Communicate with a real-world readership, via both written and/or spoken (via video) word;
6. Accept and give constructive criticism;
7. Demonstrate a basic understanding of online publishing and content distribution.

The instructor will assess student success in achieving these outcomes in evaluation of student writing. Is the review competent with the language? Did the student describe the work under observation accurately and vividly? Is the work, overall, worthy of publication? If published, did it attract an audience? Did the editor format the piece correctly, attend to grammatical and syntactical issues, account for keywords, add photos and captions, add meta data and search description?

**Assignments**

**Reviews**

Each week, starting in WEEK 3, students will work in writer-editor partnerships, each of which will produce and publish one review. During WEEKS 3-10, each student will edit four main reviews and write four main reviews. **25 points** each per story for both editor and writer; **25 x 8 = 200 total points**

During WEEKS 1 and 2, students will compile a list of potential coverage events through the end of the term and develop a coverage calendar for the quarter. **20 points**.

The instructor will assign coverage events to the editor-writer teams or accept story ideas those coverage teams pitch. These teams will meet electronically to ensure that perfect copy, complete with images, headline, deck, byline, and keywords goes out to the world. **Areas of coverage:**

- visual art
- live theater
- dance (and/or dance video)
- music (live and recorded)
- movies
- television
- print and television advertising
- web media, including but not limited to video made for the web
- architecture and landscape design
- poetry, books and author/artist lectures
- opera or opera workshop
- video games

**online video art**
• music videos
• fashion
• social criticism, that is, commentary on trends and developments that might include or transcend art; an example might involve the proliferation and spread of emojis

Some students might lean toward a certain discipline. Students can specialize to an extent, but we want some balance and adventure. You can’t do all movies, for example. I very much want you to get out into your communities to cover live events.

Writers will adhere to the guidelines in Strini’s “A Brief and Practical Guide to Writing” [Link to Canvas file to come] and to the conventions of the Associated Press Stylebook.

Student Editing Duties

Editing is more than fixing typos and enforcing AP Style. It involves dialog between writer and editor, about content, tone, overall structure and sentence structure. Both parties must be satisfied with the result before publication. The object, always, is to put the best possible piece of writing before the public within a reasonable time. You’re not producing for a teacher; you’re producing for real people in the real world. The Corvallis Review website has attracted over 100,000 page views.

Required Readings and Commentary

All students must search the internet and print publications for examples of good critical writing and come up with one each week, starting in WEEK 1. (Hint: Check The New Yorker, Arts and Letters Daily, The New York Times, Oregon Arts Watch, Los Angeles Times, BOMB Magazine, Aesthetica Magazine, Apollo Magazine. Find more; lots of them are out there.)

Students must respond to each reading with a short introduction to the linked story. The point of this introduction is to entice readers to a story that we believe they will find worthwhile. We will compile your comments and links into a Critical Readings column each week. These mini-assignments must be submitted on time and cannot be made up for any reason. 5 points each, 50 total.

Instant Micro Reviews

In the first three weeks, you will write three instant micro-reviews no longer than 250 words. I will post a video, a piece of music, a short dance piece or whatever in a Canvas Quiz, and give you 30 minutes to write a critical response, in the format of an essay question. The first Micro Review will take place in Week 2. The second and third Micro Reviews will be distributed throughout the quarter to students who have editing, rather than writing duties. We will compile these mini-reviews into a composite story. “Jade Dancing” is an example. 12 points each, 36 total.

Miscellaneous Assignments

1. Post a photo of yourself and a thumbnail bio on the Corvallis Review Staff Bios page. 10 points.
2. Discussion board: Introduce yourself. Write a short (100 words) piece about a recollection of an encounter with a work of music, visual art, theater, film, television, architecture, design or literature that made an impact on you. 20 points.
3. Respond to your classmates’ anecdotes in Number 2, above. What do you have in common? 20 points.
4. Plan your coverage: List four events, books or artworks you would like to review this quarter. Provide times, locations, dates, links if available. 10 points.
5. Write a short essay, for use as a starting point in class discussion, on the purpose of criticism. **20 points.**

6. Respond to the short essays in Number 5 above; get a discussion going. **10 points.**

7. Online discussions: Respond to Main Reviews, 8 @3 = **24 points.**

**Final Exam**

The Final Exam will be much like an Instant Micro Review (see above), but more substantial. You will choose from a piece of music, a video (dance, theater, film, video artwork, television etc) or a text reading from a list proposed by the instructor. You will have two hours to respond with a finished review. **50 points.**

**Bonus Points**

If the class’s stories attract a total of 10,000 or more page views by the last day of Week 10, each student will get 20 bonus points. The writer/editor of any one story that surpasses 1,000 page views will win a 10-point bonus. Any further ad-hoc assignments will also be treated as bonus points.

**Deadlines**

A plaque reading “Make Deadline or Die!” hangs on the wall of every newsroom in the world. If you miss a WR449 deadline, you get zero for the assignment. No makeups, no excuses. That's how the real world works, and we're trying to approximate real-world conditions. Note that I'm giving you the most generous deadlines in the history of journalism. I define a week as seven days; the writer-editor team must have their story complete at the website and ready to publish by midnight every Sunday. Plan your live event attendance accordingly. Work ahead if you can. If your role is editor, take the early downtime in your work cycle to attend an event and start planning your review for the following week.

**Evaluation of Student Performance**

- Editing four main reviews, 4 @25 points = 100 points
- Writing four main reviews, 4 @25 points = 100 points
- Misc. Assignments, including discussions, 114 points
- Three Micro Reviews @12 = 36 points
- Contributions to Critical Readings columns, 10 @5 points -- 50 points
- Final Exam – 50 points

**Total – 450 points**

**Grading Scale**

A = 450-425; A- = 424-406; B+ = 405-387; B = 386-361; B- = 360-342; C+ = 341-323; C = 322-297; C- = 321-278; D+ = 277-259; D = 258-233; D- = 232-214; F = 213 and lower.

**Course Policies**

**Discussion Participation**

Students are expected to participate in all graded discussions. While there is great flexibility in online courses, this is not a self-paced course. You will need to participate in our discussions within defined time windows.

**Makeup Exams**

Makeup exams will be given only for missed exams excused in advance by the instructor. Excused absences will not be given for airline reservations, routine illness (colds, flu, stomach aches), or other common ailments. Excused absences will generally not be given after the absence has occurred, except under very unusual circumstances.
Exam Time Limits
Exams in this class are timed; if you exceed the time limit, the exam will shut down and you will be graded on the work you have accomplished.

Incomplete
Incomplete (I) grades will be granted only in emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has turned in 80% of the points possible. If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don’t wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

Guidelines for a Productive and Effective Online Classroom
Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email) in compliance with the university’s regulations regarding civility.

Civility is an essential ingredient for academic discourse. All communications for this course should be conducted constructively, civilly, and respectfully. Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected. In all you say and do for this course, be professional. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to the attention of your instructor.

Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to success in this online course, paying particular attention to the following:
• Unless indicated otherwise, please complete the readings and view other instructional materials for each week before participating in the discussion board.
• Read your posts carefully before submitting them.
• Be respectful of others and their opinions, valuing diversity in backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
• Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please word your responses carefully, and recognize that others are expected to challenge your ideas. A positive atmosphere of healthy debate is encouraged.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities
Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at http://ds.oregonstate.edu. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

Accessibility of Course Materials
I strive to make this course accessible. If you require accommodations, please contact Disability Access Services (DAS). I will find alternatives to video for the visually impaired and alternatives to audio for the hearing-impaired.

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a vendor statement certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

Expectations for Student Conduct in this Online Classroom
Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility. Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the Student Conduct Code.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty. For further information, visit Student Conduct and Community Standards, or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

OAR 576-015-0020 (2) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

a) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a Student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the Student's own efforts or the efforts of another.

b) It includes:

   i) CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a Student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment, using prohibited materials and texts, any misuse of an electronic device, or using any deceptive means to gain academic credit.

   ii) FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

   iii) ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means, including misuse of an electronic device. It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an educational assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

   iv) TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents.

   v) PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

c) Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

**Turnitin Plagiarism Prevention**

Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited. Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information, visit Academic Integrity for Students: Turnitin – What is it?

**Tutoring**

This course is offered through Oregon State University Extended Campus. For more information, contact:
Web: ecampus.oregonstate.edu  Email: ecampus@oregonstate.edu  Tel: 800-667-1465
NetTutor is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours. Access NetTutor from within your Canvas class by clicking on the NetTutor button in your course menu.

OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching
Course evaluation results are extremely important and are used to help me improve this course and the learning experience of future students. Results from the 19 multiple choice questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and department heads. Student comments on the open-ended questions are compiled and confidentially forwarded to each instructor, per OSU procedures. The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. You will log in to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.