

Communicating Pain

Spring 2019

TTh 1:00-2:15

Classroom: Linsly-Chittenden Hall (LC) 212

Instructor: Arthur Wang

Office Hours: W 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

Office: LC 405



Paul Sharits, *Spasmatic Pain I* (Boulder Community Hospital), 1981

Pain—has an Element of Blank—

— Emily Dickinson (c. 1862)

Pain is a symphony—

— Atul Gawande, *Complications* (2002)

Course Description

Why is physical pain so difficult to communicate? What kinds of pain—and which bodies in pain—tend to receive priority over others? Given the challenges of perceiving the suffering of other beings, how can we hold ourselves responsible for the pain we inflict, witness, and experience? This course will investigate philosophical, political, aesthetic, and bioethical strategies for expressing and responding to physical pain. We will begin with theoretical readings on the challenges that the experience of pain poses for linguistic, visual, and auditory communication. Pain is universal but not uniform, and we will consider how race, gender, and species shape the political recognition of pain. Turning to contemporary medical ethics and public health, we will explore dilemmas of pain management, and their applications to chronic pain, disease, euthanasia, and end-of-life care.

Course Objectives

This course aims to introduce you to academic writing and equip you with the ability to construct well-developed arguments. As we analyze the texts on this syllabus, our goal will be to understand the components of a strong argument: identifying a *problem*, presenting a *claim* to address that problem, supporting that claim with *evidence* and *warrants*, and establishing a *motive* for writing. Lessons from in-class discussions, peer workshops, and one-on-one conferences will prepare you to draft and revise four written assignments. Paying close attention to style and structure, we will foster your confidence and creativity as an analytic writer and a reader of challenging texts.

Course Materials

All required texts will be available on Canvas and Slack

Recommended texts:

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say with 2016 MLA Update*, 3rd ed.
ISBN: 978-0393617436; \$35.98

Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 8th ed.
ISBN: 978-1319057404, \$34.99

Purdue OWL MLA Formatting and Style Guide, [available online](#)

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation:

1. To create a productive and collaborative seminar, please read all assigned texts thoroughly and come to each class meeting prepared to share thoughts, questions, and analysis. Productive participation includes making thoughtful comments, but also demonstrating respect by listening carefully and refraining from dominating conversations or cutting off peers. The course will likely touch on challenging and personal subjects, so sensitivity, generosity, and respectful engagement are essential.
2. **Inclusion and Access:** The course will benefit from the full participation of each member. If you have a disability or a personal circumstance that could affect your learning in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best ways to support your participation in the course. Yale's [Resource Office on Disabilities](#) can also assist and provide guidance. If you find yourself struggling to join the conversation or feeling uncomfortable with the class dynamic for any reason, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.
3. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade, and more than four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Frequent tardiness may also lower your participation grade.

2. Reading Responses

1. Before each class meeting, please contribute at least one comment, question, or idea (2-3 sentences) about the reading assignment to the Slack channel **#reading-responses** (see the **Course Communications** section for more information about Slack).
2. Contributions to the #reading-responses channel should address at least one of the assigned readings for the next class meeting, but don't need to deal with every reading assigned.
3. These contributions should be thoughtful, but shouldn't take too long to compose (no more than 10 minutes; less is fine). Your remarks can be informal, preliminary, or experimental. Think of it as an intellectual group text; you'll want to add something worthwhile, but that could take many forms: a written comment, a response to someone else's thoughts, a link, an image, video, or audio clip, etc.
4. Occasionally, I'll pose a specific question or prompt to respond to, but in general, you'll be free to address anything that interests you.

3. Three argument-driven essays

1. A close reading of a passage from Virginia Woolf's "On Being Ill"
2. A controlled research argument about approaches to communicating and witnessing pain in a work of visual art and one of our early readings
3. A research-based argument on a topic of your choice

4. **A final design project:** a pain scale, accompanied by a 3-4 page essay or artist's statement describing the type of pain your design helps to articulate. Your goal in this assignment will be to engage with theories of pain through a creative response to a specific pain communication issue. See **Canvas > Assignments** for more details.

5. **Three instructor conferences** (office hours meetings). These informal meetings are opportunities to discuss course topics and the development of your writerly voice and style.

Course Communications

Please use [Slack](#) for routine course communications. For example, use group channels or direct messages for meetings/office hours scheduling and questions about assignments and course policies. For broader, thematic questions and requests for comments on drafts or other materials, please see me in office hours.

- What is Slack?
 - Slack is a messaging app used by many tech companies, but also by other types of organizations, teams, and groups.
- Why Slack instead of email or Canvas?
 - In Slack, we can bypass some of the odd conventions and formalities of email. No need to worry about salutations (“Dear _____,”) or sign-offs (“All best”; “Sincerely”; or my personal favorite from a letter in the Beinecke Library’s special collections: “I am exhausted,/ [Signed: name]”)
 - Emails tend to pile up and get lost; Slack will help us keep all course-related communication in a single place.
 - Slack conversations are less formal and more conversational than Canvas posts.
 - Contributing to Slack discussions is an alternative way to participate in the course, especially if you feel shy about speaking in class. (However, if you’d like to work on speaking more in class but aren’t sure how, please let me know.)

Summary of Due Dates

All papers should be sent to me via **Slack Direct Message**, and are due **before midnight** (11:59pm) on the dates listed below, unless otherwise noted.

F 1/25	Paper 1 draft (P1V1, 4 pages)
F 2/1	Paper 1 final (P1V2)
F 2/15	Paper 2 draft (P2V1, 4-5 pages)
M 2/25	Paper 2 final (P2V2)
Th 3/7	Paper 3 Working Bibliography and Proposal (20-25 sources)
Th 3/28	Paper 3 annotated bibliography (8-10 sources)
Th 4/5	Paper 3 partial draft (P3V1, 4 pages)

Th 4/12	Paper 3 complete draft (P3V1, 8-10 pages)
M 4/22	Paper 3 final (P3V2)
Th 5/2	Paper 4 / design project (P4, 4-5 pages)

A note on extensions:

Extensions will be granted only in unusual circumstances. If your situation is foreseeable, an extension must be requested at least **one week** before the deadline. If an emergency comes up less than a week before the deadline, please contact your residential college dean for a Dean's Excuse. Otherwise, late essays will be graded down by a fraction of a letter grade for each day it is late (e.g., B+ -> B). Late drafts will not receive feedback from the instructor or peers.

Grading

Participation 15%

Reading responses 10%

Paper 1 (4 pages, close reading for argument) 10%

Paper 2 (4–5 pages, controlled research argument) 20%

Paper 3 (8–10 pages, research-based argument) 30%

Paper 4 (4–5 pages, creative assignment) 15%

Academic Integrity

Consulting with others is foundational to scholarly work, and in this course, we will develop strategies for entering intellectual debates. In an academic community, acknowledging other people's work through proper citation is not only a strict requirement, but also an important foundation for establishing the originality and distinctiveness of your own writing. Plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty may result in failure of the course. If you have any questions about citing sources, attributing ideas or avoiding plagiarism, please get in touch. Please also consult the Writing Center's guidelines to familiarize yourself with standards of academic honesty and strategies for using sources (<http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/>).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(Readings must be completed by the date listed below)

Unit One Bearing Witness, Bearing Pain	
Week 1	
T 1/15	Course introduction, key terms for academic writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Handout: “Rhetorical Terms: The Elements of an Argument”
Th 1/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elaine Scarry, introduction from <i>The Body in Pain</i> (1985), 3-23 ● Gerald Graff and Kathy Birkenstein, chapter 1 from <i>They Say/I Say</i>, 19-29
Week 2	
T 1/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Virginia Woolf, “On Being Ill” (1930), 3-28 ● Gerald Graff and Kathy Birkenstein, chapter 2-3 from <i>They Say/I Say</i>, 30-52 ● Erik Simpson, “Five Ways of Looking at a Thesis,” 2 pp.
Th 1/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wayne C. Booth et. al., “Making Good Arguments” from <i>The Craft of Research</i>, 110-121 ● Booth et. al., “Claims,” 122-131 (focus on section 8.2: 124-129) ● Booth et. al., “Warrants,” 155-172 (skim) ● Recommended (not required): Eric Hayot, “Eight Strategies for Getting Writing Done,” from <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (2014), 17-36
F 1/25	Paper #1 (draft) due at 11:59pm
Week 3	
T 1/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper #1 Workshop
Th 1/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frank Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia” (1982), 127-136 ● Eric Hayot, “Jargon,” from <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (2014), 178-179
S 2/3	Paper #1 (final) due at 11:59pm
Unit Two	

The Pain of Others Suffering, Identity, and Difference	
Week 4	
T 2/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Sontag, chapters 3 and 6 from <i>Regarding the Pain of Others</i> (2003), 40-58, 95-103 • Graff and Birkenstein, chapter 7 from <i>They Say/I Say</i>, 92-102
Th 2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sontag, chapter 9 from <i>Regarding the Pain of Others</i> (2003), 119-126 • Watch clip from Harun Farocki, “Serious Games” • Graff and Birkenstein, chapter 10 from <i>They Say/I Say</i>, 129-138
Week 5	
T 2/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Hayot, excerpt from introduction to <i>The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity, and Chinese Pain</i> (2009), 3-7, 25-30 • Eric Hayot, “The Uneven U,” 59-73 • Excerpt from “The Photographic Essay: Four Case Studies” by W.J.T. Mitchell (282-283, 286)
Th 2/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Alexander, “‘Can you be BLACK and Look at This?’: Reading the Rodney King Video(s)” (1994), 77-94 • Watch one talk of your choice (~10 minutes) from “Perspectives on Race and Representation: an Evening with the Racial Imaginary Institute”
Fr 2/15	Paper #2 (first draft) due at 11:59pm
Week 6	
T 2/19	Paper #2 Workshop
Th 2/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” from <i>Animal Liberation: a New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals</i> ([1975] 2009), 1-24 • Recommended: Graff and Birkenstein, chapter 6 from <i>They Say/I Say</i>, 78-91
Week 7	
M 2/25	Paper #2 (final) due at 11:59pm
T 2/26	Library Session: Meet in Bass L06A with Caitlin Meyer (Research and Education Librarian, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunaura Taylor, “All Animals are Equal (But Some Are More Equal Than Others),” from <i>Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation</i> (2017) (to be discussed on Thursday 2/28)
Th 2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leslie Jamison, “Grand Unified Theory of Female Pain” (2014) • Eric Hayot, “Pronouns,” from <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i> (2014), 184-187
<p style="text-align: center;">Unit Three Pain in Public: Politics of Health, Justice, and Care</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 8</p>	
T 3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Durham Peters, “‘Watch, Therefore’: Suffering and the Informed Citizen” from <i>Courting the Abyss: Free Speech and the Liberal Tradition</i> (2005), 216-246
Th 3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keith Wailoo, “Between Liberal Relief and Conservative Care” and excerpt from “The Trojan Horse of Pain” from <i>Pain: a Political History</i> (2014), 1-12, 39-56 <p>Working Bibliography and Research Proposal (20-25 sources) due by 11:59pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Spring Recess 3/9-3/24</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 9</p>	
T 3/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Cheng, “Earsplitting,” from <i>Just Vibrations: the Purpose of Sounding Good</i> (2016), 71-92 • Michel Chion, “Let’s Have Done with the Notion of ‘Noise’” (2011), 240-247
Th 3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Farmer, “An Anthropology of Structural Violence” (2004), 305-325 (commentary on 317-325 is optional) <p>Annotated Bibliography (8-10 sources) due by 11:59pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 10</p>	
T 4/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atul Gawande, “The Pain Perplex” (1998), 86-94 • <i>PMLA</i>, “Biocultures: An Emerging Paradigm” (2009), 947-956 (Read one of the five 2-page essays, assigned in class)
Th 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First half of Joanna Bourke, “Sympathy,” from <i>The Story of Pain</i>

	(2014), 231-24 Paper #3 (partial draft, 4 pages) due by 11:59pm
Week 11	
T 4/9	Paper #3 Workshop I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second half of Joanna Bourke, "Sympathy," from <i>The Story of Pain</i> (2014), 245-269
Th 4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Twiley, "The Neuroscience of Pain" (2018) Recommended: The McGill Pain Questionnaire (1983) Paper #3 (complete draft, 8-10 pages) due at 11:59pm
Week 12	
T 4/16	Paper #3 Workshop II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justin Schmidt, "The Pain Truth" and "Appendix: Pain Scale for Stinging Insects" from <i>The Sting of the Wild</i> (2016), 31-38, 221-230
Th 4/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eula Biss, "The Pain Scale" (2005), 5-25
Week 13	
T 4/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poetry by Emily Dickinson, Max Ritvo (Y '13), and others Susan Sontag, <i>AIDS and Its Metaphors</i> (1989), 5-16, 37-43, 93-95 Reading Poetry Handout (2p excerpt from Stephanie Burt, <i>Close Calls With Nonsense</i> and Jonathan Culler, <i>Theory of the Lyric</i>) Recommended: Rafael Campo, "Introduction: Illness as Muse," 1-9 Paper #3 (final) due by 11:59pm
Th 4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dan Sinykin, "Intellect, Endoscopy" (2016) Eric Hayot, "Becoming a Writer," from <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i>, 215-217
Th 5/2	Paper #4 Due by 11:59pm