

University of Southern California, Spring 2016  
**Core 112: Writing Seminar II (Section: 63544D)**

**SEE HOW THEY RUN**

Instructor: Brianna Beehler, Department of English  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:00-1:00pm  
Email: beehler@usc.edu

Course Location: AHF 410G  
Course Time: MW 1-2:20pm

*“Everywhere you go, it’s the same people.  
Don’t you see what’s happening to your  
life, woman?”*

*“Not exactly,” Jamie said.*

*“You’re going to see, all right. Something  
is happening to your life, and you’re going  
to see what it is.”*

*“I was afraid of that,” Jamie said.*

*“If you think you’re afraid now,” the  
man said.*

—Denis Johnson, *Angels*

*The lamb must learn to run with the tigers.*

—Angela Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride”

Running often evokes an image of individual freedom and self-discovery. But is this always the case? Romantic visions of a lawless, Bonnie-and-Clyde life are just as often undercut by the realities of the violence, loneliness, and sacrifices encountered by those who challenge their fates and their societies. Depictions of life on the run within literature and film only further complicate this conception, showing that running can be at once exhilarating and terrifying, empowering and alienating, revelatory and catastrophic.

In this course we will closely examine these literary and visual representations, following individuals “on the run” as they both evade and face the personal and social demands which constrict them. We will observe characters as they cross forbidden thresholds, considering the changes and freedoms they confront by leaving. Can those who run from their homes ever truly return? Do these journeys engender a search for self-knowledge—or do the runners become lost and dispossessed? How does gender affect or play into these different outcomes? And, finally, how does a life on the run transform individuals and their relationships with themselves and others?

We will ask ourselves these questions as we pursue fleeing characters in books by Denis Johnson, Alice Munro, Kate Atkinson, and Dana Spiotta as well as in the films *Maria Full of Grace*,

*Thelma and Louise*, and *Vagabond (Sans Toit ni Loi)*. Using theoretical texts by Laura Mulvey and Roland Barthes in addition to our own voices and perspectives, we will consider when—if ever—individuals can stop running once they have begun.

### **Readings:**

*Case Histories*, Kate Atkinson, 978-0316010702 (Back Bay Books)

*Angels*, Denis Johnson, 978-0060988821 (Harper Perennial)

*Runaway*, Alice Munro, 78-1400077915 (Vintage)

*Eat the Document*, Dana Spiotta, 978-0743273008 (Scribner)

### **Podcasts:**

“The Life You Save May Be Your Own,” Flannery O’Connor, read by Lois Smith in “Going to Extremes” for [Selected Shorts](#)

### **Films:**

*Maria Full of Grace*, Dir. Joshua Marston (2004)

*Thelma and Louise*, Dir. Ridley Scott (1991)

*Vagabond (Sans Toit ni Loi)*, Dir. Agnès Varda (1985)

*Please note: You must buy the correct text editions and bring the appropriate book(s) to every class. All of the films are available on reserve at Leavey Library and there will also be a group screening of Maria Full of Grace.*

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Formal Written Assignments:**

You will be expected to complete six formal written assignments: three critical papers (one of which will be read aloud), a proposal for the Thematic Option Conference, an annotated bibliography/literature review, and a final research paper.

Critical Lens Essay (5-6 pages), due Feb 3

Theoretical Critique Essay (6-7 pages), due Feb 26

Conference Proposal (1 page), due March 10

Oral Presentation Essay (4-5 pages), due April 4

Annotated Bib & Lit Review Essay (5-6 pages), due March 25

Seminar Paper (8-12 pages), due May 4 at noon

### **Oral Presentations:**

You will be responsible for two oral presentations: the first will be a 4-5 page essay written for the Thematic Option Conference, and the second will be an 8-10 minute overview of your seminar paper, presented in the final week of class.

### **Blog Posts:**

You may access our course blog at <https://core112seehowtheyrun.wordpress.com>. As part of our course, you will be required to write **six** 300 word blog posts due Tuesdays by 5:00pm. These blog posts will be informal responses to that week's assigned texts or films. You may, for instance, link one text with a previous reading, or apply a critical concept or term to the assigned text.

In addition to writing blog posts, you will also be required to respond to your peers' posts on weeks that you do not submit written comments. You will also do this **six** times, so that you will post and respond on an alternating basis for a total of twelve weeks. A good responder might ask blog writers to elaborate on certain points, make new connections, follow up on recurring themes of interest, etc. Responses will be made during class discussion.

### **Attendance and Participation:**

You are expected to attend every class and tutorial; however, you are allowed up to **two absences** for illness, family emergencies, religious holidays, etc. There are no make up assignments.

### **Tutorials:**

Over the course of the semester, you will attend six 30-minute tutorials with me. Note that tutorials are for discussing and expanding ideas, not time for me to "fix" your paper. Always be on time and come prepared with a draft as well as any other materials specified ahead of time. Missed tutorials cannot be made up and will count as a class absence.

### **TO Undergraduate Conference:**

Each year, Thematic Option holds a themed research conference and invites submissions from undergraduates. The conference takes place near the end of the semester (this year on April 12th & 13th) and is attended by a number of faculty and students affiliated with the program. Around the midpoint of the semester, you will produce a 1-page proposal for this conference. We will talk extensively in class and in tutorial about how to write a proposal and how to present your work at an academic conference. While not every student will present at the conference, everyone must attend at least two panels and produce a short write-up of one panel.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

#### **Email:**

Do not email me drafts of essays unless requested to do so. Instead, bring a draft to office hours/tutorials or email me to set up an alternative time to discuss your paper.

**Late Work:**

Please keep in contact with me about any circumstances that may affect your performance in the course. Late blog posts will not be considered. If you turn in a paper late, it will be marked down substantially.

**Grading:**

This course will be graded holistically and improvement/hard work will be greatly considered in your final grade. Generally, however, your final grade in the course will be determined in the following manner:

Formal Written Assignments	60%
In-Class Preparation & Participation	20%
Tutorial Preparation & Participation	10%
Blog Posts and Discussion	10%

**Plagiarism:**

Taking the words of another author and passing them off as your own undermines both your learning process and the academic community of which you are now a member. If you are caught plagiarizing you will receive a failing grade for this course and will be asked to leave the Thematic Option Honors Program; you may also be dismissed from USC. Generally, to avoid plagiarism you must do the following: give credit to the proper sources you reference for any ideas not your own; avoid turning in papers written for another class; and be careful when you work with tutors, friends, or family members, for if the person “helping” you alters your work substantially, then this is plagiarism as well. For a complete definition of what constitutes plagiarism, see your SCampus Student Guidebook.

**STUDENT RESOURCES:**

**Disability Services and Programs:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure this letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in Grace Ford Salvatori Hall, Room 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday- Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Support Systems:**

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. (See <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>)

The Office of Disability Services and Programs provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

(See [http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html))

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology. (See <http://emergency.usc.edu/>)

**Non-Academic:**

Center for Women and Men: (213) 740-4900, Engemann (Suite 536)

USC Counseling Services: (213) 740-7711, Engemann

**CORE 112: SEE HOW THEY RUN**  
**SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

**LONELINESS, ALIENATION, SACRIFICE**

Week 1:

Jan 11 – “The Life You Save May Be Your Own”

Jan 13 – *Angels*, ch. 1, 2

Week 2:

Jan 18 – MLK DAY – NO CLASS

Jan 20 – *Angels*, ch. 3, 4, 5

**THE POINT OF NO RETURN**

Week 3: ***Tutorials will be held this week***

Jan 25 – *Angels*, ch. 6 – Evening group screening of *Maria Full of Grace*

Jan 27 – *Angels/Maria Full of Grace*

Week 4:

Feb 1 – *Maria Full of Grace*

Feb 3 – *Maria Full of Grace* – **Critical Lens Essay Due**

**REINVENTION**

Week 5:

Feb. 8 – *Eat the Document*, parts 1, 2, 3

Feb. 10 – *Eat the Document*, part 4

Week 6: ***Tutorials will be held this week (Wednesday only)***

Feb. 15 – PRESIDENT’S DAY – NO CLASS

Feb. 17 – *Eat the Document*, parts 5, 6, 7

Week 7: ***Tutorials will be held this week (Monday only)***

Feb. 22 – *Eat the Document*, part 8

Feb. 24 – *Eat the Document*, part 9

Feb. 26 – **Theoretical Critique Essay Due**

## SEE HOW SHE RUNS

Week 8: *Tutorials will be held this week*

Feb. 29 – *Thelma and Louise*

March 2 – *Thelma and Louise*

## HAUNTING, HAUNTED, AND BURYING THE PAST

Week 9: *Tutorials will be held this week*

March 7 – *Case Histories*, ch. 1-7

March 9 – *Case Histories*, ch. 8-10

March 10 – **Conference Proposal Due to TO Office**

Week 10:

SPRING BREAK

Week 11:

March 21 – *Case Histories*, ch. 11-18

March 23 – *Case Histories*, 19-end

March 25 – **Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Due**

## ALIENATION, PART II

Week 12: *Tutorials will be held this week*

March 28 – *Vagabond (Sans Toit ni Loi)*

March 30 – *Vagabond (Sans Toit ni Loi)*

## THOSE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND (OR, THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF RUNNING)

Week 13:

April 4 – **Oral Presentation Essay Due**

April 6 – *Runaway*, “Runaway”

Week 14: *Thematic Option Conference April 12-13*

April 11 – *Runaway*, “Chance,” “Soon,” “Silence”

April 13 – *Runaway*, No reading assignment—continue with *Runaway*

Week 15: *Tutorials will be held this week*

April 18 – *Runaway*, “Passion,” & “Trespases”

April 20 – *Runaway*, “Tricks” & “Powers”

Week 16:

April 25 – Final Presentations





April 27 – Final Presentations

**May 4 – Seminar Paper Due by noon via Blackboard**



**CORE 112: SEE HOW THEY RUN**  
**SEMESTER CALENDAR**

	<b>MON.</b>	<b>TUES.</b>	<b>WED.</b>	<b>THURS.</b>	<b>FRI.</b>	<b>Tutorials</b>
<b>Week 1</b> (1/11-1/15)	“The Life You Save May Be Your Own”		<i>Angels</i> , ch. 1, 2			
<b>Week 2</b> (1/18-1/22)	<b>MLK DAY – NO CLASS</b>		<i>Angels</i> , ch. 3, 4, 5			
<b>Week 3</b> (1/25-1/29)	<i>Angels</i> , ch. 6		Wrap up <i>Angels</i> and begin <i>Maria Full of Grace</i>			Critical Lens Essay Tutorials
<b>Week 4</b> (2/1-2/5)	<i>Maria Full of Grace</i>		<i>Maria Full of Grace</i> <b>Critical Lens Essay Due</b> 🕒📝			
<b>Week 5</b> (2/8-2/12)	<i>Eat the Document</i> , parts 1, 2, 3		<i>Eat the Document</i> , part 4			
<b>Week 6</b> (2/15-2/19)	<b>PRESIDENT’S DAY – NO CLASS</b>		<i>Eat the Document</i> , parts 5, 6, 7			Theoretical Critique Essay Tutorials (Wednesday only)
<b>Week 7</b> (2/22-2/26)	<i>Eat the Document</i> , parts 8		<i>Eat the Document</i> , part 9		<b>Theoretical Critique Essay Due</b> 🕒📝	Theoretical Critique Essay Tutorials (Monday only)
<b>Week 8</b> (2/29-3/4)	<i>Thelma and Louise</i>		<i>Thelma and Louise</i>			Conference Proposal Tutorials
<b>Week 9</b> (3/7-3/11)	<i>Case Histories</i> , ch. 1-7		<i>Case Histories</i> , ch. 8-10		<b>Conference Proposal Due</b> 🕒📝	Anno. Bib. and Lit. Review Tutorials
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>					

(3/14-3/18)						
<b>Week 11</b> (3/21-3/25)	<i>Case Histories</i> , ch. 11-18		<i>Case Histories</i> , 19-end		<b>Anno. Bib. and Lit. Review Due</b>  	
<b>Week 12</b> (3/28-4/1)	<i>Vagabond</i>		<i>Vagabond</i>			Oral Presentation Tutorials
<b>Week 13</b> (4/4-4/8)	<b>Oral Presentation Essay Due</b>  		<i>Runaway</i> , “Runaway”			
<b>Week 14</b> (4/11-4/15)	<i>Runaway</i> , “Chance,” “Soon,” “Silence”	Thematic Option Conference	No reading assignment—continue with <i>Runaway</i>  Thematic Option Conference			
<b>Week 15</b> (4/18-4/22)	<i>Runaway</i> , “Passion,” & “Trespasses”		<i>Runaway</i> , “Tricks” & “Powers”			Seminar Paper Tutorials
<b>Week 16</b> (4/25-4/28)	<b>Final Presentations</b>		<b>Final Presentations</b>			
<b>May 4 – Seminar Paper Due by Noon via Blackboard</b> 