

## English Course for PhD students at ATREE – 2013

**Instructor:** Samuel Thomas

**Contact:** <samuel@atree.org> +91 94340 45123

**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 19<sup>th</sup> 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:** 23<sup>rd</sup> 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**

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

6	Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Free writing	Writing: Writing based on personal experience. Sharing and feedback session (Assignment 2)	1 hour  Homework: finish assignment 2
9.	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Writing together	Output: The Class of 2013 Newsletter	1 hour in class; group work over weekend
12.	Tue 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Assessment	Written test –	2 hours