

Writing

Widely



CHID 250B

Dr. Caroline Simpson | M/W 10:50-1:00 | Summer 2016 A-Term | Writing Credit

My use of the term, 'writing widely', flags the persistent interest among many scholars to extend the ambit of their influence and reach a broader public. In this course, we will explore the potential of the contemporary essay form as a powerful and important means of amassing just such a public, particularly where questions of cultural and social change are at stake. We will begin by reading those late twentieth century essayists who arguably fronted the effort to make the essay a common 'intellectual' language, including: James Baldwin; Susan Sontag; bell hooks; Joan Didion. In turn, we will account for those essayists who are currently making their presence felt: Ta-Nahisi Coates; Maggie Nelson; Roxanne Gay; Zadie Smith; Adam Gopnik, among others. In addition to reading, discussing and writing about the deeper structures animating these various essays, we will also be working on our own essay projects, the latter being, really, the entire point.

