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Expos 20: Loyalty & Betrayal (Fall 2021)

Course overview (or, see: <http://www.lusiazaitseva.com/expos20>)

If you heard that someone protected their family members faithfully, you'd probably consider that person to be acting in a loyal and virtuous manner, but if you then learned that this person was a member of the Soprano crime family, you might feel a bit differently. Likewise, it's hard to know how to act if an institution to which one has historically been loyal comes under morally bankrupt leadership or if someone close to us holds beliefs we disagree with—especially if we risk being considered guilty by association in the public eye. Clearly, then, it matters to whom or what we are loyal, under what circumstances, why, and at what cost. Perhaps it's not all that surprising, then, that some philosophers have gone so far as to argue that loyalty and morality are fundamentally incompatible.

In this course, we'll explore some of the big questions about loyalty and its counterpart, betrayal, that have occupied humans for millennia: what role, if any, should our personal history and identity play in our loyalties? How can we act ethically when two loyalties come into conflict? Can betrayal ever be virtuous? Can one exit a group but still be loyal to it? And must loyalty entail personal cost to be meaningful?

To begin to think about these questions, in **Unit 1** we will read short stories from three short story writers—[Edith Wharton](#), [Alice Munro](#), and [Lesley Nneka Arimah](#)—whose compelling stories provide rich material for thinking about the ties that bind us and what happens when they are tested. In “Roman Fever” by Wharton, two old friends reveal their long-held secrets. In Munro’s “Child’s Play,” an unlikely event binds two girls together for life. And Arimah’s “Redemption” tells a story that layers conflicting loyalties to one’s class and gender with betrayals by those meant to protect us.

In **Unit 2**, we'll shift our gaze to politics. In your essays for this unit, you will have a chance to deepen your understanding of the contemporary American political landscape as you grapple with fundamental questions of the role that loyalty plays in partisanship. We will read two essays by contemporary political scientists—[Russell Muirhead's "The Case For Party Loyalty"](#) and [Steven M. Teles](#) and [Robert P. Saldin's](#) essay "[The Future is Faction.](#)" Taken together, these authors will help us explore questions such as: what is the promise and peril of party loyalty? Should

we remain loyal to our party even if (or especially when) we see its flaws? How does one decide what is worthy of loyalty to begin with, and can one be loyal to a cause but maintain independence of thought?

In **Unit 3**, you will have the opportunity to identify an original research topic about an occasion of loyalty or betrayal (or a loyalist or traitor) that is compelling to you. Some possibilities include thinking about a divisive belief that tests in-group loyalty, a politician at odds with his or her party, a whistleblower or suspect social group, or a community experiencing the trauma of what scholars have termed “institutional betrayal.” You might even investigate how our themes play out in popular media such as television and film or consider what a particular brand loyalty reveals about the people who have it.

Course philosophy and goals

While you are at Harvard, you will write papers of various kinds; discuss readings and debate issues from many perspectives; form questions and present possible answers in many different circumstances. In Expos 20, our goal is to help prepare you for all of those occasions, by focusing on the key elements of academic argument. At the foundation of all that work is the other primary goal of the course: to provide you not only with important skills, but also with confidence about how best to communicate your good ideas.

The following three points form the foundation for our work this semester:

- ❖ **Writing is thinking.** The cornerstone of this course is the idea that learning to write is learning to think. *Writing* is one of the best ways to figure out your ideas, and the evolving writing process allows you to develop your thinking with greater depth and meaning. You will write frequent short assignments to help you develop the ideas you will use in your arguments and in our class discussions. Developing worthwhile ideas also takes time, and you’ll want to plan accordingly.
- ❖ **Writing is a process.** For all three of our essays in this course, you will write an initial draft and then a revision. This continued process of drafting and revision is the primary work of this class, and is the main way your writing grows stronger. You will also write response papers to develop your ideas and reflect on the process of developing your ideas and questions.
- ❖ **Writing is a conversation.** When you write, you are participating in a conversation: with your immediate audience (represented by your classmates and me) and with a larger academic community. As you express your ideas in your written work, your audience will be responding to those ideas, telling you what their strengths are and where they can keep

developing. In addition to the feedback you get from your classmates, you will have two individual conferences with me (these conferences are a required part of the course and often people's favorite), and you will receive extensive feedback from me throughout the semester.

How the course works: writing and discussion

This course consists of not only the work we do *together* in class, but also the *individual* questions, interests, and strengths you bring to our work. We will focus on the goals particular to your own progress and work as a writer: developing your sense of what you already do well; challenging you to figure out how you want to grow as a writer; and expanding your repertoire of drafting and revision techniques.

One other important issue to note about your writing in this course:

- ❖ Just as in any Expos course, all of the work you do for this class is public—which means that it may be read by your fellow writers in the class (not just by me). If at any time you turn in a piece of writing that you would rather not have other students read, please tell me so—but also please note that you cannot make this request about every piece you turn in. Hearing the ideas and reactions of other readers is one of the most valuable opportunities a writer can have, and the writing that all students do in the course will often be the basis for our discussions.

What you will write

Expos 20 is organized around three units. Here's how the writing will work in each:

- ❖ **Unit 1:** For the first unit, you will write a brief argument (4 pages) consisting of close reading a single short story. The goal of this assignment is to focus on the most fundamental elements of argument: thesis, evidence, and reasoning.
- ❖ **Unit 2:** In the next unit, you will write a slightly longer (5-7 page) argument that puts two theoretical texts (arguments) into conversation with each other, or one theoretical text into conversation with a primary source material (what we'll come to call your "exhibit"). The goal of this assignment is to keep working on all of the skills noted above and practice articulating worthwhile arguments as you enter into dialogue with others. To this end, this unit will provide new challenges in terms of how you integrate sources and evidence.
- ❖ **Unit 3:** The argument you write in Unit 3 will be slightly longer (8-10 pages) and be based on a topic you select and research. The goal of this paper is to practice the skills and habits of mind necessary to identify a topic worthy of

discussion and answer it in an original, interesting way that maintains your own voice all the while incorporating numerous others.

What we'll do in class

Expos is most effective when every student engages fully in the class; you learn much more from contributing your own ideas to our discussion than from simply listening to others do so. Our time together is largely devoted to discussion and small-group work. You are therefore responsible for being in class, prepared and on time, each time we meet.

- ❖ **Being prepared** means that you have given careful thought to the reading and writing assigned for the day, and that you are ready to offer ideas and questions to open our discussion. Have the required materials for that day on hand and ready to go.

Have with you for all class meetings:

- The readings for the day
 - The unit assignment packet
 - A dedicated notebook or part of a notebook
 - Something to write with
- ❖ **Class discussions**: One of the best ways to develop your own ideas is to hear and respond to the ideas of others; articulating your response often helps you clarify what you want to convey. For that reason, I'll sometimes call on you even if you haven't raised your hand—I encourage you to take the opportunity to contribute to the conversation, but always feel free to say "pass." There will certainly be times this semester when we disagree with each other in our discussions. Our basic principle will always be to listen and respond to each other respectfully.
 - ❖ **Laptop policy**: Unless otherwise noted, you should plan to take notes by hand in class and leave your laptop at home. If you have accommodations that make using a laptop necessary, please provide me with documentation from the Accessible Education Office as early as possible.

Communication

We'll carry on our conversation about your writing outside of class as well. Please remember a few important things about keeping in touch:

- ❖ **Office Hours**: On days when we don't have class, I will make myself available 9am-5pm EDT over Zoom (use the "Conferences & Office Hours" link in Zoom, accessible through Canvas). I will also be available on T/Th before and after class in my office in 1 Bow; please just let me know ahead of time if you'd like to come by so I can make sure you won't be kept waiting.

- ❖ **E-mail & Slack:** Rather than take up our class time with announcements and administrative arrangements (and there will be many of them!), I'll use Slack (**#announcements** channel) to communicate most of that information as well as other important things. As part of your engagement in the course, you will need to check Slack daily; you are responsible for the information I send your way. [Make sure your notifications are set up correctly](#). Likewise, I will check my email and Slack every weekday for questions from you (though please note that I don't check it at night—communications that reach me after 7:00 p.m. will likely be answered the next day). I won't check email or Slack over the weekend, so if you anticipate needing my input, plan ahead! The **#phone-a-friend** channel in Slack is also a great way to get answers to your questions from your classmates.
- ❖ **Canvas:** We'll use the course Canvas site in two important ways. All the assignments and most of the course handouts will be posted there; course readings will be posted there too. Canvas is also a way to turn in your own written work and receive feedback from me.
- ❖ **Loom:** Starting with your rough draft in unit 1, over DM in Slack I'll send you a personalized link to your folder in Loom where I will store all of my video feedback to you for the semester. Keep track of this link for subsequent response paper and draft feedback. (All final drafts, by contrast, will be returned in Canvas.)

Required texts and materials

- ❖ Course readings are available on our Canvas.
- ❖ The *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* (<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>)
- ❖ A dedicated **notebook** (or at least a dedicated section in a notebook) that you will use only for this class.*

*Unless your learning needs dictate otherwise, please plan on using the notebook in each class and in your conferences—the hand-to-brain connection is an important one, and as we've recently learned, it's always nice to get a break from screens!

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines

For each class meeting, you will prepare some reading or writing exercise to help you develop your essay for that unit. All essay deadlines in the course are firm, in order to make sure that you're not falling behind on the frequent assignments and in order to be fair to each student. Other than the instances outlined below, please do not ask me to make a special exception for you alone, as our work together in class will also often be based on those assignments. We all start a new semester

with high hopes and big dreams, so this may not seem relevant to you now, but trust my years of experience: late assignments often snowball, especially toward the end of the semester, into full-blown catastrophe. For your own sake, don't be 'that student.' I'm always here to help provided you respect my time and take responsibility for yourself.

Extensions

I only grant extensions for medical or family emergencies. Essay drafts or revisions turned in after the deadline without an approved extension will be penalized *a third of a letter-grade on the final essay for each day they are late*. If you cannot meet a deadline due to a medical emergency, you must contact me right away, and a note from UHS may be required; in the event of a family emergency, you should also contact me right away, and a note from your Resident Dean may be required. In those circumstances, we will also need to work out a schedule for you to make up your missed work. The above being said, I understand that sometimes, despite our best intentions, life gets away from us—especially now. If you would like a one-time, 24-hour extension for reasons other than the above, you are responsible for requesting it 24 hours prior to the assignment deadline. Additionally, I will do my best to be flexible in our new circumstances provided you communicate with me.

Grades

The majority of your final grade comes from the revised version of your three essays. The remaining 10% of your grade represents the depth and seriousness of your revisions in units 2 and 3 as well as your engaged and constructive engagement in class discussion and conferences and the care with which you respond to fellow students' work—in other words, your course citizenship.

Unit 1:	20%
Unit 2:	30%
Unit 3:	40%*
U2 & U3 revision cover letters:	5%
Course citizenship**:	5%

*Your unit 3 grade consists of your annotated bibliography + final draft

**This is not a measure of how frequently you raise your hand—in other words, quality over quantity.

Slack

Especially with a course like Expos that has so many moving parts, sometimes you'll find yourself with a logistical question that needs a quick answer ("What is the page limit for the draft?" or "What are we doing for class tomorrow?"). Our

class has its own Slack so that you can ask and answer these questions without having to wait for me to respond (#phone-a-friend). This cuts down on individual emails, which saves me a lot of time and also fosters your independence and sense of our class as a community. Make sure you turn on notifications so you're not just using Slack when you have a question. And remember that if you can't find a response from the group, always feel free to email or direct message me. You can access our Slack through [Canvas](#). Here again is a [quick guide](#) to getting started.

Attendance and Lateness: Official Writing Program Policy

The Writing Program attendance policy is intended to make sure that you get everything you can out of your Expos course. Because Expos has fewer class hours than some other courses; because the course is largely discussion-based; and because instruction in Expos proceeds by sequential writing activities, your consistent attendance is essential to your learning in the course.

While I of course encourage you to be present every day in class, you are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester with no consequence. Some absences (religious holidays and medical situations) are automatically considered excused; some family circumstances may also be counted as excused absences. If you miss two unexcused classes, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss any issues that may be keeping you from attending, and to advise you on your plan for catching up on the missed work. If you miss a third class, you will be required to meet with your Resident Dean about those absences so that your Dean can give you any support you may need to help you get back on track in the class. Missing four classes—the equivalent of two full weeks of the semester—puts you at risk for missing crucial material necessary to complete your work. Unless there is a medical or other emergency issue preventing consistent engagement with the class, students who miss four classes will receive a formal warning that they are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.

In the case of a medical problem, you should contact me before the class to explain your absence, but in any event within 24 hours. In the case of a medical absence, you may be required to provide a note from UHS or another medical official to confirm that absence as excused; protracted or repeated illness will require such documentation. Absences because of special events or extracurricular involvement are not excused absences. If such circumstances lead you to want to miss more than two unexcused absences, you must petition the Associate Director of the Writing Program for permission.

- ❖ Please note: class begins promptly at our specified meeting time. If you are more than ten minutes late for class more than twice, those latenesses will add up to a class absence. So, four late arrivals of ten minutes or more constitute two unexcused absences.

Completion of Work: Official Writing Program Policy

Because your Expos course is a planned sequence of writing, you must write all of the assigned essays to pass the course, and you must write them within the schedule of the course (not in the last few days of the semester after you have fallen behind). If you are unable to complete your work on time due to medical or family issues, please contact me before the deadline to discuss both the support you might need as well as a possible new arrangement for your deadline.

Communication about your situation is essential so that we can determine how best to help you move forward. If we have not already discussed your situation and you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of an essay by the final due date in that essay unit, you will receive a letter reminding you of these requirements and asking you to meet with me and/or your Resident Dean to make a plan for catching up on your work. The letter will also specify the new date by which you must submit the late work. If you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of the essay by this new date, and if you have not documented a medical problem or been in touch with your Dean about other circumstances, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you will require some flexibility in deadlines or participation in the course for reasons of a documented disability, please schedule a meeting with me early in the semester so we can discuss appropriate accommodations. (To be eligible for such accommodations, you need to have provided documentation to the Accessible Education Office ahead of time. Please let me know if you are unfamiliar with that process.) The Accessible Education Office works closely with Expos courses, and we will develop a plan that is appropriate for your needs. Please note that it is always your responsibility to consult with me as the need for those accommodations arises.

Submission of Electronic Documents

You will submit most of your work for this course electronically to our course Canvas site, and occasionally to Google Drive or Slack (these exceptions will be made clear). As you send or upload each document, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have saved the document in a form compatible with Microsoft Word—all files must be in the format .doc or .docx. It is also your responsibility to ensure that the file you send is not corrupted or damaged. If I cannot open or read the file you have sent, the essay will be subject to a late penalty. Students deliberately submitting files that are corrupted will be subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity

All writers in an academic community (from professors to first-years) are developing their own ideas and interpretations, informed by the claims and perspectives of others; all writers are responsible for helping their readers see the distinction between their own ideas and the sources they draw on. In this class, we will talk about and practice approaches to working well with sources, developing your own ideas, and avoiding plagiarism or misuse of sources. Throughout the semester we'll work on the proper use of sources, including how to cite and how to avoid plagiarism. You should always feel free to ask me questions about this material. (Expos classes are great places for asking those questions). All the work that you submit for this course must be your own, and that work should not make use of outside sources unless doing so is explicitly part of the assignment. Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course and is also potentially eligible for disciplinary action by the Honor Council.

Collaboration

When people collaborate closely, as we will in this course, it is important to recognize the acceptable ways for working together. The following kinds of collaboration are permitted in this course: developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students and through peer review of written work (including workshop in class and feedback from Writing Center tutors). You will also collaborate with classmates on oral presentations or other class projects. If you would like to acknowledge the impact someone had on your essay, it is customary to do this in a footnote at the beginning of the paper, although as stated in the *Student Handbook*, "Students need not acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading." If you are ever unsure about what constitutes acceptable collaboration in this course or how to acknowledge it, it is always wise to ask. All work submitted for this course must be your own: in other words, writing response papers, drafts, or revisions with other students is expressly forbidden. (It is worth noting that courses in other fields may have different practices and policies about appropriate collaboration; when in doubt, always ask.)

Writing Center

At any stage of the writing process—brainstorming ideas, reviewing drafts, approaching revisions—you may want some extra attention to or feedback on your essays. The Writing Center (once life returns to normal, this will be located on the ground level of the Barker Center) offers hour-long appointments with trained tutors. I can't stress strongly enough how helpful those sessions can be; regardless of the "strength" or "weakness" of the essay, any piece of writing benefits from further review and a fresh perspective. Visit the Writing Center's web site at writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu to make an appointment. There is also a designated English grammar and language (EGL) tutor who can meet with you—he has his own schedule that is not part of the general Writing Center schedule, so make

note of that when you email him. His contact information is on the homepage of the Writing Center the link for which is noted above.

Conferences

Students regularly report that conferences are the most helpful and meaningful aspect of class. They are a chance for us to sit down one-on-one and discuss your ideas as well as what steps you've taken since your draft (my feedback will always include a revision step). You are responsible for signing up for a conference on Canvas and arriving to our session having considered my feedback and completed the revision step. You're in the driver's seat; you ask the questions and lead our discussion. In order to help you foster autonomy and the metacognitive skills you'll need to succeed in your other courses that require writing at Harvard, you'll be expected to revise independently in unit 2: in other words, we'll have two one-on-one conferences this semester, one in unit 1 and one in unit 3 (where you'll practice your growing independence as a writer in other ways). You are, of course, always welcome to come see me in office hours.

A final note about conferences. As beneficial as conference week is for students is as difficult as it is for me. As such, missed conferences will not be rescheduled in the absence of a valid medical excuse or emergency. That means set your alarm, note your time carefully, check and double-check Canvas to see that you've noted the time accurately. If we're meeting online, use the 'Office Hours & Draft Conferences' session Zoom link on Canvas—if you're early to your appointment or the previous one is running over, I'll place you in the virtual waiting room until the previous conference is done. For in-person conferences, I'll see you in 1 Bow.

Other course requirements

- If you are reading this, congratulations! You've found the golden nugget. In a direct message on Slack, please send me a gif, a meme, or a link to a YouTube video with your current favorite song.
- All of your assignments for this class should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 1" margins. You should insert page numbers in the top right-hand header of every page after the first and include your last name before it, so the page 2 header will read, for example, "Smith 2," the third page "Smith 3," and so on. Do not include the page number on the first page. In addition, you should include the following information in the top left-hand corner of the first page of your essay:

[Your name]

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[Response paper number (1.1, 1.2, etc.) or essay number (e.g. "Essay #1 rough draft")]

[Date]

Essay titles should be centered after the identifying information on the first page. All rough and final drafts of essays should include bracketed paragraph numbers: [1], [2], [3], and so on, before or after the indent. You can see an example [here](#).

- In addition to your nightly assignments, expect to contribute at least once during the first ~eight weeks of our course to the **#relevant** channel on Slack. We'll discuss what to put here in class.
- Keep backup copies of all of your writing for this course. For paper drafts, I recommend saving a new copy every time you work on it with nomenclature you can easily understand, such as "Essay1_Draft1."