Writing and walking are both peripatetic activities: we wander through our ideas, making observations along the way, often taking a detour or two before arriving at our conclusion. This class will take the streets of New York as its starting point – our “primary text” will be the City itself – and we will read the ways in which it has been walked through on paper, often in the form of descriptions of seeing it for the first time, or re-seeing it as if it were the first. Through a series of writing assignments, including informal journals and analytic, revised essays, students will contextualize and historicize their journeys through these texts – and through the city – as we come to understand how New York City got from “there” to “here.”

Course objectives: Via close readings and analysis, students will learn how to write and revise college-appropriate essays, using a variety of modes and techniques.

Required Texts:
James, Henry. Washington Square.
Smith, Patti. Just Kids.

Readings indicated as “pdfs” on the syllabus will be available on the course website. You must always bring a copy with you to class. Please do not use phones as e-readers in the classroom.
Requirements:

1. Formal essays. You will be assigned three formal essays ranging in length from three to six pages (60% of grade).

2. Journals. Every Tuesday, you will hand in a typed, 250-word informal essay, often responding to a prompt (20% of grade).

3. Participation includes group work, productive use of class time, and arriving prepared and on time every day, as well as actively participating in class discussion. Not having your text with you on a day in which it is needed will count against your participation grade (10% of grade).

Policies:

Come to class every time, on time, and with your reading done.

Essays will be turned in electronically, in the form of PDF documents, and must be formatted according to instructions.

You are responsible for all material covered during class – whether you are present or not. Please get contact information from at least one classmate, so that if you are absent they can fill you in on what you missed.

Excessive absences will not only affect your success in the course, but also your grade. I expect you to arrive promptly and prepared each day.

Be aware that your work will be looked at by others; ensure that your content is appropriate for the classroom environment. On workshop days, you must bring 3-4 copies of your essay with you to class; failure to do so will count against your final essay grade.

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and
integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)

All essays and journals must be double-spaced and typed in 12-pt Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins all around. This ensures the standardization of page limits.

Reading Schedule

Readings are due on the date listed; please note that assignment dates may change; it is your responsibility to keep up with any changes. Please do not use your phones as e-readers.

Items marked with an asterisk will be available on the course website.

T 9/3 Introduction to the Course; in-class essay
Th 9/5 Newhouse essay, De Certeau excerpt *

T 9/10 Benjamin excerpt
Th 9/13 Poe, “The Man of the Crowd”*
Th 9/17 Poe, “Mellonta Tauta”* Essay 1 assigned
Th 9/18 Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,”*

T 9/24 Peer Workshop
Th 9/26 Martí, “New York Under the Snow,”* +Revision workshop
Th 10/1 Riis, “The Downtown Back Alleys,”* (pdf)
Th 10/3 Crane, “Opium’s Varied Dreams”* and “Adventures of a Novelist”* (pdf) Essay 1 due

T 10/08 James, Washington Square
Th 10/10 James, Washington Square
T 10/15 Smith, *Just Kids* Essay 2 assigned
Th 10/17 Smith, *Just Kids*

T 10/22 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of American Cities*, excerpt *
Th 10/24 Essay 2 workshop

T 11/5 *Gentrification and Inequality in Brooklyn: New Kids on the Block* excerpt
Th 11/7 *How East New York Became a Ghetto*, excerpts *Essay 2 due*

T 11/12 Guest lecturer: R. Nicholas Ames, University of Washington.
Th 11/14 Pasulka, “Wanted: Macho Men With Mustaches”

T 11/19 Chelsea Piers article
Th 11/21 Screening: *How to Survive a Plague*

T 11/26 TBA
Th 11/28 Thanksgiving, No class.

T 12/03 Foucault, “Panopticism” excerpt* Essay 3 Due

T 12/10 Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” excerpt
Th 12/12 Last Day of Class, Essay 3 Workshop