



O G L E T H O R P E
U N I V E R S I T Y

GO Paris
COM 290
SPECIAL TOPICS IN COM: TRAVEL WRITING

Seema Shrikhande, Ph.D

Email: sshrikhande@oglethorpe.edu

"One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." Henry Miller

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Travel writing gives you the opportunity to give voice to the experiences you have while traveling and share these with a broader audience. It allows you to explore a culture and develop an understanding of other ways of living.

This increasingly popular genre of writing draws on journalistic and literary traditions. In this course you will develop an understanding of this genre by reading the works of well-known travel writers. Through exercises and in-class workshops you will learn to write in this genre and recognize the role of research, observation, journaling and reporting to produce your own travel stories and explore the market for your travel pieces. You will also explore travel blogs and learn what characterizes an effective travel blog. By becoming familiar with some critiques of this genre you will develop strategies to become ethical writers in this genre.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On successfully completing the course students will be able to:

- Identify different styles and categories of travel writing.
- Use research and observation as building blocks for travel writing.
- Identify and use the key writing elements that lead to successful travel articles.
- Produce a variety of articles within this genre.

TEXTS

Required

Best American Travel Writing, ed. Andrew McCarthy. Mariner Books, 2015

Travel Writing: See the World, Tell the Story, (2nd edition) L. Peat O'Neil. 2005.

Selections from *Four Seasons in Rome*, Anthony Doerr, *The road to Little Dribbling* by Bill Bryson, *Tourists with Typewriters*, Patrick Holland (**purchase not needed, pdfs will be provided**)

Travel blogs – links will be posted on Moodle.

Additional readings will be assigned and posted to Moodle.

Recommended

Adios Strunk and White, Hoffman and Hoffman.

London: *A Travel Guide Through Time*, Matthew Green

In addition you will need a travel journal (small and portable is good) and a separate notebook for class exercises and homework.

EVALUATION

Short articles (2 @15% each)	30%
Feature article	20%
Reading responses and FOB (4 @5% each)	20%
<u>Class exercises and participation</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A= 93-100; A- =90-92;

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82;

C+ = 77-79; C= 73-76; C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F= 59 and below

You will write two 800-word articles (travel narrative and destination) and one 1200-word feature article. In addition to this you will contribute one entry to the class blog, write 3 reading responses to the articles in the *Best American Travel Writing* collection and write one FOB piece. Your class participation grade will be based on satisfactory completion of writing exercises, activities during workshops and on maintaining a travel journal which will be submitted every Monday. Detailed handouts will be provided for each assignment.

In the writing business, deadlines are non-negotiable. Your articles/assignments are due on the day specified on Moodle. Late submissions will be penalized 5 points off per day. Work that is more than two days late will not be accepted. Reading responses will be collected digitally, through Moodle; articles must be submitted as a hard copy and on Moodle. A physical journal must be submitted every week. Blog posts will be assigned and scheduled on Moodle.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and class etiquette

Typically, class attendance affects performance positively. There are no allowed absences in this course. In case of extenuating circumstances, please contact me. You are expected to participate in class by completing in-class assignments and homework assignments.

Late arrivals or early departures from class may be counted as absences. If you must leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class. Whether you attend class or not, you are responsible for all materials presented in class and for all announcements and assignments. If you miss class, contact a classmate or me to get you up to speed before the next class session and check the course page on Moodle. If you have extenuating personal or medical circumstances, contact me as soon as possible via e-mail or phone. You will be required to submit valid documentation the day you return to class.

Cell phones and other communication devices should be turned off or set to vibrate and not be used during class. The use of laptops should be limited to class-related work. Texting and surfing the web are not appropriate in-class activities. Personal conversations are disruptive to both your class mates and to me; any observations or insights you have should be shared with the entire class.

Moodle and Email

Students should familiarize themselves with Moodle and check the course page regularly since it will be used extensively to post homework assignments, supplementary readings and course

updates. Each student should maintain an active, functioning e-mail account that is capable of receiving group e-mails.

Disability statement

Reasonable accommodations will be made on an individual basis only when the student provides proper documentation.

Withdrawals and incompletes

The standard university policies on withdrawals as outlined in the most current edition of the Bulletin, apply to this course.

Honor Code

Persons who come to Oglethorpe University for work and study join a community that is committed to high standards of academic honesty. The honor code contains the responsibilities we accept by becoming members of the community and the procedures we will follow should our commitment to honesty be questioned. All work produced for this class will be governed by the honor code.

The Code defines cheating as “the umbrella under which all academic malfeasance falls. Cheating is any willful activity involving the use of deceit or fraud in order to attempt to secure an unfair academic advantage for oneself or others or to attempt to cause an unfair academic disadvantage to others. Cheating deprives persons of the opportunity for a fair and reasonable assessment of their own work and/or a fair comparative assessment between and among the work produced by members of a group. More broadly, cheating undermines our community’s confidence in the honorable state to which we aspire.”

Students pledge that they have completed assignments honestly by attaching the following statement to each piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a course:

“I pledge I have acted honorably,” followed by their signature.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative schedule. Changes may be necessary as the semester progresses. Check Moodle for the most updated schedule.

Readings need to be completed before the class meets.

Key to readings: **BATW**: *Best American Travel Writing*; **TW**: *Travel Writing: See the World, Tell the Story*.

Week	Topic	Reading/Activity
Week 1		
Monday	Course Introduction Why we travel	Syllabus Pico Iyer’s blog post, BATW : Intro
Tuesday	What is travel writing? The Travel Journal	TW : Ch.1; BATW : Neville TW : Ch. 3
Wednesday	Preparing to Write	TW : Ch. 2, BATW : Hessler, Steeves
Thursday	Travel Blogs Reading Response #1 due	See moodle for links Check Moodle for handout.
Week 2		
Monday	Research and observation Travel journals due	TW : Ch. 6; BATW : Abend, Maddux
Tuesday	Travel essays and travel narratives	BATW : Anderson, Busch

Wednesday	Structure and place Reading Response #2 due	TW: Ch. 4 BATW: Theroux
Thursday	Field trip: TBA Style and tone Story 1 – travel narrative due	TW: Ch 5
Week 3		
Monday	Writing the Lead Travel journals due	BATW: Symmes
Tuesday	Writing the body, conclusions Destination articles	Crispin.
Wednesday	Travel journalism: magazines Reading Response #3 due	<i>Travel and Leisure, CN Traveller</i>
Thursday	Field trip: TBA Story 2 - destination article due Planning your feature article and conferences	
Week 4		
Monday	Travel journalism: newspapers Planning your feature article and conferences	NYT, WP articles
Tuesday	Field trip: TBA	
Wednesday	Travel Photography Representing the 'Other' FOB piece due on Moodle	See Moodle for links Cocking, Fursich
Thurs	Finding a market for your writing Course reflection and wrap up Article #3 due 6:00 pm	TW: Ch 8.

Readings and resources

Ben Cocking. (2009). Travel Journalism: Europe Imagining the Middle East. *Journalism Studies*, 10 (1): 54-58.

Crispin, Jessica. (2015). How not to be Elizabeth Gilbert. <http://bostonreview.net/books-ideas/jessa-crispin-female-travel-writing>

Elfriede Fursich. (2002). How can global journalists represent the Other? : A critical assessment of the cultural studies concept for media practice. *Journalism Studies* 3(1): 57-81

Huffington Post: *Best Travel Blogs*
www.huffingtonpost.com/news/best-travel-blogs

Pico Iyer. "Why we travel"
<http://picoiyerjourneys.com/index.php/2000/03/why-we-travel/St>

Steeves, Rick. (1997). How I Became a Travel Writer
http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/9707/rick_steves_on_being_a_travel_writer.shtml

A Taste of the Best Travel Writing (2002).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/725071/A-taste-of-the-best-travel-writing.html>

Travel Writers: Tim Cahill interview. <http://www.rolfpotts.com/writers/cahill.php>

What Makes a Winning Travel Writing Piece (2013).

<http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2013/sep/13/travel-writing-tips-advice>

Travel and Leisure Magazine: www.travelandleisure.com

Food and Wine Magazine: www.foodandwine.com

New York Times Travel Section www.nytimes.com

Conde Nast Traveler <http://www.cntraveler.com/>

Outside Magazine

<http://www.outsideonline.com/2036326/outside-magazine-december-2015>

National Geographic Traveler

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/traveler-magazine/>