course description:

The focus of your writing this term will be an examination of the social forces that facilitate the American longing for the open road. In what ways might these forces, these exploratory impulses, be distinctly American, and in which ways are they more central to the essence of human character? If these forces are universal, then how do they shape themselves in an American landscape, or overseas? What is the role of place in literature; what is its role in shaping consciousness? What do we seek to learn through travel? Can travel teach us anything about the value of slowing down or speeding up? Can it give us any insight into the human character that rests beneath cultural trappings? Through your writing this term, you will examine social construction and philosophy as it relates to place and movement. In this context, consider philosophy as all of the following:

- love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means and moral self-discipline
- inquiry into the nature of things based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods
- critique and analysis of fundamental beliefs as they come to be conceptualized and formulated
- the synthesis of all learning
- the science comprising logic, ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology
- a system of motivating concepts or principles
- the system of values by which one lives

A central goal of this course will be to identify the place and/or responsibility of an individual, particularly an educated person, within a larger culture. We will use theories of relativity, literary theory, and especially close reading and systems thinking as metaphorical and practical platforms for thought.

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and assertion. From an interdisciplinary platform, we will examine connections between psychology and travel as well as between ecological historical, philosophical and sociological currents and the impulse to explore or remain still. Mark Twain stated that “travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness;” we will examine if and how Twain’s observation might apply to concepts of travel and philosophical or spiritual growth. Road may be defined not simply as a highway, a paved or dirt pathway, but perhaps as any route taken with the intention of movement or travel.

You will learn to make and improve well-informed assertions concerning contemporary cultural and social constructions. Over the course of the term, and in a variety of rhetorical contexts, you will develop and present an individual definition of the cultural role that the American “road” system plays. You will apply your rhetorical knowledge by writing in different genres and for varied audiences, adapting voice, tone, format and structure according to the rhetorical situation at hand. Additionally, throughout the semester, we will investigate the ethical force and power of rhetoric – what are the ethical responsibilities of an author?

You will be required to write three major and several minor essays and to make brief presentations throughout the course. One essay will be a blend between philosophical investigation and research-intensive presentation of a relevant, current social concern related to course content; another essay will be a researched personal narrative essay, and the final essay genre will be determined, in keeping with an attendant rhetorical premise, by the author. In addition, you will keep a journal throughout the semester.

texts & materials:

All books are held at Innisfree Poetry Bookstore & Cafe
1203 13th St
Ste A
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 579-1644
www.innisfreepoetry.com

Walking – Henry David Thoreau
On the Road – Jack Kerouac
Best American Travel Writing 2010
Facing the Congo - Jeffrey Taylor
Steep Passages: A World-Wide Eco-Adventurer Unlocks Nature’s Spiritual Truths – David L. Drotar
A Walk Across America - Peter Jenkins
Four Corners - Kira Salak

You will also need a notebook to use as journal or a camera device to keep a photo journal.

The main text in this course is your own writing. Throughout the term, you will be asked to provide up to twenty copies of your writing projects for class distribution and evaluation.

note on plagiarism:
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean. Penalties for plagiarism range from an “F” for an individual paper to expulsion from the University of Colorado, Boulder.
YOUR GRADE will be determined as follows:

25% participation, reflection journal -
includes quality of classroom presence, class discussions and critiques, quizzes, weekly response papers, presentations, field work, class blog work and:

oral participation
five community lectures/events (to be documented in reflection journal)
blog participation (discussions, peer review posts)
weekly “place” walks and accompanying reflection journal

75% writing portfolio -
of three long projects and several short assignments to be submitted sequentially throughout term as well as in final revised version at term’s end. This portfolio is roughly fifty pages (12,500 words) in length:

personal narrative/creative nonfiction progression
philosophical inquiry/research paper
digital composition project/project of your design
course reading reflections/responses
10 short papers (launched in class and/or reflection journal)

additional policies and recommendations:

email (bulk of following policies taken directly from official UCB official email policy):

Assignment of student e-mail addresses:
Information Technology Services (ITS) will assign all students an official University e-mail address. It is to this official address that the University will send e-mail communications; this official address will be the address listed in the University's Enterprise Directory for that student.

Redirecting of e-mail:
A student may have e-mail electronically redirected to another e-mail address. If a student wishes to have e-mail redirected from his or her official address to another e-mail address (e.g., @aol.com, @hotmail.com, or an address on a departmental server), they may do so, but at his or her own risk. The University will not be responsible for the handling of e-mail by outside vendors or by departmental servers. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to his or her official e-mail address.

Expectations regarding student use of e-mail:
Students are expected to check their official e-mail address on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with University communications. Students must check email twice a week at a minimum, in recognition that certain communications may be time-critical.

attendance and participation:

Students who miss two classes during the first week of the course will be administratively dropped from the course.
Regular attendance and active participation throughout the semester are crucial to this seminar/writing workshop. Students who miss class will be expected to ask classmates for the information and assignments that they miss. Students who miss more than two classes can expect the final course grade to be lowered by one fraction of a letter (i.e. A to A-) for each absence after the third. An absence carries the same weight whether due to a doctor’s appointment or a faulty alarm clock. Even when excused, more than five absences can result in an IW, IF, or F for the course. Class starts at the announced time; tardiness is not acceptable (two late arrivals count as one absence). Finally, physical presence in a classroom does not necessarily mean that you are in mental attendance – you must positively contribute to the course workshops. Lack of preparation counts as \( \frac{1}{2} \) absence.

Students are expected to contribute to a positive classroom environment. Students who conduct themselves in a disruptive manner will be asked to leave the classroom; all students who are asked to leave will be marked absent for that class meeting.

**special notes**

Students with disabilities:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or [www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices](http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices).

Religious holidays:

Campus policy requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, [insert your procedures here]. See policy details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

Classroom behavior:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. See policies at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

Honor Code:

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. I will report all incidents of academic misconduct to the Honor Code Council. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information may be found at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html) and [http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/).
Sexual harassment:

The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the OSH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe they have been sexually harassed may be found at http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/

assignments

A regular and required assignment is that you pick up and read papers (in advance of the class) to be workshopped. You must come to class ready to comment on the work of your colleagues and to share in their inquiry. Presentations on drafts submitted by classmates will be a regular feature of the workshop. These presentations should be prepared in advance of class and should be well organized, cogent, and to the point. The presentations should identify strengths and weaknesses as well as propose possible remedies.

In addition to a number of short assignments and activities, you will develop three project-based essays or documents in this class. (Assignment sheets will detail the nature and requirements of each project.) Although relatively short, these essays or documents will require considerable thought and attention. Frequent revisions will be necessary. You will be expected to work on these documents throughout the term, even on days when your draft may not come up for discussion.

Each student is responsible for saving copies of all drafts of work submitted. It is best to save work (including various drafts) in computer and paper files.

All essays and essay drafts must be submitted on time. Students can expect that late drafts will not receive comments. If a student misses class when his/her essay is due for workshop, he or she should expect that it will not be workshopped.

Late assignments will be accepted only in cases of documented emergency.

All essays containing more than seven grammatical or mechanical errors will be returned, ungraded, for revision. Grades will not be assigned until grammatical/mechanical errors have been corrected.

All essays and drafts must be typed, double-spaced, in TNR or similar font. Your name and a page number must appear at the top of every page.

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The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities.

The University takes action to increase ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity, to employ qualified disabled individuals, and to provide equal opportunity to all students and employees.
The journey itself is home. ~ Basho

WEEK ONE – 23 & 25 August –
Course Introduction
view: Plastic Bag, Jonathan Franzen’s 2011 Kenyon College Commencement speech
write: film review/analysis (in opposition to a classic review)
freewrites on travel, on what “being American” means, the composition of popular culture, the meaning of what it is to be passionate/engaged

WEEK TWO – 30 August & 1 September
read: Taylor, first half.
invention and freewriting: patterns of consumption, rhetorics of use
discussion: Barry Lopez: what makes a writer; logical fallacies,;
Aristotilian argumentation

WEEK THREE – 6 & 8 September
read: finish Taylor
due: review of Taylor’s Facing the Congo
due: proposal for first essay: “walking through Boulder: silence and noise”
This American Life as model for essay composition
field writing seminar at Chautauqua: close observation and clarity of purpose, balancing sources

WEEK FOUR – 13 & 15 September
due: first pages of “walking through Boulder”
workshop: practical applications of field writing for the essay
workshop: space and silence
read: Thoreau’s “Walking”

WEEK FIVE – 20 & 22 September
workshop: Morton and Casey: place as question, place as indeterminacy
individual conferences

* Schedule is subject to revision and change – please regard this schedule as a rough map from which we will make marked and interesting and relevant side excursions. Certainly, course plans and freewriting will be expanded and supplemented. Principles covered during workshop will be somewhat intuitive and guided by the material that you write. You can expect to turn in drafts of your work throughout the semester on various workshop days.
finish: Thoreau’s “Walking”

WEEK SIX – 27 & 29 September#
rhetorical awareness: economy of language, balance, concision: haiku exercises, Kerouac’s haiku
practical writing: formal and informal conventions (scholarly discourse vs. informal communication)
writing as breath: freewriting and analysis
writing workshop: grammatical concerns, organization, five (six?) senses
writing workshop: repetition vs. repetitiousness; practical-philosophical continuum

WEEK SEVEN – 4 & 6 October
read: first half of Salak
brainstorming and project generating for research project: travel heuristics
introduction to digital composition and multi-modal rhetorics
begin walking journal
workshop: the interrelatedness of things – “The Theory of Relativity”; complementarity, systems thinking and analysis

WEEK EIGHT – 11 & 13 October
read: finish Salak
due: book review for Salak
due: proposal for travel heuristics research assignment
workshop: introductions: hooks, lines, and sinkers; types of evidence
midterm course review and feedback

WEEK NINE – 18 & 20 October
read: first half of Kerouac
due: first page of research paper
workshop: “Tyranny of the Thesis”

WEEK TEN – 25 & 27 October
read: finish Kerouac
due: review of Kerouac
workshop: occasion and rhetorical context, revisiting ethos, pathos, logos

# At this point, we begin stratified due dates for drafts of your first essay.
WEEK ELEVEN – 1 & 3 November
  read: Jenkins, first half
  workshop: making a claim: praxis, polemic, and dialectic

WEEK TWELVE – 8 & 10 November
  read: finish Jenkins
  due: book review for Jenkins
  workshop: citing sources, giving credit where it’s due, quotation integration, a model of balance for myriad sources/concepts

WEEK THIRTEEN – 15 & 17 November
  read: selections from Best American Travel Writing
  due: short essay responses
  workshop: conclusions: leaving with a question; oral presentation pointers
  final project brainstorming

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASSES ON 22 & 24 NOVEMBER

WEEK FOURTEEN – 29 November & 1 December
  read: selections from Best American Travel Writing
  due: final project outline
  workshop: final project outlines/proposals
  begin final presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN – 6 & 8 December
  course review, final presentations, final portfolio submission