WRTG 3020 The Rhetoric of Travel Writing
Spring Semester 2012
Catherine Lasswell, Instructor
M/W Sect. 48 4:30-5:45 HUMN 186
M/W Sect. 54 6:00-7:15 HUMN 370

Course and Contact Information
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We travel initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next, to find ourselves. We travel to open our hearts and eyes and learn more about the world than our newspapers will accommodate.” -- Pico Iyer

Course Description:
Why do we leave home to venture into the unknown? What can travel teach us about the world? What can reading travel literature teach us about culture, history, and global issues? What can travel literature teach us about rhetoric, the art of persuasion? In this course, we will discover what travel literature has to teach us about writing well and using rhetoric effectively.

In this course, you will have the opportunity to study travel literature in order to engage closely with the tools of rhetoric, to hone your own critical thinking skills, and to craft your own persuasive essays. To do so, you will read both literary and popularly acclaimed travel writers: Bill Bryson, Jon Krakauer, Paul Theroux, Cynthia Zarin, Elizabeth Gilbert, Jack Kerouac, and Pico Iyer. Focusing primarily on 20th century travel literature, we will study the art and craft of this genre, paying particular attention to the ways that authors direct their writing to specific audiences. We will uncover the often implied argument embedded in travel essays as a means of producing our own essays. Of particular interest will be the global issues raised in the literature—ethical, political, cultural, and environmental—offering a richer understanding of the changing world in which we live.

Required Texts and Materials:
- Best American Travel Writing 2007 Ed. Susan Orlean. This collection contains a broad range of highly acclaimed professional travel literature which we will study, critique, analyze, and emulate
- Easy Writer 3rd edition by Andrea A. Lunsford
- In a Sunburned Country by Bill Bryson. This text will be used to examine the ways that research can be conveyed credibly, yet informally.
- Scholarly articles about travel and psychology from CU’s university libraries databases
- Articles, links, and videos posted on CU Learn: https://culearn.colorado.edu.
- Handouts using theoretical perspectives from Rosenwasser and Stephen’s Writing Analytically and revision strategies from Harvard Writing Project
- “Silva Rhetoricae” Web site (humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Silva.htm). This website will be a central text which we will draw on for our understanding of the history of rhetoric and different writing appeals and terms as we gain understanding of how to address the challenges of a given rhetorical situation.
The Purdue University OWL  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ This site provides writing resources for all stages of the writing process.

Colorado Commission on Higher Education Criteria

The course is intended for juniors and seniors in humanities-related degree programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. This 3000-level course meets CCHE criteria for an Advanced Writing Course (GT-CO3) in the Colorado system of higher education in the following:

Rhetorical Knowledge
Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, or the ability to tailor one’s argument for a particular purpose and audience in a particular context. Knowledge of rhetoric sharpens one’s ability to choose the most effective evidence, reasoning, and communication strategies for a given audience and purpose. By closely analyzing travel literature, we will be able to study the rhetorical strategies used by professional travel writers. The exemplary essays from Best American Travel Writing 2007 will help us gain a deeper understanding of rhetorical concepts such as voice, tone, and structure.

Writing Process
This course offers opportunities to learn about audience-centered writing by focusing on peer reviews of work in progress. By actively participating in a series of small- and whole-class workshops of drafts and by revising your own writing in light of audience feedback, you’ll develop the ability to critique your own work with the same insight and honesty with which you critique the work of others. To effectively formulate claims and create strong thesis statements, we will draw from Rosenwasser and Stephen’s Writing Analytically. One concept in particular, the practice of making observations or “noticing” to create an “analytical habit of mind,” will be employed to help formulate analytic claims for an argumentative essay. Revision strategies from The Harvard Writing Project will provide you with a broader, more idea-centered approach to the revision process than merely choosing better words. This approach highlights the ways that revision works as an ongoing, recursive process. You will also have opportunities to integrate various technologies (e.g. Internet search engines, electronic discipline-specific databases) into your creative travel narratives, critical analyses, and academic arguments and to develop advanced information literacy skills pertinent to your research area.

Conventions
In this course, you will tailor your writing – in both style and form—to suit the expectation of sophisticated readers who enjoy publications such as Outside, Gourmet, The New Yorker, and Harper’s – in short, audiences of the sorts of publications routinely selected for the Best American Travel Writing 2007 anthology. The Professional Writing assignment will allow you to take on a professional role of writing to colleagues in the publishing industry.

Effective application
Each assignment in the course is geared to a real-world audience – including members of your discipline or professional and potential employers. As we progress, you will become familiar with writing in a disciplinary or specialized rhetorical situation, even as you make your work accessible to secondary audience in other related fields.

Assignments and Readings

Epiphany  

due Fri. Feb. 3rd
We will begin with an articulation of a travel experience in the form of a 400-500-word Epiphany (5%) directed to CU’s Honors Journal. The purpose of this assignment is to recreate a moment of insight experienced while traveling--one that provided a sense of discovery, truth, or “ah-ha.” The skill of crafting a highly concise piece of writing using sensory detail is transferrable to writing in all professions.

**Writing Portfolio**

*due Feb. 3rd, Fri Mar 9th, and Apr. 20th*

The writing performed for the Writing Portfolio (25%) will serve as relatively “low stakes” writing that will help ramp up your skills for the formal assignments. It also provides the opportunity for you to rehearse a range of rhetorical and mechanical applications/strategies covered in class. The WP will be comprised of various short writings based on prompts given to you on CU-Learn. In some WP assignments, you will be expected to write formal 3rd person accounts in reaction to various aspects of the readings. You will also have the opportunity to compose 1st person informal reflective pieces based upon how their initial interpretations and theoretical applications have changed (or not) as a result of class lecture and discussion. Specific skills will be practiced – claim making, summary, using quotations – based on the handouts on CU-Learn. In other instances, you will “try on” the style of a professional writer in the form of an homage. Peer review worksheets and drafts, as well as other homework given out in class, must also be neatly included in the WP. With the exception of worksheets, all work submitted with the WP must be typed. The WP will be submitted on three different due dates for assessment of 10%, 10%, and 5%.

**Professional Writing**

*due Fri. Feb 24th*

In the Professional Writing (10%) assignment, you will give your assessment of travel essay in the form of a persuasive argument. Writing to your colleagues and superiors in the publishing industry, you will make a case for a specific essay suiting a publication’s readership and demographics. This thesis-driven assignment will strengthen your analytic abilities by requiring you to articulate specifically how and why the issues, language, and values displayed satisfy readers’ expectations and desires. The writing skills honed in this assignment are applicable to many professions including marketing, public relations, education, and business.

**Argumentative Essay**

*due Fri Mar. 23th*

Extending the analytic skills practiced in the professional piece, you will develop an original thesis for an Argumentative Essay (20%) based on In a Sunburned Country or another essay. This essay will use a theoretical lens through which to view the representation of the writer’s travel experiences such as “The Tourist’s Gaze” by John Urry and others. This essay will ask you to employ a range of rhetorical strategies that will connect with your audience and to address multiple perspectives. The argumentative essay will hone writing skills applicable to writing in advanced civic contexts, law, business, environmental work, and journalism/public relations.

**Travel Narrative**

*due Wed. May 2nd*

Last, you will produce an original Travel Narrative (20%) based on a journey you have taken or an in-depth site you have explored. This narrative will apply or modify the narrative structures you’ve studied and incorporate outside research in ways that have been modeled in the readings. Your narrative will take a shape of its own but will contain an outer journey as well as an inner journey. You will work to find a shape to this narrative, whether it is a story, a cultural meditation, or a “mind in motion” piece that reaches toward larger meanings: ethical, political, or personal. Your narrative will exhibit kairos, the important characteristic of timeliness, important in today’s rapidly changing cultural
and societal landscape. As in all major course assignments, your travel narrative will be workshopped and critiqued by your peers. The skills practiced in this final assignment will be transferable to writing in the fields of publishing, journalism, public relations, and political citizenry work. (The narrative needs to be submitted and approved through a Travel Narrative Proposal due Fri. Mar. 9th.)

**Evaluation and Calculation of Grades**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Epiphany</td>
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<td>Professional Writing</td>
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<td>Argumentative Essay</td>
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<td>Travel Narrative &amp; Proposal</td>
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<td>Easy Writer Worksheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Portfolio—I, II, and III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation, Peer Reviews, and Preparedness</td>
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**Workshop Format**

This course will be taught as a workshop in which student texts play a role in producing part of the course “text.” Student writing will be discussed through critical dialogue in small groups of whole class discussion. We will all work closely together to move each person’s ideas to greater originality, depth, logic, and clarity.

On the days we workshop, you will be expected to contribute constructive comments to your classmates’ drafts. Writers need and deserve an attentive and discerning audience, one that is ready to help improve their writing and thinking. In workshops, writers want and need more than praise. High quality participation in workshops involves identifying weaknesses in the writing and offering ways to remedy them. The writers, in turn, will receive peer feedback and decide how to incorporate the feedback into their revisions. All students are responsible for reading the assigned student essays in advance of workshops. With all workshops, your responsibility is to arrive with hard copies of the drafts, (sometimes downloaded from CU-Learn), prepared to comment on the work of your colleagues and to share in their inquiry.

All final essays need to go through a drafting process with some peer or instructor review. **I will not accept final essays that have not been reviewed on a regular basis over the course of the assignment.** I cannot accept first-draft final papers.

**Preparedness**

Mastering the course material in this class will depend on your preparedness. Readings and writings are required for each class session, serving as the basis for the class discussion and activities. Preparedness means always bringing the articles, books, handouts, writings needed for that day. **Sometimes we will concentrate on works for multiple days and the handouts used with them.** Review handouts and works to refresh your memory when we are using works repeatedly.

**Attendance**

In writing courses, attendance is essential. Please arrive on time and to attend every class. **If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining materials missed on that day from one of your classmates.** I would rather you not email me to ask me “what did I miss?” Since we only have 29 days of class, each class is important. **You are allowed THREE absences to use in any way you choose. I do not excuse absences except in the most extreme circumstances.** For each class session missed over THREE, your overall grade will drop one fraction such as from an A- to a B+. **If you have six or more absences, you**
will have missed out on substantial course material that your final course grade will be no higher than a “C.” Seven or more absences will result in an “F” – NO EXCEPTIONS. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as ½ an absence. Failure to be prepared for class may also be counted as an absence.

Grading Criteria for Writing
A Excellent in form and content, insightful, clear, eloquent style, no mechanical errors
B Good, interesting writing with some minor flaws, but no major ones
C Adequate, reasonably competent; a mixture of strengths and weaknesses
D Poor in content, lacking careful thought, in form or mechanics, generally slipshod
F Incoherent, seriously flawed or difficult to understand, or not turned in when due

Grading Criteria for Participation
A Always prepared for class; participates without being called upon; criticism of other student essays shows insight, close reading; comments clear, succinct, and helpful.
B Generally prepared for class; occasionally participates without being called on; criticism of other student papers shows mastery of the course goals; comments generally clear and helpful.
C Adequately prepared for class; only participates when called on; mastery of the course goals generally evident, but criticism of other student papers, although somewhat helpful, demonstrates a less than thorough reading of the paper.
D Preparation is less than adequate; never participates unless called on; criticism of other student papers demonstrates a casual reading, at best; comments demonstrate a failure to master the course goals.
F Disruptive in class (texting, talking, continual tardiness), unprepared when called on, unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions.

Format of Final Papers
All peer-reviewed drafts and final drafts must be typewritten. Double space them and use 1-inch margins and 12-point font.

Late Assignments and Drafts
All assignments must be turned in at the time they are due—at the class they are due or often in my mailbox on the Friday they are due. Please do not email any submissions unless you've been given permission to do so. Final drafts turned in one day late (24 hr. period) will drop a full letter grade; no work will be accepted more than one class day late. Missed work CANNOT be made up. If you are going to be absent from a class when an assignment is due, you must submit the assignments (in hard copy) prior to class in order to receive credit for the assignment.

Cell phones and computers
Once class begins, you need to turn off your cellphones and put them out of sight. Texting is not allowed under any circumstances. If your cell phone is in your lap or visible in your bag, I will assume you are communicating sending or reading message. If you need to check the time, wear a watch. If you need to input your classmates’ emails or mark something on your calendar—do it after class. The bottom line is this: if you text or use your phone during class time, you will be marked absent. Laptops are not needed except on rare occasions. Transcribe your notes onto a computer outside of class. Those students who have texted in class can expect that any letters of recommendation for employment, graduate school, or future will mention the inappropriate use of cell phones.
Classroom Conduct
Our classroom environment will use a discussion format. It is important to attend class and put forth your perspective on issues discussed. For this to be productive, we must treat one another with the highest respect. This means avoiding any disparaging remarks and instead valuing all honest contributions. I reserve the right, if necessary for behavioral reasons, to request a student to leave the room. Inappropriate, lewd, and/or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.

Writing Center
Additional help with your writing is available at the Writing Center in Norlin’s Learning Commons. A tutor will help with everything from brainstorming ideas for a paper, to grammar tips, to helping you organize your ideas. Advance appointments are required. Check the Writing Center website for information on hours and services: [http://www.colorado.edu/PWR/writingcenter.html](http://www.colorado.edu/PWR/writingcenter.html)

Here are various University-wide policies you need to know about:

**Scholastic Honesty and Plagiarism:** Turning in work that is not your own or any other form of scholastic dishonesty will result in a major course penalty. If any part of a paper up to two sentences is plagiarized, you will receive an F on the paper with no possibility for a rewrite. If any more than two sentences is plagiarized, you will fail the course and the incident will be reported to the Honors Council. 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/academics/honorcode/index.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/index.htm)

**Religious Observances:** Please notify me at least one week in advance if you will be absent due to religious observances. These missed classes will not be counted as absences. I will make every effort to accommodate your absence including giving make-up exams or extra credit work for in-class assignments missed. [See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

**Student Conduct Code:** 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)

**Discrimination and harassment:** The University of Colorado Policy on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been discriminated against or 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/](http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/)
Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter 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

Day-by-Day Course Readings Schedule
(All assigned readings have a written component due the day of the discussion. Additional details on each class’s assignments is available on CU-Learn. This schedule is tentative and may be changed.)

WEEK ONE Foundational Concepts and Terms: Rhetoric and Travel Literature and more
W Jan 18 Introduction to Course
Readings:
Course Syllabus

WEEK TWO Foundational Concepts
M Jan 23 Achieving Concise Credible Prose
Readings:
“Why We Travel” by Pico Iyer (CU-Learn)
c. 1336: Mount Ventoux “The Road Less Traveled;” (CU-Learn)
“Introduction” (Best)
Credibility Handout
Rhetorical Situation Handout

W Jan 25
Readings:
“Five Epiphanies” by Paul Theroux (CU-Learn)
Early Travel Writing from Lapham’s Quarterly: c. 700 BC: Boeotia “Sailing Time” (CU-Learn)
“A Brief and Awkward Tour of the End of the Earth” by Jason Anthony (Best)
Rhetorical Strategies Handout
Credibility Handout
Rhetorical Situation Handout

WEEK THREE
M Jan 30
Readings:
Patterns of Exposition (excerpts) –CU-Learn
Early Travel Writing: c. 1283: Asia “Marco Polo’s Notes” ; c.425 BC: Ancient World “Travels with Herodotus” (CU-Learn)
Claims/Evidence/Opinions Handout (CU-Learn)
Summary Handout

W Feb. 1
Readings:
Early Travel Writing: c. 1283: Asia “Marco Polo’s Notes c.425 BC: Ancient World “Travels with Herodotus” (CU-Learn)

Patterns of Exposition (excerpts)
Claims/Evidence/Opinions Handout

Bring 3 copies of your completed epiphany to class to workshop with two others.

Writing Portfolio I due in my mailbox on Fri 2/3. Include your Epiphany.

WEEK FOUR
M Feb. 6

Readings:
Excerpt from The Tourist Gaze by John Urry (CU-Learn)
“The Loss of the Creature” by Walker Percy (CU-Learn)

W Feb. 8
Readings:
“High in Hell” by Kevin Fedarko (Best)
“Desperate Passage” by Michael Finkle (CU-Learn)
“The Loss of the Creature” by Walker Percy (CU-Learn)
Excerpt from The Tourist Gaze by John Urry (CU-Learn)

WEEK FIVE
M Feb. 13

Readings:
Excerpt from On the Road by Jack Kerouac
“High in Hell” by Kevin Fedarko (Best)
“Desperate Passage” Michael Finkle (CU-Learn)
Rhetorical Strategies Handout
Claims/Evidence/Opinions Handout
Quotations Handout
Summary Handout

W Feb. 15
Readings:
“Long Day’s Journey into Dinner” by Elizabeth Gilbert (Best)
“Fantasy Island” by Cynthia Zarin (Best)
Logos Handout

WEEK SIX
M Feb 20
Workshop Professional Writing

W Feb 22
Workshop Professional Writing
Professional Writing due in my mailbox on Fri. Feb. 24.

WEEK SEVEN
M Feb 27
Readings:
“Lonely Planet Guide to my Apartment” by Jonathon Stern (Best)
“Do Not Disturb” by Ann Patchett (Best)

W Feb 29
Readings:
“Death of an Innocent” by Jon Krakauer (CU-Learn)

WEEK EIGHT
M Mar. 5
Readings:
Bryson Chs. 1-3

W Mar. 7
Readings:
Bryson Chs. 4-7

Writing Portfolio II due in my mailbox on Fri. Mar 9. Please include your Travel Narrative Proposal.

WEEK NINE
M Mar. 12
Readings:
Bryson Chs. 8-13

Readings:
Bryson Chs. 14-19

WEEK TEN
M Mar. 19
Workshop Bryson essay

W Mar. 21
Individual Conferences in my office

Argumentative Essay due in my mailbox on Fri. Mar. 23

WEEK ELEVEN
Mar 26-30 Spring Break

WEEK TWELVE
M Apr. 2
Readings:

http://rpucolo.colorado.edu/ebsco-web/ehost/detail?sid=93f727d4-1e8a-45d0-ab24-8ddc3408291e%40sessionmgr110&vid=1&hid=107&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG1ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=65797099

Rhetoric of Scholarly Writing Handout

W Apr. 4
Readings:

http://rpucolo.colorado.edu/ebsco-web/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=cdddf5ec-85c4-40b4-8603-5f6710f8d6fe%40sessionmgr110&vid=2&hid=107

Rhetoric of Scholarly Writing Handout

WEEK THIRTEEN
M Apr. 9
Readings:
“Lost in Space” by Rick Bass (Best)
Easy Writer Worksheet

W Apr. 11
Readings:
“Magic Mountain” by Matthew Power (Best)

WEEK FOURTEEN
M Apr. 16
Workshop Travel Narratives
Easy Writer Worksheet

W Apr. 18
Workshop Travel Narratives
Easy Writer Worksheet

*Writing Portfolio III due in my mailbox by Fri. Apr 20.*

WEEK FIFTEEN
M Apr. 23
Workshop Travel Narratives
Easy Writer Worksheet

W Apr. 25
Workshop Travel Narratives
Easy Writer Worksheet
Week 16
M Apr.30
Workshop Travel Narratives

W May 2
Travel Narratives DUE. Final Reflections