Topics in Writing: Travel Writing
WRTG 3020-060, 888, Fall 2012
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Course Overview

“Wherever you go, there you are.” This cliché implies that people cannot change themselves or their perspective by changing their location. In this course we will explore the potential and limitations of travel as a means to facilitate different types of journeys: physical, cultural and psychological. We will study theories of “place,” and the interplay between the viewpoints of traveler, “native,” writer, and reader. In addition to writing critical analyses of the readings, students will write their own travel narrative. You need not have traveled extensively to take this course.

Course Objective

The objective of this course is to help you improve critical thinking and writing skills by focusing on the rhetorical strategies employed by the writers of travel narratives. I will share my enthusiasm with you for the richness, variety, and complexity of these narratives, and will provide background on the genre conventions that helped to produce them. Since these narratives are written self-consciously, with an eye to how they will be perceived by readers, they are a natural vehicle through which to examine rhetorical strategies as you fine-tune the rhetorical strategies you employ in your own papers.

You will learn to shape your essays by expressing an analytical or argumentative purpose and then presenting facts, observations, inferences and ideas in support of that expressed purpose. While skills in interpreting narrative will be covered and practiced in class, students should already possess the ability to read for inferences (that is, you should be able to recognize and explore ideas that are stated indirectly in a primary text, not just explicitly). Although issues of grammar and syntax may be addressed in class, students with deficiencies in these areas should see me about where to get additional help outside of class.

Why is this class a “core” course?

This 3000-level writing and rhetoric seminar satisfies upper-division core requirements in the College of Arts & Sciences and is part of the state-wide “Guaranteed Transfer” pathway of courses. It extends rhetorical knowledge and writing skills practiced in 1000-level writing courses at CU (which meet “Guaranteed Transfer” goals for Intermediate Writing, GT-CO2) by engaging theoretical perspectives and addressing specialized disciplinary communities. Thus, this upper division course meets the state-wide goals of an Advanced Writing course (GT-CO3) through:

Rhetorical Knowledge: While our focus will be on persuasive writing, the course also focuses on critical reading strategies to enable you to recognize how authors choose images, language, and syntax as rhetorical strategies aimed at particular audiences. Key rhetorical texts that will guide our analysis of the primary materials include Rosenwasser and Stephen’s Writing Analytically, which focuses on strategies for critical analysis of disciplinary discourses, the writing process, and writing conventions; Bruce Ballinger’s The Curious Researcher, Robert Harris’s Writing With Clarity and Style: A Guide to Rhetorical Devices for Contemporary Writers; Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola’s Tell It Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction, William Zinsser’s On Writing Well, Anne Lamott’s Bird by Bird, and Robert Root Jr.’s, “Collage, Montage, Mosaic, Vignette, Episode, Segment.” Texts that help you
examine these narratives through different theoretical frames include Jacques Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.”

Writing Process: The course provides multiple opportunities for you to understand writing from the perspective of various audiences while engaging in specialized discourse. For example, we will engage in a variety of approaches to the writing process, including strategies for gaining facility with a specialized discourse, conducting research within a discipline, generating ideas, making initial ideas more complex, using multiple drafts, and applying a variety of approaches to revision as well as a variety of techniques for conducting constructive peer review.

To facilitate the peer review process, and to hone critical thinking skills, we will read and apply a number of scholarly sources, including Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff’s Sharing and Responding, Lisa Ede’s Work in Progress: A Guide to Academic Writing and Revising, Sarah L. Ash, Patti H. Clayton and Myra G. Moses’s Learning Through Critical Reflection, and Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

Please note: most of the sources mentioned in the previous two sections do not appear as individual entries on the syllabus calendar; these readings are posted on Desire2Learn and are assigned in conjunction with specific writing exercises in the homework. To obtain details about the homework, see the “Assignments” link on our course homepage on Desire2Learn.

Writing with Technology: as part of the writing process, the course will deepen your facility with the research methods and tools necessary for discipline-specific research in various online databases, as well as with uses of technology specific to the writing and revision process, such as editing and comment tools within word processing programs, PDF annotation tools, and interactive online message boards.

Writing Conventions: The theoretical and scholarly texts within the course will introduce you to the specialized vocabulary and conventions of selected disciplines, and students will choose a disciplinary focus for their final research paper. In addition to learning the conventions of writing within a particular field, you also will learn how to make your analysis accessible to secondary audiences.

Effective Communication Strategies: Through our readings and assignments, you will become familiar with writing within a disciplinary or specialized rhetorical situation, will practice effective communication strategies appropriate for different contexts and audiences, and will adapt your writing style to the context in which an analytical argument is made.

Required Texts

- Handouts and articles on Desire2Learn: https://learn.colorado.edu An educational technological platform that supports teaching and learning. Abbreviated as D2L.
- Photocopies of various assignments, as needed. While I am hoping we can conduct peer review online, this will require that each student brings a laptop to class on certain days. We will arrange this after the semester begins.

- **Writer’s Help.** We have the opportunity to pilot an interactive student handbook for free. The handbook covers things like MLA and APA style, as well as help with sentence structure, research methods, and more. This resource will be particularly useful for the Research Travel Essay (Paper 3). I will get a password so we all can access the site at www.writershelp.com, so stay tuned.

- A CU email account that you check regularly.

**Workshops**

Workshops sessions are designed to help both writers and peer reviewers develop rhetorical awareness, apply critical reading skills, refine and reflect on the writing process, and use conventions of language that are appropriate to audience and genre.

*Peer reviewers:* peer reviewers will carefully consider and critically appraise the work of their peers; workshops require application of rhetorical skills by each reviewer to enable writers to understand how they might improve. Thus, peer comments need to explain why the reviewer is making a particular suggestion, so that the logic informing the suggestion is visible to the writer. Techniques for how to deliver constructive peer comments will be covered extensively in class. Coming to class prepared, with all of the reading done and with written and oral comments for other student papers, is a substantial part of your course grade.

*Writers:* writers should listen carefully to comments offered by their peers and consider why a peer might offer suggestions for revision. While writers are under no obligation to implement every suggestion they receive, the peer responses should enable writers to look at their work with fresh eyes, and to recognize where sections of the paper are succeeding and where the argument needs improvement. *Revision is an essential part of the writing process.* I expect that you will make substantive changes to each draft of your major papers.

**Drafts of Papers**

You will be required to write multiple drafts of each of the major papers. Papers must go through the draft and revision process to receive a grade. If you do not turn in drafts, you will earn a zero for the assignment.

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 drafts must be typed, double-spaced (*not* single-spaced), in a readable font. When attaching your paper as a file please make sure your paper is in .doc or .docx so everyone can open it. Your name and page number should appear at the top of every page.
Overview of Assignments

You will be required to write three major papers and several short exercises and to make brief presentations throughout the course. Detailed assignment sheets will be provided for each major paper.

The major essays that you will write in this course (Paper 1--Rhetorical Analysis, Paper 2--Local Travel Article, and Paper 3--Researched Travel Essay, will develop out of a sequence of reading, writing, and thinking assignments that will culminate in a rhetorically sophisticated, idea-driven essay. Although the Homework Responses & Writing Exercises are put into their own category and are not weighted heavily in terms of individual point totals, they provide the basis for you to explore ideas and get thoughts down on paper with little risk. There is a correlation between effort put into these homework assignments and exercises, and the quality of your papers, as the homework and writing exercises help you lay the foundation for developing your initial thoughts into a sophisticated paper.

Paper 1: Rhetorical Analysis with Analytical Cover Letter: A short paper (4-5 pages), in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies used in a travel essay. 10%

Midterm Portfolio. The midterm portfolio is comprised of three components: The Local Travel Article (Paper 2), an analytical cover letter, and your choice of writing exercises and homework assignments. For the Local Travel Article, you will “travel” to a nearby location and write a local travel article, using course readings as a model. The article will need to have a clear theoretical, philosophical or argumentative purpose (implicit or explicit). The article must include some research in addition to your own observations, and be approx. 5-7 pages. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided. The midterm portfolio counts 25% towards the final grade and is weighted as follows: Local Travel Article (10%), Cover Letter, including discussion of writing exercises (15%) = 25%

Final Portfolio: The Final Portfolio documents and demonstrates student learning over the course of the semester, with emphasis on material covered since the midterm portfolio. The final portfolio is comprised of the Researched Travel Essay (Paper 3), cover letter, and a selection of writing exercises and assignments since the midterm. For the Researched Travel Essay you will choose a disciplinary lens (philosophy, biology, anthropology, etc.) or theoretical framework through which to analyze a selection of the travel texts in the course. The essay will include substantial research, make an argument, anticipate and respond to counterarguments, and be approx. 7-10 pages. The research will provide opportunities for students to write papers that enter into conversations taking place within various discourse communities about the ethics and purpose of travel. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided. The Final Portfolio counts 35% towards final grade and is weighted as follows: Researched Travel Essay (20%), Cover Letter, including discussion of writing exercises (15%) = 35%

Portfolio Cover Letters: For the midterm and final portfolios you will include a cover letter that is a reflective analysis of what you accomplished and learned in that section of the course. Each cover letter addresses how you pursued your goals for the major paper, what changes you made to the paper as you revised your drafts, and why you made these changes rather than others. The cover letter sets the stage for the instructor to understand the revised draft of the major papers; you should provide thoughtful insight into your writing process and outcomes. You also may identify and describe in-class activities, writing prompts and/or homework assignments that helped you develop your writing skills.

Homework & Writing Exercises: These formative assignments are designed to help you analyze the readings, hone your writing skills, try new writing approaches, and develop ideas for the major papers for the course. To encourage you to try new approaches these assignments are not individually graded, although assignments will not earn full credit if they are incomplete or poorly done —see below for late homework policy. 10%
Class Discussion Leader/Oral Presentation: Working in pairs, students will have the opportunity to present material and facilitate class discussion on a particular travel piece. A detailed assignment sheet and a sign up sheet will be provided in class. 10%

Class Participation: Includes thoughtful participation in class discussions, preparation of oral and written comments for peer workshop, timely submission of drafts, arriving to class on time, and attendance. (Please see attendance policy.) 10%

Grading Scale for Papers
A Excellent in form and content—insightful; clear, eloquent style, no mechanical errors
B A good, interesting paper 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; generally slipshod in form or mechanics
F Incoherent, seriously flawed or difficult to understand, or not turned in when due

Grading Scale for Participation
A Always prepared for class; participates without being called on; written and oral responses to other students’ papers show insight, close reading; comments are clear, succinct and helpful
B Generally prepared for class; occasionally participates without being called on; responses to other student papers demonstrate mastery of the course goals; comments are generally clear and helpful
C Sometimes prepared for class; only participates when called on; mastery of the course goals generally evident; responses to other student papers, although somewhat helpful, demonstrate a less-than-thorough rhetorical awareness or a superficial reading of the paper; absent
D Inadequately prepared or cannot always participate when called on; responses to other student papers demonstrate an inaccurate reading of the draft; comments demonstrate inadequate mastery of the course material; absent
F Unprepared when called on, unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions or peer review of papers; disruptive to class (talking inappropriately, continual tardiness, text-messaging, etc.); absent

Late Work
Late policy for homework: late homework will be accepted for half-credit if it is turned in before the class period following the original due date. Repeated late work will lower your final grade for the course, regardless of the total of your individual assignment grades. Plan ahead: computer or printing problems do not excuse late work.

Unless otherwise specified, homework is to be turned in to the appropriate dropbox in D2L. To count as on-time, the time stamp must show that it was turned in before the time at which class begins.

Late policy for paper drafts: for papers assigned to be workshopped, late drafts interfere with your workshop group’s ability to function; thus, late drafts of your papers will affect your grade more severely than late homework. Some class periods will require that you bring multiple copies of paper drafts to class, and some class periods will require that you post a draft electronically—read the assignment sheets and follow the directions. Drafts brought in the wrong format will count as late.

Drafts also count as late if they are missing on the date due, incomplete (e.g., three pages when the full draft should be five), or you bring an insufficient number of hard copies to class for your group members (when hard copies are required), or you send the paper electronically after class has begun (when electronic copies are required) for the class period in which they are due (e.g. class begins at 8 a.m. and you post your paper at 8:10 a.m.). Late drafts will cause the final paper to be marked down by one-third for each instance (A- to B+, for example). Repeated late work will lower your final grade for the course, regardless of the total of your individual assignment grades.
Attendance Policy

Class time is for the exchange of ideas and for deepening your understanding of the readings, writing strategies and conventions. If you don’t attend class you won’t get much from the course. Attendance is rarely a problem in this class, but nevertheless, I have an attendance policy: each absence after 3 ABSENCES (1.5 weeks of class) will drop your class participation score. If you miss 6 classes, you will earn a zero for class participation. For each absence after 6, the total course grade will further drop by one third (B- to C+ for example). This means that if all of your assignments together work out to a C average, and you also have 8 absences, you will fail the course.

An absence is an absence: I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences, so take care not to use up your three "penalty-free" absences early in the semester. Two late arrivals and/or two early departures count as one absence; text messaging in class or any non-course related electronic activity conducted in class counts as an absence. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate before the next class. Extenuating circumstances, such as a documented extended illness (hospitalization), will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Please be considerate and turn off cell phones before class begins.

The Writing Center

All students are invited to bring their writing to the Writing Center in Norlin Library for feedback and advice. Students are welcome to bring writing from any discipline at any stage of the writing process. Fifty-minute consultations with experienced writing consultants are available by appointment at no charge to CU students. Because the Writing Center is a very popular campus resource, please plan to make reservations at least one week in advance. Reservations can be made through the Writing Center website or in person. The WC can help you:

- improve your planning, logic, and organization
- refine your clarity, style, citation, and grammar
- prevent procrastination and writing anxiety

Find more information at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html

Communication: please communicate. If a situation arises that interferes with your ability to do the work for this class, please tell me about it, write me a note, or talk to me after class. I would rather learn about problems, concerns, or suggestions during the course when I have a chance to help you succeed, than at the end of the semester, when it is too late to remedy things for you.

Campus Policies

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, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (including but not limited to failure of the course) and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Papers may be submitted to Turn-it-in.com. Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please provide a letter from Disability Services (DS) and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. DS determines accommodations (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, if a religious observance conflicts with your ability to attend class, please notify me two weeks in advance and make arrangements to make up the work.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh
Schedule

- The due dates for assignments are subject to change. Short assignments may be added.
- Readings and assignments are to be completed for the date listed. You are not required to do the exercises in the textbook unless they are specifically assigned.
- If you miss class, look for homework assignments and handouts on Desire2Learn, and get notes from a classmate.

FIRST PROGRESSION: Rhetorical Analysis
Rhetorical focus: critical analysis and reading for inferences

Aug. 28  Introduction to course
What is Travel Writing; what is Creative Nonfiction

Aug. 30  Read Theroux's essay, "Five Travel Epiphanies"** on Desire2Learn (D2L):  
https://learn.colorado.edu, under “Readings”
**please print the primary readings (the travel texts) and bring to class, or have them available on a laptop; you won’t be able to discuss language and style without having the reading in front of you
Homework due (handed out in class; also posted on D2L under “Assignments”)
Read entire syllabus (on D2L)

For all homework:
1. Please see the individual homework assignment sheet; often there will be rhetorical or skills-development readings listed on the assignment sheet that we will apply to the primary texts
2. Send your homework to the dropbox on D2L before class begins

Sept. 4  Read “Introduction” by Faith Adiele and “Introduction” by Simon Winchester
posted under “Readings” on D2L
Homework due, see assignment on D2L

Sept. 6  Read “I Stand Here Writing” posted on D2L
Read “Deer at Providencia” posted on D2L
Homework due

Sept. 11  Paper 1 draft due (Group 1)
Read “Time and Distance Overcome” and “Back to Buxton” on D2L
Read “Sharing and Responding” –see assignment sheet
Homework due; students in Group 1 may turn in the homework next class

Sept. 13  Workshop drafts Paper 1 (Group 1)
Bring laptop to class
Peer responses due—see assignment sheet
Discuss Paper 2: Local Travel Article

Sept. 18  Paper 1 draft due (all groups besides Group 1)
Sept. 20 Workshop Paper 1; peer responses due
   Bring laptop to class
   Read Zinsser, “Writing About Places: the Travel Article” on D2L
   In-class writing on 15 min walk—bring your notes to class
   Bring Proposal for Paper 2 (see prompts on D2L)
   Begin reading *Travels with Charley*; discuss Sept. 27

Sept. 25 **Paper 1 due, final draft with cover letter**
   Bring laptops to class for in-class research
   Continue reading *Travels with Charley*

SECOND PROGRESSION: Turning Experience into Interpretation
Rhetorical focus: claims and evidence; style as argument; strategies for peer review

Sept. 27 Read/discuss first half of *Travels with Charley*
   Homework due
   Student Interactive Presentations

Oct. 2 Read Root, “Collage, Montage, Mosaic…” on D2L
   Read Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts” on D2L
   Student Presentations
   Continue reading *Travels with Charley*
   Homework due

Oct. 4 Read/discuss second half of *Travels with Charley*; homework due
   **Paper 2, draft 1, due date window begins today (see assignment sheet)**
   Student presentations today
   Begin reading *Scribbling the Cat*; discuss Oct. 11

Oct. 9 Workshop Paper 2 (Draft 1)
   Written peer responses due before class begins
   Bring laptop to class
   Homework due
   Continue reading *Scribbling the Cat* (discuss next class)

Oct. 11 Read/discuss first half of *Scribbling the Cat*; homework due
   **Paper 2, draft 2, due date window begins today (see assignment sheet)**
   Student presentations today

Oct. 16 Workshop Paper 2 (Draft 2)
   Bring laptop to class
   Read all drafts in your group; written peer responses due before class begins
   Homework due
   Read “Internal Revision” on D2L
   Continue reading *Scribbling the Cat*

Oct. 18 **Paper 2, Penultimate Draft (Group A), due date window begins today,**
   **see assignment sheet**
   Read/discuss second half of *Scribbling the Cat*; homework due
   Student presentations today
   Begin reading “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity” on D2L
Oct. 23 **Paper 2, Penultimate Draft (Group B), due today by class time**
Read essays TBA
Homework due
Students in Group B may turn in homework next class
Continue reading “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity” on D2L

Oct. 25 **Paper 2, Penultimate Draft (Group C), due date window until Friday at noon**
Read/discuss “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity” on D2L
Homework due
Students in Group C may turn in homework next class
Begin reading *In a Sunburned Country*; discuss Nov. 1
Begin reading essays due Tuesday

Oct. 30 Read essays TBA (see assignment sheet)
Homework due
Continue reading *In a Sunburned Country*

Nov. 1 **Midterm Portfolio Due**
Read/discuss first half of *In a Sunburned Country*
Student presentations today
Homework due

**THIRD PROGRESSION:** Devising a Viable Research Question; Applying Sources
Rhetorical Focus: using a disciplinary lens; argument, analysis, synthesis

Nov. 6 Proposals for Paper 3 due
Begin Online Research Methods—bring laptops
Continue reading *In a Sunburned Country*
Homework due

Nov. 8 In-class research day; bring laptops
Continue reading *In a Sunburned Country*
Homework due

Nov. 13 **Paper 3, draft 1 due**
Read/discuss second half of *In a Sunburned Country*
Student presentations today

Nov. 15 Workshop Paper 3, draft 1
Peer responses due before class
Begin reading *The Places In Between*

Happy Thanksgiving!

Nov. 27 Read essays TBA
Homework due
Continue reading *The Places In Between*

Nov. 29 **Paper 3, draft 2, due date window begins today**
Read/discuss first half of *The Places In Between*
Student presentations today
Homework due
Dec. 4  Workshop Draft 2, Paper 3
Peer responses due before class begins
Homework due
Continue reading The Places In Between

Dec. 6  **Paper 3, penultimate draft (Group A); due date window until Friday at noon**
Read/discuss second half of The Places In Between
Student presentations today
Homework due

Dec. 11  **Paper 3, Penultimate Draft (Group B), due today by class time**
Homework due

Dec. 13  In-class writing exercises

**Dec. 15**  Final Portfolio due
See me if you need an extension, I am willing to work with you

Have a wonderful winter break!