The American Road:
An Investigation Through Inquiry, Interpretation and Experience
WRTG 3020 Section 38, 45 (M/W 3:00-4:15, 4:30-5:45, respectively)
Fall 2013

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Office Hours: M/W 9-10, F 10-11

Texts and Materials:
• Wild, Cheryl Strayed (required)  
• Jesus' Son, Denis Johnson (required)  
• Consider the Lobster, David Foster Wallace (required)  
• Handouts (required)  
• Loose-leaf notebook paper for in-class writing (required)  
• Copies of your work when needed for class discussion (required)

Class Policies and Etiquette:
• Attendance in this class is mandatory (Attendance, page 3). Similarly, being absent from a scheduled conference will count as an absence (unless the conference was rescheduled 24 hours before the original conference time).
• As classes will be full of insightful discussions, enlightening workshops and edifying instruction, it is crucial that you attend all class sessions. In-class activities have been designed to boost your understanding of the readings, sharpen your writing and editing skills, and offer you the essential tools to succeed in this class. Simply showing up for class, however, will not be enough. I expect the class to be the site of lively intellectual activity, which is not the sound of one voice (mine), but rather your voices as you challenge your own beliefs, encounter new ideas, question our texts, welcome new points of view, and—always—contribute respectfully and thoughtfully. Regular participation during class will positively affect our collective classroom experience (and raise your final grade). Failing to contribute your unique voice will strip the class of its diversity.
• Group work is vital to this class and the only way group work is effective is if all members of the group participate. It is important that you be present on days of peer critiquing, not only for your benefit, but also because your group members are counting on your input. This activity plays a major role in your participation grade. Each instance of being unprepared for group work with count as an absence.
• Please be punctual. This class starts at 3:00/4:30pm. Late arrivals disrupt the class and are inconsiderate. Two late arrivals count as an absence.
• Cell phones, iPods and other such devices are both disruptive to the class and inconsiderate. Therefore, these gadgets must be turned off before class.
• Late assignments will not be accepted, unless prior arrangements have been made and verified. This is to encourage you to keep up with class assignments and to allow me to return work back to you in a timely manner.
• Your hard work is a reflection of yourself. Plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will result in failing this course.
• This classroom is a safe haven for all ideas. Respect not only me as your instructor but also your peers. We are all unique individuals entitled to our own opinions and beliefs, however, any comments, jokes, or remarks that denigrate the worth of an individual’s physical/mental ability, body size, religion, race, creed, ethnic background, sexual preference, or gender are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

I have read and understood these policies.  
Signature: __________________________ Date: ________
Course Description
The road is where both opportunities arise and dreams die. The road is peopled with a variety of characters—the outcast, the runaway, the opportunist, the felon, the lost soul, the intellect, the sopping wet and hopeless, the observer, the elitist, and the phony, just to name a few. While there are similarities between all these people, the road offers something different to each. In this class we will investigate the myriad reasons why we take to the road and attempt interpretations of what happens when we get there (wherever or whatever “there” is). Questions such as: In what ways might these forces, these exploratory impulses, be distinctly American, and in which ways are they more central to the essence of the human character? What is the role of the road in literature/media/art, and how does this role shape public consciousness concerning the road? 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 lies beneath cultural trappings? Once we’ve heard from others, we will then attempt to enter the conversation ourselves through an extended and “post-modern” travelogue (i.e. a travelogue that knows it’s a travelogue) in an attempt to show through personal experience and contemplation some of the ideas, questions and concepts explored in the course.

CCHE CO3 Course Outcomes:
1. Extend Rhetorical Knowledge:
   a) Use texts from rhetoric, discourse studies, communication, or related disciplines to extend understanding of rhetorical concepts to the discipline that is the focus of the course.
   b) Develop sophisticated strategies for critical analysis of several genres, for specified discourse communities. These communities may include professional or disciplinary discourse communities.
   c) Learn more sophisticated ways to communicate knowledge to appropriate audiences.
   d) "Apply reflective strategies to the synthesis and communication of knowledge.

2. Extend Experience in Writing Processes:
   a) Use multiple drafts.
   b) Hone strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   c) Learn to critique own and other’s work.
   d) Use a variety of technologies (writing and research tools).
   e) Learn to evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, credibility, reliability, and bias.

3. Extend Mastery of Writing Conventions
   a) Select and adapt genre conventions for disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   b) Use specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation appropriately.
   c) Control features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

4. Demonstrate comprehension of content knowledge at the advanced level through effective communication strategies, including:
   a) Ability to compose messages for specific audiences and purposes.
   b) Ability to communicate to the variety of audiences in disciplinary or specialized discourse.
   c) Ability to adapt content and style to respond to the needs of different audiences and rhetorical situations in disciplinary or specialized discourse.
Teaching Philosophy
I enjoy the teaching of writing and rhetoric and take great pleasure in my students’ developing proficiency in academic reading, writing, and critical thinking. I will gladly act as coach and mentor, but please be advised that I consider higher education an exercise in self-reliance, and I will not rescue students from the consequences of their choices. Please understand that enrolling in this class does not mean that you should expect me as your teacher to be solely responsible for your unique learning experience. I will do my utmost to ensure that you do improve your writing abilities and leave my class better equipped to handle future courses and job requirements; however, you must take responsibility if you fail to meet the demands of the course. I expect that students will familiarize themselves with the course requirements and policies and do their best to follow these guidelines.

Grading
Assignment #1: Driving Song  40pts  (4%)
Assignment #2: A Picture is Worth... 750 Words?  60pts  (6%)
Assignment #3: Road Narrative  100pts  (10%)
Assignment #4: Rhetorical Analysis (DFW)  200pts  (20%)
Assignment #5: Literary Journalism  350pts  (35%)
    Workshop Draft  25pts
    Response Letters  50pts
    Preface  25pts
    Final Draft  250pts
Reading Quizzes (2 for Wild, 1 for Jesus’ Son, 1 for DFW)  100pts  (10%)
Participation (based on mandatory “presentations” & in-class discussion)  50pts  (5%)
Attendance*  100pts  (10%)
Total  1000pts. (100%)

*Everyone starts with 100 points, lose 10pts/absence, 3pts/tardy. Everyone gets one (1) “freebie”. Those with more than eight (8) absences will automatically fail the course. Only (advanced-notice) school-related functions and religious observations represent an “excused” absence.

Major Assignments
- Road Narrative: A brief narrative essay in which the author draws from his/her own personal beliefs, thoughts and experiences “on the road” to reflect on a larger questions, ideas or concepts. A story with a point. (Approx 1400 words)
- Rhetorical Analysis & Response: 1) A rhetorical analysis of the essay, “Consider the Lobster” by David Foster Wallace. 2) A response to both the text and the analysis of the text that engages with and extends upon the ideas presented. (Approx 2000 words)
- Literary Journalism Essay: A creative nonfiction essay where author takes the role of participatory journalist and collects data through experience, interview, research, etc. in an attempt to reflect on and offer answers for larger questions, concepts and/or ideas influenced by the “outsider perspective”. (12 page minimum)

Writing Center
If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. All students are invited to bring their writing to the Writing Center 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.

§ 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

Disability accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website (http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Classroom Behavior: 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, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, 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

Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. 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. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) 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://hr.colorado.edu/dh/

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, 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; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://honorcode.colorado.edu

Religious Observances*: Campus policy regarding religious observances 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, I ask that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss.
**Course Calendar:** (This is a tentative schedule for the Fall 2013 semester. For each project you will receive an in-depth project calendar that highlights the reading and due dates in more depth.)

WEEK 1 Brief Course Introduction; Syllabus, Intro Assignment #1: Road Song (Aug 26, 28)

WEEK 2 Assignment #1: Road Song Due; Intro Assignment #2: A Picture…; (Sept 4)
Read: *Wild*, by Cheryl Strayed

WEEK 3 Assignment #2: A Picture… RD Due (Monday); Assignment #2: A Picture…DUE Discussion: Assignment #3: Road Narrative; Read: *Wild*, Literary Journalism Intro (Sept 9, 11);

WEEK 4 *Wild* Reading Quiz #1 (approx 200pgs); Discussion: Bringing scenes to life; A#3: In-class (Sept 16, 18)

WEEK 5 Rough Draft of Assignment #3 Due (Monday); *Wild* Reading Quiz #2 (finish book); Discussion: Revision (Sept 23, 25)

WEEK 6 Assignment #3 Final Draft DUE; Read: *Jesus’ Son* by Denis Johnson; (Sept 30, Oct 2) Discussion: Transcendentalism (Emerson, Whitman, d. Johnson); Lecture: Drugs & the Fender Jazzmaster; Intro A#4.

WEEK 7 *Jesus’ Son* Reading Quiz (whole book); Discussion: *Jesus’ Son* (Oct 7, 9)
Read: “Up, Simba” by Handout: Rhetorical Analysis; Sample Essays

WEEK 8 DFW (Reading Quiz); Read: “Consider the Lobster”; In-Class Drafting of Assignment #4; (Oct 14, 16)

WEEK 9 Rhetorical Analysis lecture/Discussion; Rough Draft of A#4 (peer review) (Oct 21, 23)

WEEK 10 Final Draft of A#4 DUE; Creative Nonfiction Discussion Craft and Theory (Oct 28, 30)

WEEK 11 Assignment #5: Literary Journalism Essay Proposals Due (Nov 4, 6)

WEEK 12 A#5 Lecture, Discussion, In-class drafting (Nov 11, 13)

WEEK 13 RD of A#5 Due (Wednesday) (Nov 18, 20)

WEEK 14 **FALL/THANKSGIVING BREAK**

WEEK 15 A#5 Peer Review Letters Due. (Dec 2, 4)

WEEK 16 Revised Final Draft (w/ Preface) of A#5 DUE (Dec 9, 11)

WEEK 17 Exam Week; No class.