“Travel Writing”  
Dr. Tracy Ferrell

“Please be a traveller, not a tourist. Try new things, meet new people, and look beyond what’s right in front of you. Those are the keys to understanding this amazing world we live in.”  
--Andrew Zimmern

Spring 2014  
sect.055, TTh 9:30-10:45, HLMS 104  
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Phone: 303-492-3515  
Website:www.colorado.edu/PWR/courses/ferrell

Required Texts:

On D2L:
"Why We Travel," Pico Iyer  
selection from Video Nights in Kathmandu, Pico Iyer  
“In Defense of Tourism,” Peter Jon Lindbergh  
“Walk of Fame,” Jeff Vize  
selections from How They See Us, ed. James Atlas  
“Who is America?” Chuck Klosterman  
selection from The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiesen  
“Miami Party Boom,” Emily Witt  
selection from Nothing to Declare, Mary Morris  
“Aligning the Internal Compass,” Jessica McCaughey  
“Let the Buyer Beware,” Edwin Tucker  
“The Aunties,” Anne Lamott  
selection from In a Sunburned Country, Bill Bryson  
selection from In Patagonia, Bruce Chatwin  
selection from Travels in a Thin Country, Sara Wheeler  
selection from Wild, Cheryl Strayed  
“Northwest Passage,” Duncan  
selection from Tim Cahill  
selection from Eiger Dreams, Jon Krakauer  
“The King of the Ferret Leggers,” Donald Katz  
“Bolivia’s Wrestlers,” Alma Guillermoprieto  
selection from Dark Star Safari, Paul Theroux  
selection from Under the Tuscan Sun, Frances Mayes  
“Lost in America,” Steve Friedman

Linked from syllabus:
“The Shock of Arrival,” Pico Iyer
Course Description:
This course will examine a variety of modes of writing about travel including journal format, creative non-fiction, research-based essays, humor, reviews and more. In addition to studying the different techniques and forms of writing about travel, the class will also explore the ethical considerations inherent in travel itself. We will read selections from such well-known travel writers as Peter Mathiessen, Bruce Chatwin, Pico Iyer, Paul Theroux, Mary Morris, and Jon Krakauer. Besides keeping a journal of your own writing where you can experiment with style and genre, you will also write two major travel writing pieces. The first will be a creative non-fiction piece based on a travel memory/event, while the second will be a magazine-style piece which integrates research about a place with personal experience. In addition to these written assignments, you will be responsible for contributing to a class travel blog as well as teaching the class about a major figure in travel writing.

Course Goals and CCHE Criteria:
This upper division seminar is part of the state-wide “Guaranteed Transfer” pathway of courses. Thus, this course meets the Colorado Commission on Higher Education goals for an Advanced Writing course in the following areas:

Rhetorical Knowledge: Because this class focuses on the topic of travel writing, readings and assignments will focus on the genres and subgenres of the discipline, including travel literature, memoir, magazine/journal articles and guidebooks/blogs. We will explore a variety of styles/writers within these genres, aimed at different audiences, in order to better form an understanding of the principals of rhetoric in general and to be able to employ that knowledge within these more specific discourse of travel writing.

Writing Process: The course will allow you to understand writing from the audience perspective by focusing on the peer review of work in progress. Thus, you will discover how revision is central to the writing process. Each paper will go through a minimum of two revisions and we will all work together as a class to provide constructive criticism to help each writer with his/her writing process. Your job will therefore be to provide oral and written commentary on other students' papers when assigned to do so. In addition, you will sometimes be asked to evaluate other students' input into the workshop process.

Writing Conventions: The papers you will write for this course will call upon key genres of travel writing aimed specifically at a general audience. In the process you will learn about genre conventions appropriate to this field and/or to your audience, and about how to draw on specialized vocabularies in ways that still make your work accessible to secondary audiences.

Effective Communication Strategies: Many of the assignments in the course are geared to real-world audiences—including members of the community at large.
You will become familiar with writing in a variety of contexts for different audiences including literary non-fiction, research based essays and guides/reviews suitable for magazines or the internet.

**Technology:**
My WRTG 3020 course draws extensively on a wide variety of technology. You will be expected to use the course website daily for finding readings and interactive web assignments. We will be using various forms of technology in the classroom including blogs and websites in order to better understand visual rhetorics. You will be using databases and search engines as a basis for research on your second paper, and you will become familiar with blog creation in assignments for the class blog.

**Writing Help:** In addition to coming and seeing me during my office hours, there are various resources available on campus to help you with your writing or research. The Writing Center schedules individual consultations in Norlin E111. You can schedule an appointment at [http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html](http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html).

**Course Requirements:**
1) Essay 1: Your first paper of the semester will be a 3-4 page personal travel essay/memoir using one of the styles we will be studying in class. This essay should draw on personal experience to make a point about the self, the "other" or larger, more widely relatable concerns.

2) Essay 2: Your second essay will be a 6-8 page magazine style travel piece that incorporates research about the place in question.

3) Travel Blog: Increasingly, travellers look to the internet for information about their travels, and more and more travel writing is found on-line (particularly guidebook-style writing). In order for you to gain practice in this area, we will be creating a class blog for travellers to Boulder and the surrounding area. You will be divided into small groups based on your interests, and each group will be responsible for one section of the blog: Lodging, Dining, Entertainment, Activities and General Information. Each group will be graded on the quality and professionalisms of their posts and will be responsible for posting a minimum of 5 articles throughout the semester.

4) Journal: All good writers must be aware of and record their surroundings, but for no one is this more true than for the travel writer. Thus, I am going to ask you to keep a journal this semester where you will complete a certain number of specific assignments that will ask you to explore your environment and practice styles and tools that we will be studying in class. You will not receive a letter grade on these pieces, just a check or check minus depending on the effort put into each one. You can either keep a traditional hand-written journal or a
computer folder “journal.” For hand-written pieces, you should aim for two pages. For typed pieces, you should aim for one page, double-spaced.

5) Participation/Attendance: Clear thinking is imperative to clear writing. To this end, you are expected to come to class having read and completed all assignments and ready to share your thoughts in a class discussion. Such discussions allow you to clarify your own opinions and arguments when faced with opposition. Of course, you cannot participate if you are not in class. Thus, if you miss more than three classes during the semester, your grade will be lowered by 5 points for each subsequent absence. Extenuating circumstances will require written documentation. I also expect you to be on time for class, since arriving late disrupts the entire class. Because of this, 3 tardies will count as 1 unexcused absence. In class writing assignments and reading quizzes will also count in the participation grade.

6) Class presentation: At the beginning of the semester, you will be paired with another student and assigned a major writer in the field of travel writing. For the week we will be discussing that writer, you will be responsible for presenting the class with background on this writer, leading a discussion on a short piece of his/her work, and then guiding the class through a writing exercise based on that writer. I will lead the first discussion on Pico Iyer as an example of what you should try to do.

7) Portfolio: Your final assignment for the semester will involve sorting through all of the writing you have done for the course so far (in class and in your journal) and choosing 2-3 short pieces that you consider your best. You will edit and workshop these pieces to bring them up to publishable quality and submit them on the last day of class in a portfolio that includes all drafts as well as a reflection piece.

Grading:
Journal pieces will earn a check or check minus. All other papers and presentations will be graded according to the rubrics that can be found on the website. The final grade will be broken down as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1 and 2 (15% ea. x2)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Late Work:
For each paper, you will be responsible for writing two rough drafts, which are due on the date noted. Late rough drafts will not be accepted. If you have an excused absence on the day that a rough draft is due, you are responsible for having the draft workshopped by other students in the class or by the writing center. Final paper drafts need to be turned in with all drafts. I will accept papers up to one day late for one grade lower. The portfolio will not be accepted late, since I have to do grades immediately. Other assignments such as writing exercises and research assignments will not be accepted late unless you have an excused absence.

Cell Phones/Computers: Remember to turn off your cell phone when you enter the classroom. Because ringing cell phones are extremely disruptive to the entire class, you will receive an F for participation for the day if your phone rings in class. You may use your computer to take notes in class. If I find that you are using your computer for non-class related activities, you will receive an F for the day and will lose your computer privileges.

University Policies
Students with 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 (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Plagiarism: We will discuss plagiarism in depth in class before any paper assignments are due. Any student found to have intentionally plagiarized work for this course will receive an F on that assignment with a possibility of further sanctions based on the severity of the infraction. Students found to be breaking the honor code in any way (cheating, lying, plagiarizing, etc.) will be reported to the Honor Code Council and may be subject to both academic and non-academic sanctions. For further information, please consult the CU Honor Code at: http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/studentinfo/index.htm

Sexual Harassment: The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or promises or create an environment that is hostile or offensive. Harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite gender and between any combination of members in the campus community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) 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 can be obtained at: http://www.colorado.edu/odh/resources.html

**Religious Observances:** 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, I expect to be notified in the first two weeks of the semester if you will be missing class due to a religious observance so that we can make arrangements for any work missed.

**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. See policies at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Readings and Classwork</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Jan.</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>21 Jan.</td>
<td>Tourist vs. Traveller: Is there a difference? Does is matter? Read “In Defense of Tourism,” Lindbergh Form blog groups</td>
<td>With your blog group, sign up to be an author of the blog. Then, research and find a travel blog and present it to the class. Make sure to link the blog you are presenting on the class blog so that there are no duplicates.</td>
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<td>23 Jan.</td>
<td>Blogs</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>30 Jan</td>
<td>Read selection from <em>How They See Us</em>, ed. Atlas Read “Who Is America?” Klosterman</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>4 Feb.</td>
<td>Travel Memoir/Personal Revelation Selection from <em>The Snow Leopard</em>, Peter Matthiesien Presentation on Peter Matthiesien</td>
<td>Journal entry 1: Write either a philosophical piece about the ethics of travel or a memoir piece about a past travel experience</td>
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<td>6 Feb.</td>
<td>Journal Style Read “Miami Party Boom,” Emily Witt Look at Dan Eldon’s journal in class</td>
<td>Blog: Article 1 should be posted</td>
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| Week 5 11 Feb. | Read selection from *Nothing to Declare*, Morris  
Presentation on Mary Morris | Journal Entry #2: Create a multimedia journal entry that includes writing plus collage, photos, video, music or anything else you would like (you may do this digitally or on paper) |
| 13 Feb. | Paper workshopping in class | Due: First draft of paper #1  
Bring one copy to class |
| Week 6 18 Feb. | The Mundane  
Read “Lonely Planet Guide to My Apartment,” Stern  
Read “Aligning the Internal Compass,” McCaughey | Journal Entry #3: Write a travel piece about something mundane—a trip to the grocery store, your backyard, your friend’s apartment . . . |
| 20 Feb. | Paper workshopping in class | Due: Second draft of paper #1  
Bring 3 copies to class |
| Week 7 25 Feb. | Humor  
Read “Let the Buyer Beware,” Tucker  
Read “The Aunties,” Anne Lamott | Journal Entry #4: Turn a travel experience into something funny. Write about something that went wrong or take a look at something from a different perspective |
| 27 Feb. | Read selection from *In a Sunburned Country*, Bryson  
Presentation on Bill Bryson | Due: Paper #1—Turn in final draft with copies of all other drafts |
| Week 8 4 March | The Research Essay  
Read selection from *In Patagonia*, Chatwin  
Presentation on Bruce Chatwin | Blog: Article 2 should be posted |
| 6 March | Research and citation workshop in class | Take a break! |
| Week 9 11 March | More Using Research  
Paper workshop in class | Due: First draft of Paper #2  
Bring 3 copies to class |
| 13 March | Read selection from *Travels in a Thin Country*, Wheeler  
Presentation on Sara Wheeler | Journal entry #5: Write a travel piece that imitates the style of a favorite author. This could be someone we have studied in class or another writer you know. Please list the writer. |
| Week 10 18 March | Nature/Adventure Writing  
selection from *Wild*, Strayed  
Read “Northwest Passage,” Duncan | Blog: Article 3 should be posted |
<p>| 20 March | Paper workshop in class | Due: Second draft of paper #2 |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
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<th>Bring 3 copies to class</th>
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<tr>
<td>24-28 March</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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| Week 12  | Nature/ Adventure Writing (cont.) | Due: Paper #2  
| 1 April | Read selection from Cahill | Turn in final drafts with all rough drafts  
|         | Presentation on Tim Cahill |                       |
| 3 April | Read selection from *Eiger Dreams*, Krakauer | Journal entry #6: Write a nature piece or an adventure piece  
|         | Presentation on Jon Krakauer |                       |
| Week 13  | People and Events |                       |
| 8 April | Read "The King of the Ferret Leggers," Katz | Blog: Entry 4 should be posted  
|         | Read “Bolivia’s Wrestlers,” Guillermoprieto |                       |
| 10 April | Read selection from *Dark Star Safari*, Theroux | Journal entry #7: Write a piece about a particular person or group of people or an event  
|         | Presentation on Paul Theroux |                       |
| Week 14  | Playing with Style |                       |
| 15 April | Read selection from *Under A Tuscan Sun* | Blog: Entry 5 should be posted  
|         | Presentation on Frances Mayes |                       |
| 17 April | Read “Lost in America,” Friedman | Journal entry #8: Play with style. Write in a way that is new to you—use the 2nd person or make lists or focus on a very specific object (like a type of food) or be ultra descriptive or try something else. Be experimental.  |
| Week 15  | The class blog | Be prepared to present your segment of the blog to the class |
| 22 April |                         |                       |
| 24 April | Portfolio readings |                       |
| Week 16  | Portfolio readings |                       |
| 29 April |                         |                       |
| 1 May    | Finish portfolio readings | Portfolio due  
|         | Last day of class! |                       |