Travel Writing

When you travel, your first discovery is that you do not exist.
-- Elizabeth Hardwick

As you walk and eat and travel, be where you are; otherwise you will miss most of your life.
-- Buddha

Trips don’t end when we return home – in a sense it’s when they usually begin.
-- Agnes E. Benedict

*Bill Bryson once made the point that travel writing is a forgiving genre: once you walk out the front door, you’re traveling.

*[A] manuscript that is, in essence, the traveler’s journal is one in which the writer has failed to analyze the material. Reading these manuscripts is like those interminable nights spent at your neighbor’s house viewing several hundred unedited slides of his latest vacation.
-- Tim Cahill

Spring 2014
WRTG 3020-066 – 12:30-1:45, ECCR 116

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office: Temporary Bldg. 1, room 2
office hours: T/Th 11:30-12:30
& by appointment

Course Policies, Etiquette, Integrity

• This classroom is a safe place. Respect not only me as your instructor, but also your peers. Each class member is entitled to his or her beliefs, opinions, and interpretations. Refrain from jokes, comments, and remarks that disparage or malign others (i.e.: be respectful of peer physical/mental abilities, race, religion, ethnicity, belief systems, sexual orientation, gender, and body size); failure to adhere to these terms will not be tolerated.

I absolutely invite you to disagree with me, and with one another, but you must do so without sliding to the level of snide, sarcastic, or abusive discourse.

1 With permission, based loosely on “Class Policies and Etiquette” by Steve Caldes.
• This course requires that each student exercise independent thought and develop self-awareness, accountability, and self-reliance. While I am here to help (and happy to do so), I will not be solely responsible for your learning experience; you must take responsibility for your studies and for your movement through the world. In other words, while I wish to help you become a better writer and thinker and reader, the ultimate outcome rests on your shoulders, and I will not rescue you from the consequences of your actions, nor from the outcome of any failure to act.

• David Foster Wallace says this better than I might have: “please be informed that I draw no distinction between the quality of one’s ideas and the quality of those ideas’ verbal expression.” Please do not turn in ill-conceived, slapdash work.

• Attendance is mandatory; no more than three absences are allowed. If you should miss a conference (outside of office hours), this counts as an absence as well (conferences must be rescheduled 24 hours before the original conference time). If you miss two classes in the first two weeks of this course, you will be dropped from the course. If you miss four classes over the length of the semester, you will fail this course.

Mere attendance in this class is insufficient – you must actively contribute to class discussions. Failure to prepare for class counts as an absence. Late arrival to class counts as one half absence; please arrive on time.

• Workshops are crucial to this class – and workshops are successful when all class/group members arrive prepared with thoughtful and insightful written critique. We will discuss, at length, what creates, supports, and supplies sound critique. Failure to prepare for workshop constitutes an absence.

• Cell phones, Ipods, and all email, text, twitter, etc. programs are disruptive to class.

Please turn off all such devices and programs before class. Texting, Facebooking, etc. during class constitutes absence.

• Late assignments will not be accepted. This encourages you to keep up with coursework and it allows me to return your work in a timely manner.

• Plagiarism and academic deception will result in course failure.

I have read and understood the above policies:

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Course Description

In the mid-Nineteenth century, during his travels to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, Mark Twain wrote “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrowmindedness.” In more recent years, Larry McMurtry suggested that “It may be that the availability of speedy travel has mainly worked to make the human animal—or at least the American animal—more impatient.” There is a lot of philosophical space between these statements, which we will explore throughout the course of this term via an exploration of the following:

• Barry Lopez suggested that in order to become a good writer, one ought to “get away from the familiar.” But he went on to say that travel to exotic destinations need not be the way to exit the familiar. So what, then, does travel mean?
Etymologically, travel is akin to travail. Is travail, in fact, an imperative element of enlightened travel?

What is the distinction between traveler and tourist? Is this distinction dissolving, particularly within the pressures of globalization?

What dangers of cultural appropriation exist? How should a traveler treat a distinct (and foreign) culture? What value exists in preservation of/noninterference with autonomous/unique cultures? How do concepts of cultural relativism factor into these arguments?

Is the notion of enlightenment though travel a pretentious intellectual construct? Must one launch into any journey, of any length and type (physical, emotional, etc.) with an existing seed of understanding for the beautiful, for the potential for enlightenment?

What is the role of place in literature; what is its role in shaping consciousness? What relationships exist between place and movement, between place and culture?

How might travel function as access to the commons?

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 human character independent of cultural trappings?

Through your writing and investigation of rhetorical stance and structure 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, particularly within a large culture with an environmental consciousness. We will use theories of relativity, literary theory, and especially close reading and systems of dialogic and argumentation as metaphorical and practical platforms for thought and assertion. From an interdisciplinary platform, we will examine connections between psychology and travel as well as between historical, ecological, philosophical, and sociological trends and resultant impulses to explore or remain still.

Students 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, each student will develop and present an individual definition of the cultural role that travel plays. Students will apply their 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

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and power of rhetoric—what are the ethical responsibilities of an author, particularly a travel writer?

Students 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; another essay will be a researched first-person narrative essay, and the final essay genre will be determined, in keeping with an attendant rhetorical premise, by the author. In addition, students will keep a walking journal throughout the semester.

CCHE (Colorado Commission on Higher Education)

As an upper-division writing and rhetoric course, Travel Writing will build upon the skills that you learned in you first year writing and rhetoric studies. Travel Writing is designed with the following criteria in mind: competency in critical thinking, reading, and writing, as well as a content focus in communication. Proficiency in various technologies (to be outlined later) will be given high priority.

Rhetorical Knowledge: Rhetoric is the art of persuasion—the ability to shape one’s argument for a specific purpose and audience in a carefully defined context. In this course, you’ll learn to write compelling essays that explore original, provocative, and complex ideas in interesting ways. By closely analyzing and thoughtfully discussing a variety of exemplary models, you’ll gain a deeper understanding of rhetorical concepts such as voice, tone, and structure. The essays you write in this class will challenge you to move beyond familiar formulas and to communicate to audiences in more interesting, substantive ways. We will foreground the importance not only of critical thinking but also unique, individual intellectual inquiry and creativity.

Writing Processes: The essays that you will write in this course will develop gradually in the form of progressions, each of which is a series of interrelated reading, writing, and thinking exercises designed to culminate in a rhetorically aware, advanced essay. Workshops and revision will be essential in this process. By actively participating in a series of small- and whole-class workshops of drafts and by revising your own writing in response to peer and instructor feedback, you’ll develop the ability to critique your own work fluidly and with skill, confidence and honesty; in turn, you will critique the work of others with the same level of skill and grace. In addition, as outlined in the sections below, technology will also play a role in your writing and research. You’ll also evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, credibility, reliability, and bias.

Advanced Content Knowledge: By analyzing a number of primary sources and the work of numerous scholars in the fields most relevant to travel studies, as well as scholars in rhetoric and composition, you’ll learn to intellectually engage and communicate with specialized discourse communities. For the final progression, you’ll investigate ways to extend your knowledge of the field of travel studies to write effectively in a discipline of your choice (e.g., your major).

Texts & Materials
In addition to a number of secondary-source handouts concentrated on rhetorical theory and travel studies, please acquire the following books and bring them with you to class at the relevant times.

All books are held at the CU Bookstore:

Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*
Elizabeth Gilbert, Ed, *The Best American Travel Writing, 2013*
Pico Iyer, *Sun After Dark*
Peter Matthiessen, *The Snow Leopard*
Paul Bowles, *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*
Kira Salak, *Four Corners*
Bruce Chatwin, *Songlines*
Alexandra Fuller, *Scribbling the Cat*
Robert Root, *Following Isabella, Travels in Colorado Then and Now*

Optional: you may wish to order Andrea Lunsford’s *The Everyday Writer* if you wish to have a good writing manual on hand during the semester. Lunsford covers many grammar and mechanics concerns quite effectively.

You will also need a notebook to use as your journal. The main text in this course is your own writing. Throughout the term, you will be asked to provide up to 21 copies of your writing projects for class distribution and evaluation.

Your Grade will be determined as follows:

80%:
- A: excellent in form and content—in 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, form, or mechanics—generally slipshod.
F  incoherent, seriously flawed or difficult to understand, OR not turned in when due.

20%: participation and presentations

10%: daily participation in critical thinking exercises, oral participation, quizzes (150 pts.)
10%: brief presentations and effective use of technology (100 pts.).

Grading Scale for Participation:
A  always prepared for class; participates without being called on; response to other students’ papers reveals insight and close reading; comments are clear, succinct, and helpful.
B  generally prepared for class; occasionally participates without being called on; response to other student papers demonstrates 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, but responses to other student papers, although somewhat helpful, demonstrate a less than thorough rhetorical awareness or reading of the paper.
D  inadequately prepared or never participates unless called on; response to other student papers demonstrates a superficial or inaccurate reading, at best; comments demonstrate a failure to master the course goals.
F  disruptive to class (talking inappropriately, continual tardiness, etc.); unprepared when called on; unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions.

Technology
Our culture relies increasingly on highly developed information literacy, and therefore, this class will draw on multiple technologies, among them websites, PowerPoint, email, and digital library databases. Additionally, some students may choose to produce short film responses.

If you use a non-university e-mail account (e.g. hotmail.com, msn.com), be sure to link it to the university e-mail account. Access to on-line library materials requires that you be identified as a university user (colorado.edu). See the Library web site, for information on remote access and setting proxy servers. It is your responsibility to become familiar with sending and receiving attachments using commonly available software (e.g. Microsoft Word), and for pasting text into the body of an e-mail. For assistance on technical computing matters, contact 735-HELP or 5-4357 for the Information Technology Help-Line.

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.

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.

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.

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 and 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 and 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 guidelines 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.

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.
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<th>Tuesday</th>
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| 14 January  
week 1 | Course introduction | 16 January | Read: Rinella essay |
| 21 January  
week 2 | Read: *BATW*: Kinder  
CNF techniques:  
Open space in the essay  
Voice and person (intentional  
movement from first to second to third) | 23 January | Read: *BATW*: Topol, Brunner  
Due: first page of narrative essay  
Workshop |
| 28 January  
week 3 | Read: *BATW*: Sedaris, de Ballaigue  
*Breaking Freytag’s Pyramid*  
*humor in the essay* | 30 January | Due: rough draft, narrative essay  
*Uploading to Google Drive  
*Continue from 28 January  
*introduction to literary journalism |
| 4 February  
week 4 | Full-class workshop  
Read: classmate essays: Sitara,  
Piper, Lauren, Tommy | 6 February | Full-class workshop  
Read: classmate essays: Leslie, Colin, Carissa, Emily |
| 11 February  
week 5 | Full-class workshop  
Read: classmate essays: Saskia,  
Melanie, Chrissy, Annie | 13 February | Full-class workshop  
Read: classmate essays: Julia,  
Lawrence, Jack, Shannon |
| 18 February  
week 6 | Full-class workshop  
Read: classmate essays: Meagan,  
Catherine, Elizabeth | 20 February | Read: Fuller, first half  
Introduction to literary journalism  
Discussion Leaders:  
____________________  
____________________ |
| 25 February  
week 7 | Read: finish Fuller; selections from  
Solnit  
Workshop on brainstorming and  
project generation for research  
progression; also, place as question,  
as indeterminacy  
Discussion Leaders:  
____________________  
____________________ | 27 February | Read: selections from Solnit and  
Iyer  
Workshop on rhetorical awareness: economy of  
language, balance, concision, haiku exercises  
Discussion Leaders:  
____________________  
____________________ |
| 4 March  
week 8 | Read: selections from Bowles  
Workshop on practical matters:  
formal and informal conventions  
(scholarly discourse vs. informal  
communication). | 6 March | Read: selections from Iyer and Bowles  
Due: proposal for second progression: philosophical inquiry & literary journalism – |
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>11 March</td>
<td>Due: second progression draft</td>
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<td>Workshop: grammatical concerns, organization, five senses</td>
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<td>Read: Root, selections</td>
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<td>Workshop: the interrelatedness of things – “Theory of Relativity,” complementarity,</td>
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<td>systems thinking &amp; analysis</td>
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<td>Finish: Root</td>
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<td>20 March</td>
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<td>Workshop on close observation and clarity of purpose; balancing sources</td>
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<td>Finish: Matthiessen</td>
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<td>10 April</td>
<td>Contemplation of urban/human-constructed spaces: meet at Dushanbe Tea House</td>
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<td>15 April</td>
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