Topics in Writing: Travel Writing
WRTG 3020-056; 888, Spring 2015
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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 will 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 Dinty Moore’s The Truth of the Matter. Texts and lectures 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,” John Urry’s “The Tourist Gaze,” and John Lyons’s “Autonomous Cross-Cultural Hardship Travel.”

**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 academic 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*, Benjamin Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, and Joe Lambert’s *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*.

**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. In addition, the second major assignment will include a digital project in which you will use WeVideo to depict a personal journey.

**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](https://learn.colorado.edu) 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.

- A CU email account that you check regularly.
Workshops

Workshop 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 and Digital Project

You will be required to write multiple drafts of each of the major assignments. Please see policy for late or missing drafts under “Late Work.”

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 you attach your paper as a file (as opposed to using the html editor), 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 projects and several short exercises and to make brief presentations throughout the course. Detailed assignment sheets will be provided for each major assignment.

The major assignments (*1: Rhetorical Analysis; 2: Digital Personal Journey Project; and 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 or project. Although the *Writing to Learn (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 with little risk. *There is a correlation between effort put into these homework assignments and exercises, and the quality of your projects,* as the homework and writing exercises help you lay the foundation for developing your initial thoughts into a sophisticated project.
Paper 1, Rhetorical Analysis: 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 two components: The Digital Personal Journey Project (Project 2), and a written Rhetorical Analysis/Learning Synthesis. For the Digital Personal Journey Project (3-5 minutes) you will need to have a clear theoretical, philosophical or argumentative purpose (implicit or explicit). The project must include some research in addition to your own observations. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided. The digital project includes four drafts: 1. ideas for story circle, 2. draft of the narrative, 3. storyboard, and 4. exported draft in WeVideo. Please see policy for late drafts. The midterm portfolio counts 25% towards the final grade and is weighted as follows: Digital Personal Journey Project (10%), Rhetorical Analysis/Learning Synthesis (15%) = 25%

Final Portfolio: The Final Portfolio documents 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), and an Analytical Learning Synthesis that includes discussion of WTL or in-class assignments that have improved your writing and thinking abilities. 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, and be approx. 7-10 pages. The research will provide opportunities for you to write a paper that enters 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 (25%), Analytical Learning Synthesis, including discussion of writing exercises (10%) = 35%

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

Writing to Learn Exercises (Homework): These formative assignments are designed to help you analyze the readings, hone your writing skills, try new writing approaches, develop ideas for the major projects for the course, and diagnose how to improve a draft. To encourage you to try new approaches the WTL assignments are not individually graded, although assignments will not earn full credit if they are incomplete, late or poorly done —see below for late homework policy. 10%

Written and Oral Peer Review of Drafts (Major Assignments 1, 2, & 3): When done properly, peer review fosters critical thinking, helps you diagnose how to improve a draft, and helps writers apply to their own writing the comments they make to others. In this class written and oral peer review should focus on how well a draft is making its argument. Peer review comments that focus solely on grammar, punctuation or sentence-level issues will not earn full credit. Good reviewers are made, not born; we will practice effective peer review techniques in class. 5%

Class Discussion Leader/Oral Presentation: Working in pairs, you will have the opportunity to facilitate class discussion of 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 and peer review workshops, timely submission of drafts, arriving to class on time, and attendance. Please see attendance policy. 5%
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 posted 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: online access or printing problems do not excuse late work.

Unless otherwise specified, homework is to be posted on the discussion page in D2L. To count as on-time, the time stamp must show that it was posted before the time class begins.

Late policy for paper drafts: for the 3 major assignments to be workshopped (Paper 1, Digital Project, and Paper 3), 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. Most workshops will require that you post a draft electronically a few days before the workshop date to give your peers time to thoughtfully read and comment on your draft in advance of class discussion.

Drafts count as late if they are incomplete (e.g., three pages when the full draft should be five), or if they are posted after the specified deadline. Late drafts will cause the final paper to be marked down by one-third for each instance (A- to B+, for example).

If drafts miss workshop: there is an additional penalty if a late draft is not posted by the beginning of class time on the day on which peer review is to take place; with a missing draft the writer deprives the group of two learning opportunities: the opportunity for readers to learn by providing comments on the draft, and the opportunity for the writer to learn from group feedback. Drafts that miss workshop will cause the final grade of the paper to be marked down two-thirds 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 my classes, 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 an average of 75%, and you also have 8 absences, you will earn a D in the course.
An absence is an absence: you are not less absent if you are sick or if your plane is delayed than you are if you deliberately skip class. Thus, there is no distinction 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. You may use the WC for any class. 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; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (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

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please provide a letter from Disability Services (DS) and discuss specific needs with me during the first two weeks of class. DS determines accommodations (303-492-8671) or email 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 me.

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 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/

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 textbook exercises unless they are specifically assigned.
- If you miss class, look for assignments and handouts on Desire2Learn, and get notes from a classmate.

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

Jan. 13  Introduction to course
What is Travel Writing; what is Creative Nonfiction

Jan. 15  Read full syllabus on D2L
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

Writing to Learn (homework) assignment due (handed out in class; also posted on D2L)

For all writing to learn (homework) assignments:
1. Please see the individual 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. Post your assignment on the discussion page in D2L before class begins

Jan. 20  Read “Introduction” by Faith Adiele and “Introduction” by Simon Winchester
posted under “Readings” on D2L
Writing to Learn (WTL) assignment due; see assignment link on D2L
Jan. 22  Read “I Stand Here Writing” posted on D2L
Read “Deer at Providencia” posted on D2L
WTL assignment due

Jan. 27  **Paper 1 draft due**

Jan. 29  **Workshop drafts, Paper 1**
Bring laptop to class; see reading assignment
Peer responses due—see assignment sheet

Feb. 3  **Paper 1 due**
Discuss Personal Journey Digital Project

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

Feb. 5  Story Circle 1; see reading assignment
WTL assignment due
Begin reading *Travels with Charley*

Feb. 10 Story Circle 2; see reading assignment
WTL assignment due
Continue reading *Travels with Charley*

Feb. 12 Read/discuss first half of *Travels with Charley*
WTL assignment due
Student Presentation

Feb. 17 Narrative due; see assignment sheet
See reading assignment
WTL assignment due
Continue reading *Travels with Charley*

Feb. 19 Read/discuss second half of *Travels with Charley*; WTL assignment due
Student Presentation
Begin reading *Scribbling the Cat*

Feb. 24 Narrative Revisions due; workshop revisions
Share story visuals; see assignment sheet
Bring laptop to class
Continue reading *Scribbling the Cat*

Feb. 26 Read/discuss first half of *Scribbling the Cat*
WTL assignment due
Student Presentation
**Personal Journey Digital Project storyboard, due date window begins today (see assignment sheet)**
Mar. 3
Workshop Storyboards
Tech questions and trouble-shooting; rhetorical choices
Bring laptop to class
Continue reading *Scribbling the Cat*

Mar. 5
Read/discuss second half of *Scribbling the Cat*
WTL assignment due
Student Presentation
**PJ Digital Project draft, due date window begins today (see assignment sheet)**
Begin reading *In a Sunburned Country*

Mar. 10
Workshop Digital Projects; peer responses due
In-class work time
Continue reading *In a Sunburned Country*

Mar. 12
Read/discuss first half of *In a Sunburned Country*
Student Presentation

Mar. 17
**Digital Projects Due**
Discuss Rhetorical Analysis; screen projects

Mar. 19
**Rhetorical Analysis/Learning Synthesis Due**
Screen projects

**Happy Spring Break!**

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

Mar. 31
Reading and WTL assignment due
Continue reading *In a Sunburned Country* (excerpts)

April 2
Finish reading *In a Sunburned Country*
WTL assignment due
Student Presentation
Begin reading “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity”

April 7
**Proposal for Paper 3 due**; workshop in class
In-class research day; bring laptops
Continue reading “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity”
April 9  Read/discuss “The Ideal Particle and the Great Unconformity”
Student Presentation
WTL assignment due
Paper 3, draft 1, due date window begins today, see assignment sheet
Begin reading The Places In Between

April 14  Workshop first draft Paper 3; peer responses due
WTL assignment due
Continue reading The Places In Between

April 16  Read/discuss first half of The Places In Between
Student Presentation
WTL assignment due
Paper 3, draft 2, due date window begins today, see assignment sheet

April 21  Workshop Paper 3, draft 2
Continue reading The Places In Between
In-class writing exercises

April 23  Read/discuss second half of The Places In Between
Student Presentation
WTL assignment due
Paper 3, penultimate draft; due date window begins today; see assignment sheet

April 28  WTL assignment due
In-class writing exercises

April 30  In-class writing exercises

Final Portfolio Due:

9:30 class    Sunday May 3, 4:30-7 pm
12:30 class   Monday May 4, 4:30-7 pm

Have a wonderful summer!