

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Voyage:** Fall 2013

**Discipline:** English Writing

**Course Number and Title:** ENWR 1559-502 Travel Writing

**Division:** Lower Division

**Faculty Name:** Gregory Mason

**Pre-requisites:** None

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Travel writing regularly about encounters on a journey is an excellent way to process all that happens along the way. As you sort through recollections and find the right words to express them, you teach yourself the meaning of your experiences, and your memories become valued possessions. A Semester at Sea voyage provides a perfect opportunity to enrich and enhance a travel experience, first through alert observation, and then through journaling and essay writing, both about the experience of being at sea, and about the places where we make landfall during the voyage. It becomes both an outer and an inner journey of discovery. Prior to each port of call, the class will prepare by reading professional travel essays that both inform us about the upcoming location and model a sensitive and insightful written response. Travel writing, like other kinds of writing is a skill that is improved through practice and coaching. Regular peer reviewing and critiquing workshops will help sharpen both the powers of observation and writing style of each class member. As a class project and also a personal possession, each student will revise and complete a series of personal essays on chosen ports of call.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To enrich and deepen each participant's travel experience by encouraging a more discerning and focused attention to all the places, people, events, and circumstances we encounter

To enhance our understanding and appreciation of the ports of call on our voyage through reading sensitive and informed articles by professional writers, with whom, of course, we may not always agree

To practice and improve each student's writing skills through regular, informal assignments, followed up by peer review workshops and revision.

For each student to develop a portfolio of revised, finished pieces on our ports of call, some of which might be submitted for publication

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Don George  
TITLE: *Lonely Planet's Guide to Travel Writing*  
PUBLISHER: Lonely Planet Publications  
ISBN #: 978-1-74104-701-1  
DATE/EDITION: 2009

AUTHOR: Lavinia Spalding  
TITLE: *Writing Away*  
PUBLISHER: Travelers' Tales, Solas House, Palo Alto, CA  
ISBN #: 9781932361674  
DATE/EDITION: 2009

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

**A1- August 26:** Introduction. Travel Writing and Travelers' Tales

**B1- August 27**

**A2-August 28:** Getting Started as a Travel Writer

The basics and some warm-up calisthenics

Readings: S xii-xix, 1-17; G 6-9

Preparation for Saint Petersburg; readings about Saint Petersburg TBA

August 29-September 1: St. Petersburg

**B2- September 2**

**A3- September 3:** Finding Your Personal Focus as Writer

Share and peer review class journals on Saint Petersburg

Readings: S 18-28; G 12-22; writings about Hamburg

Preparation for Hamburg; readings TBA

**B3- September 4**

September 5-8: Hamburg

**A4- September 9:** Creating a Structure

Share and peer review class journals on Hamburg

Elements of structure in good travel writing (G 23-39)

Preparation for Antwerp and Le Havre: readings TBA

**B4-September 10**

**A5- September 11:** Discipline and Focus

Share and peer review class journals on Antwerp and Le Havre

Developing and maintaining discipline and focus (S 29-50)

**COLLECT FIRST ROUND OF JOURNAL ENTRIES**

September 12-14: Antwerp

September 15-16: Le Havre

**B5- September 17**

**A6- September 18: Painting the Scene**

Share and peer review class journals on Antwerp and Le Havre

Attention to Details: Bringing Your Story to Life (S 51-67) (G 40-49)

Preparation for Ireland: readings TBA

**B6- September 19**

September 20-23: Dublin

**A7- September 24: Travel Writing as Creative Non Fiction**

Share and peer review class journals on Lisbon and Cadiz

Elements of Style: voice, pacing and music (G 49-53), ( S 68-86)

Prepare for Casablanca; readings TBA

**B7- September 25**

**A8- September 26: Travel Writing as an Inner Journey**

Share and peer review class journals on Casablanca

Journal to the Center. Travel writing as personal discovery (S 87-104)

September 27-28: Lisbon

September 29: in Transit

September 30-October 1: Cadiz

October 2: No Class. Morocco. Preparation.

October 3-6: Casablanca

**B8- October 7**

**A9- October 8: Review and Work-shopping on Items of Unfinished Business**

In-class writing TBA

**COLLECT SECOND ROUND OF JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**B9- October 9**

October 10: Study Day

**A10- October 11: Keeping Your Writing Fresh**

Keeping Your Writing Fresh, saving important scraps, making it new (S 105-139)

**B10- October 12**

**A11- October 13:** Learning from the Pros  
Preparation for Ghana; readings TBA  
Learning from the Pros; Examples of Good Travel Writing (G 54-88)  
In-class writing exercises

**B11- October 14**

October 15-16: Tema  
October 17-18: Takoradi  
October 19. Study Day

**A12- October 20:** Share and peer review class journals on Ghana  
More Examples of Good Travel Writing (G 88-112)  
In-class writing exercises

**B12- October 21**

**A13- October 22:** Preparation for Cape Town; readings TBA  
Learning from Experience and From the Experienced  
What It Takes to be a Travel Writer (G 166-171) (S 140-155)

October 23. Study Day

**B13- October 24**

**A14- October 25:** Talking with the Pros  
Interviews with Professional Travel Writers (G 113-141)  
Peer reviewing and revision workshop

October 26-30: Cape Town

October 31. Study Day.

**B-14 November 1**

**A15- November 2:** Debrief and reflect on Cape Town port stay  
More Talking With the Pros  
Interviews with Professional Travel Writers (G 142-163)  
Preparation for Buenos Aires; readings TBA

**B15- November 3**

November 4. Study Day.

**A16- November 5:** Insiders' Tips for Better Travel Writing  
...And the words will follow (S 156-174)

**COLLECT THIRD ROUND OF JOURNAL ENTRIES.  
FIRST REVISED ENTRY ALSO DUE**

**B16- November 6**

**A17- November 7: Different Ways to Tell The Truth**

Share and peer review class journals on Buenos Aires and Montevideo  
Dealing with censors, finding your niche (S 175-191) (G 176-177, 182-187)  
November 8. Study Day.

**B17- November 9**

**A18- November 10: The Gods Speak: Interviews with Editors and Agents**

What We Can Learn from Interviews with Editors and Agents (G 246-281)  
Preparation for Buenos Aires; readings TBA

**B18- November 11**

November 12-16: Buenos Aires

**A19- November 17: Professional Guidelines**

Share and peer review class journals on Buenos Aires  
Tweaking Our Best Work to the Needs of the Profession (G 331-348)

**B19- November 18**

**A20- November 19: Revision, Review, Portfolio Preparation**

Peer Review and Work-shopping for final Portfolio preparation  
Preparation for Rio de Janeiro; readings TBA

**COLLECT FOURTH ROUND OF JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**SECOND REVISED ENTRY ALSO DUE**

November 20-22: Rio de Janeiro

November 23: Study Day.

**B20- November 24**

**A21- November 25: Technology and the Journaling Traveler**

Share and peer review class journals on Buenos Aires  
Technology and the Journaling Traveler (S 192-208)  
Preparation for Manaus; readings TBA

**B21- November 26**

November 27. Study Day.

**A22- November 28: Open**

Class content and activities to be determined (possible make-up day)

**B22- November 29**

**A23- November 30: Bringing Your Journal Home**

Bringing Your Journal Home (S 209-222)  
Preparation for Dominica; readings TBA

December 1. Study Day.

December 2-5: Manaus

December 6. Study Day.

**B23- December 7**

**A24- December 8:**

**COLLECT FINAL ROUND OF JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**B24-December 9**

December 10. Study Day.

**A25-December 11; A Day Finals, In Class Best Essay Presentations**

December 12. Study Day.

**B25-December 13: B Day Finals, In Class Best Essay Presentations**

#### **FIELD WORK**

***FIELD LAB* (Attendance and participation in the Field Lab is MANDATORY.)**

Field Lab Proposal Number One

A Literary and Historical Walk Through Dublin

This immersive field lab experience will offer a sense of the historic and contemporary dimensions of Dublin as a writer's city and a city of writers. Now designated as a UNESCO City of Literature, the capital city is the birthplace of three Nobel laureates of literature; Yeats, Shaw and Beckett, and the creator of the world's first modernist novel, James Joyce. The city also continues to be a vibrant literary city, celebrating words written, spoken, sung. Home to festivals and writing workshops, literary museums and walking tours

Irish literature and history are inextricably linked so we will begin the day with a brief introduction to the literary profile of Dublin at the Irish Writer's Centre, and then a tour of the city including a visit to Kilmainham Jail, where many of those who led, fought and were executed in Ireland's Rising/Revolution in 1916 were also writers. We would hope to include a lunchtime play at the celebrated Bewley's Café Theatre as part of the International Fringe Festival which will be in full swing during your visit. A little bookshop browsing, a visit to Trinity College and the Book of Kells the steps of Leopold Bloom's odyssey in Ulysses. We will finish the day by participating in the celebrated Dublin Literary Pub Crawl where two actors lead us around the city interspersed with excerpts from songs plays and poetry of Irish writers.

## Student Assignment for Field Lab One and Method of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated for this assignment by 1) their engaged participation in all aspects of the day's program and 2) by a written reflection on the day's events. This should be both impressionistic, conjuring the feel and texture of the day, and critical, reflecting on what was said by whom, and how the student feels and where he/she stands in relation to all that was seen, spoken and heard in the course of the day. The reflection should also refer to and incorporate references to preparatory reading for the field lab, to the visits to the city's various sights and monuments, and to whatever other impressions and information that the student gathers in the course of the day's activities. Beyond this, each student can use a camera or sketchpad to record visual evidence to complement the written record. This assignment is worth 20 % of the total course grade

## Field Lab Proposal Number Two ; Lübeck: Gem of the Baltic (see attached proposal)

While Hamburg is still very much a bustling world port, Lübeck is today a lovingly preserved cultural precinct, complete with *Altstadt* (Old City) two of the city's original four gates, and much of the old city walls. In Lübeck we will be met by a city guide, who will show us the city with its seven gothic style church towers before proceeding to the Thomas Mann-Haus and then to the Gunter Grass-Haus literary museums. We will take time to read and reflect on some short pieces by Mann and Grass, and to enjoy a slice of Lübeck *marzipan* or *Bremer Klaben* (stollen cake), as part of our day. After the guided part of our day, students will have time to roam the streets and explore on their own before we reconvene to travel back to Hamburg together by train.

## Student Assignment for Field Lab Two and Method of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated for this assignment by 1) their engaged participation in all aspects of the day's program and 2) by a written reflection on the day's events. This should be both impressionistic, conjuring the feel and texture of the day, and critical, reflecting on what was said by whom, and how the student himself feels and where he/she stands in relation to all that was seen, spoken and heard in the course of the day. The reflection should also refer to and incorporate references to preparatory reading for the field lab, to the city and museum visits, and to whatever other impressions and information that the student gathers in the course of the day's activities. Beyond this, each student can use a camera or sketchpad to record visual evidence to complement the written record. This assignment is worth 20 % of the total course grade

Students will be evaluated for the field lab, based on attendance at all parts of the day's program, on curious and engaged participation, and on the quality of their response papers. First informal drafts of response papers must be submitted within 48 hours. Revised versions may be submitted at a later date, after receiving instructor feedback.  
Field Lab worth 20% of course grade

### **FIELD ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will be required to complete the following “image capture and reflection” assignment at two ports of call of their choice during the voyage. The assignment is as follows: using your eyes, ears, nose and your notepad, as well as a digital camera and/or sketchpad, capture at least five distinctly different images of your chosen port location in an attempt to capture the sense of place, perhaps even the heart or soul, of your chosen location, as you experience it on that day or days. You can present and comment on the images, linking them together to develop an informal essay, combining words and images. These two assignments are together worth 20% of your final grade. Each field assignment is due no later than the last day before the next port visit.

### **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC**

Attendance and Engaged Participation*	20%
Field Lab including response essay	20%
Two Port Field Assignments	20%
Regular Ongoing Journaling Entries	20%
Two Revised and Essays draw from journals	20%

\* Attendance and Participation. Students must attend each class session and be sure to have completed the assigned reading and any other assigned preparatory tasks for the day’s session. Students should also participate actively in all class discussions, exercises, and group projects.

### **RESERVE LIBRARY LIST**

AUTHOR: Paul Theroux  
TITLE: *The Tao of Travel*  
PUBLISHER: Penguin  
ISBN #: 978-0141044262  
DATE/EDITION: 2012

AUTHOR: Michael Pearson  
TITLE: *Innocents Abroad Too: Journeys Around the World on Semester at Sea*  
PUBLISHER: Syracuse UP  
ISBN #: 9780815609094  
DATE/EDITION: 2008

AUTHOR: Paul Fussell, ed.  
TITLE: *The Norton Book of Travel*  
PUBLISHER: Norton  
ISBN #: 978-0141044262  
DATE/EDITION: 1987

AUTHOR: Peter Hulme  
TITLE: *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*



PUBLISHER: Cambridge UP  
ISBN #: 978-0521786522  
DATE/EDITION: 2002

### **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

To be made available via intranet

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Each student will benefit greatly from having a personal laptop with wireless antenna and DVD player, as well as a digital camera with camera to computer download connector for the voyage.

### **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed

