

English 200: Travel Writing/Summer 2019

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Course Description

Our online course

Exploring recent contemporary travel writing and the genre it represents, literary nonfiction, our course examines a wide range of places and ideas about the world and the ways we live in it. Classes feature images, maps, blogs, videos, and other illustrations of the travelers' experiences and the territories they explore. Activities engage students in ways that let ideas and work be shared. There is no textbook for this course - our site on myCourses links you to all readings and viewings. Assignments include discussions, unit reading quizzes, and exercises that prepare you for major assignments, including the term project, a travel essay of your own. ENL 200 satisfies the University Studies 3A requirement and is a Literature course for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Expected outcomes

By working diligently, you can expect to acquire:

- knowledge of the forms, techniques, and uses of the "fourth genre" of creative nonfiction
- familiarity with the forms and purposes of contemporary nonfiction travel writing
- knowledge of the many agendas of travel writing, which explores subjects that are personal, political, scientific, cultural, historical, and more
- a passport to "virtual travel" and thus a better understanding of our world and an improved sense of global geography

Textbook: **None.** All readings and other materials occur online.

To succeed in an online class, you must have ongoing, reliable access to the internet and the skill and willingness to work independently. Course work must be completed by deadlines that occur in regular succession and most course work cannot be "made up." Online classes are *asynchronous*, meaning you work on your own during the "window" of time each assignment is open. Every discussion assignment, as well as some other assignments, has a *two-part posting deadline*. If you miss the initial posting deadline, you will lose points on that assignment. If you miss the final deadline the system will lock you out of the assignment and your work in progress will not be saved. You are strongly recommended to do all your work separately on your own device and then paste in into the course site before the deadlines.

This course occurs in a five-week session and thus has a fast pace. You will perform the full 3-credit work of a regular semester, but in less than half that time, so to succeed you must be ready and willing to work efficiently and conscientiously.

How the Course is Organized

Our course is divided into an introductory unit and 6 thematic units. All deadlines are clearly indicated on the course site within the units, each of which begins with the section of the syllabus that pertains to its theme and assignments. Every unit highlights a theme about travel and includes readings and other materials that complement the theme. *ALL* materials indicated on the syllabus are *required* reading or viewing and their content may be featured in a quiz.

Each unit opens with an "overview" document that treats the unit's theme and suggests ways in which the readings engage it. The Overviews are your "lectures" for the course (and thus also required reading, the content of which may be featured in a quiz). Every unit includes an interactive discussion. Every *other* unit contains a quiz. Additional assignments, and their value for your course grade, are indicated in the list below. At the end of each unit folder, you will find a Resources file – these contain helpful additional materials you may consult at your option. You will find wonderful stuff in them – but none of it will be subject to quiz review.

The content of the entire course is visible to you throughout the term – so that you may look ahead, if you wish, to plan work earlier than the deadlines. But every scored assignment has a specific window of time during which it is open for participation. After that deadline passes, the assignment will be unavailable until the instructor opens it again as “read only.” When that happens, you may again access the content but not write to it. Every discussion assignment has a two-part deadline; by the initial deadline, you must post a full draft of your own response to the discussion query, and if you subsequently want to revise it, you have until the final deadline to do that; your replies to colleagues must be posted by the final deadline (that is, there is no initial deadline for your replies to others).

There are no “right” or “wrong” responses to the material we explore together in this course. You are encouraged to speak and write openly from your own perspectives, explaining and supporting your views by referring to the details of your reading. Our discussions will welcome intellectual controversy and debate, respectfully conducted.

Assignments in Brief (detailed instructions appear on the course site)

I. Reading Quizzes (3 @ 5 points each):

Quizzes ask basic questions about the content of the major readings (the travel essays) and about the unit Overviews. They do not cover materials in the Resources folders. Each quiz contains 10 short-answer questions worth .5 points apiece, is offered during a specific window of time (3 days), and has a duration of up to 20 minutes. A quiz will appear at 12:01 a.m. at the beginning of its access period and will close at midnight on the third day. You must begin a quiz at least 20 minutes before access ends and complete it within 20 minutes. If you go overtime, the system will lock you out but retain the score you have accrued. You will be able to review and change your answers during the 20-minute test period. Quizzes may not be “made up” (if you miss a quiz) or repeated (if you earned an unsatisfactory score). So before you start a quiz, please be certain you have a private and dedicated block of time (20 minutes) and a secure internet connection. Do not try to take a quiz on a phone and do not start a quiz if you have spotty connectivity. Losing connectivity is not acceptable as a reason to request retaking a quiz.

II. Discussions (6 @ 10 points each):

Interactive discussions form the core of the assignments for our course. Each poses a query about a signal question or issue concerning the theme of a course unit and provides instructions how to respond to it. Each asks you to respond in an informal but detailed essay of at least 600 words and to reply, in an essay of at least 300 words to each, to the responses of at least two of your colleagues. You will qualify for full credit if you meet these technical requirements, follow instructions about how to address the query, and write essays illuminated by *specific explanatory details drawn from the readings*. Queries allow flexibility of response and invite you to explore your own thinking about the subjects. Each discussion has a *two-part deadline*; the initial posting reflects your own response to the discussion query and the final posting includes your responses to colleagues’ postings.

III. Illustrating Exercise (1 @ 5 points)

This exercise prepares you for the term project’s basic requirements - to write an illustrated travel essay in three (or more) segments that develop, and in different ways present, a focused core theme. It requires a brief, specific description of your project, three illustrations of *different kinds* captioned according to instructions provided, and a conclusion in which you explain the “take-away” idea you intend your project to offer your readers.

IV. Term Project (1 @ 20 pts.):

The term project demonstrates what you have learned about the arts of travel writing in an original, illustrated narrative. In a *segmented essay* (of at least 3 segments) embedding at least 3 captioned illustrations of different kinds, your project develops a theme related to traveling and what one sees and learns doing it. The project contains between 2500 - 3000 words of narrative (about 6 text pages in 10 pt. font, spaced 1.5). Captioned illustrations are of three different kinds (pictorial,

graphic photographic, cartographic, etc.); only one of these may be a personal photo; illustrations are embedded in your text where they reflect its content, with at least one image in each segment of your narrative.

V. Extra Credit (optional – 1 @ 5 points):

This exercise invites you to explore a “take-away” from your term project narrative – a key subject or idea that is related to, but *not included or developed at length in*, the actual project narrative.

Total points available = 105. The course grade is determined by adding all the points you accrue. A total score of 100 – 105 is an A+; a score of 96-99 is an A, a score of 90-94 is an A-, a score of 87-89 is a B+, a score of 84-86 is a B, a score of 80-83 is a B-, and so on.

Basic course rules

1. Complete all readings before beginning any assignment or activity associated with them and also review the resource materials – websites, images, videos or other such materials associated with that reading unit - before beginning your work.

2. All activities scored for course credit have due dates and penalties apply to late work. In the case of some activities (such as discussions), submissions are not allowed after the deadlines. Other assignments (such as exercises) have due dates with late submissions discounted in score. To submit work late, you must offer an excusable reason for lateness that is accepted by the instructor and then must submit accepted late work by the new deadline the instructor indicates. Please keep in mind that *after an assignment’s due date has passed, that assignment will be “locked” so that you can no longer perform its work, although you can still review work posted to it.* You have the entire unit’s period to complete all activities due during that unit. Check the syllabus carefully to keep the due dates in mind. Because course content is open from start to finish of the term and all assignments that are scored are open until their deadlines, you can work ahead as much as you want to. You will have until the deadlines to go back in and revise any early-posted work, should you desire to.

3. You are responsible for knowing what work is due, and when. Each unit folder opens with its portion of the course syllabus, which serves as a checklist for what’s due that week. Please note that the instructor does not post information to the Calendar, but you can use the Calendar tool to record due dates and your other personal reminders. Your syllabus is your basic guide to what’s due when.

Getting Help – The Rules of Engagement

The “messages” and email tools on the course site will be enabled. You may message your classmates and/or the instructor through the course site but please be aware a message can be viewed only when one is on that course’s site. If you have an urgent issue to discuss with the instructor, send a regular email: jschaaf@umassd.edu. Please use this access with discretion, and sparingly.

Our course site features a tool called Ask and Answer. You may post questions to this open forum. The instructor will visit this forum regularly to answer questions, but please help out if you know an answer, too.

If you have a technical question about using the course website, do not ask the instructor. Look for your answer by searching the menu available through the “**Help**” tab in the far upper right corner of the page when you are logged into the course.

The Rules of Participation

Attendance

Any class based on discussion and collaboration requires the full and energetic participation of all, and your continued, active participation is required. (The Blackboard system allows an instructor to

examine the history and details of any student’s participation in a course.) As mentioned above, assignments have due dates and most work cannot be “made up.” If you have a documentable emergency that prevents you from completing an assignment on time, email to jschaaf@umassd.edu as soon as you anticipate the absence or as soon as possible following it. A reason for missing work does not constitute an excuse for having missed it, however, so do not expect that you will necessarily be allowed to make up missed work. An absence in this course is construed as missing an assignment or posting work late (remember, some assignments - like the discussions - have 2-part deadlines). Your total course score will be reduced for excessive absences; “excessive absence” in our online course means more than two occasions of late postings or missed assignments. For each absence beyond two, 5 points will be deducted from your course grade.

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for knowing and obeying the University’s policies regarding academic honesty. Your instructor will pursue any case of academic dishonesty according to those policies and procedures. You may find them reviewed in the *Student Handbook* @

<http://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/>

Always ask your instructor and/or advisor if you ever have a question about what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Contact information/access

I am very happy to work with you any time you want further instruction or conversation about our course. Message or email me on the course site. If you are near or on campus and wish to meet in person, I will be happy to schedule an appointment with you.

Welcome to the course!

ENL 200: Travel Writing/Summer 2019 Online/Prof. Schaaf

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

All readings are online. No textbooks required.

I. Why and How We Travel

(July 16 - 19)

July 17 is the deadline to Add or to Drop. July 19 is the deadline to drop with a W grade.

Readings: *(always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)*

- Pico Iyer, "Why We Travel" @ <http://picoiyerjourneys.com/index.php/2000/03/why-we-travel/>
- Lisa Abend, The Sound of Silence @ <https://www.afar.com/magazine/the-sound-of-silence>
- Nathan Heller, "Air Head" @ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/01/air-head>
- Iris Smyles, *Ship of Wonks* @ <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/ship-of-wonks/361610/>

Assignment: “Why and How We Travel” Discussion (10 pts.)

Please note: *If you miss the initial posting deadline for a discussion assignment (the date by which you must post your own response to the query), you will lose points on that assignment. "Midnight" on MyCourses means 11:59 p.m. If you miss that deadline you will be locked out of the assignment and your unsaved work will be lost. Recommended: do your work in a document on your computer, save it, and then paste it into the comment boxes on the course site.*

Schedule:

July 16 – Introductions; post your “profile” to the Meet and Greet forum (unscored but required) no later than Jan. 25; read all materials in the Course Handouts folder and post any questions to the Ask and Answer forum

Jul. 18 – Post a full length-draft of your reply to the Unit I discussion query by midnight (11:59 p.m.); *see note above about late postings*

Jul. 19 – Revise your reply to the Unit I discussion query (as/if needed) and reply to at least two colleagues' postings by midnight (11:59 p.m.)

II. Fellow Travelers

(July 20 – 24)

July 24 is the deadline to file for Pass/Fail.

Readings: *(always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)*

- Patricia Marx, "Pets Allowed" @ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/10/20/pets-allowed>
- Reggie Ugwu, "My Father's House" https://www.buzzfeed.com/reggieugwu/my-fathershouse?utm_term=.dw1VnAGkl#.rtkZVgxDo
- Wells Tower, "No Amount of Traffic ..." @ <https://www.outsideonline.com/2086161/no-amount-traffic-or-instagrammers-or-drunks-can-take-magic-out-semi-wilderness>
- David Sedaris, "Now We are Five" @ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/10/28/now-we-are-five>

Assignments: “Fellow Travelers” Discussion (10 pts.)
Quiz #1 (on Units I and II) (5 pts.)

Schedule:

July 23 – Respond to the Unit II discussion query by midnight (11:59 p.m.)

July 24 – Revise your response (as needed), reply to colleagues, and take Quiz #1 (on Units 1 & 2) by midnight (11:59 p.m.).

Please note: You have only one opportunity to take each quiz, so be prepared before you engage it; each quiz is 20 minutes in duration and allows reviewing your work within that time.

III. Urban Odysseys

(July 25 - 29)

Readings: *(always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)*

- Elif Batuman, "Cover Story" @ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/08/cover-story-personal-history-elif-batuman>
- Nick Paumgarten, *Berlin Nights* @ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/03/24/berlin-nights>
- Andrew W. Jones, *The Marlboro Men of Chernivtsi* <https://themorningnews.org/article/the-marlboro-men-of-chernivtsi>
- Matthew Power, "Excuse Us While We Kiss the Sky" @ <https://www.gq.com/story/urban-explorers-gq-march-2013>

Assignments: Illustrating Exercise (5 pts.)
"Urban Odysseys" Discussion (10 pts.)

Schedule:

July 26 – Post a draft of your Illustrating exercise by midnight

July 27 – Illustrating Exercise due by midnight

July 28 – Reply to the Unit III discussion query by midnight

July 29 – Revise your response (as needed) and reply to colleagues by midnight

IV. Out There
(July 30 – Aug 3)

Readings: (always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)

- Steven Rinella, *Little Things that Kill You* @ <https://www.outsideonline.com/1994346/little-things-kill-you>
- Peter Frick-White, "What Happened to Eastern Airlines Flight 980?" @ <https://www.outsideonline.com/2126426/what-happened-eastern-airlines-flight-980>
- David Kushner, "Land of the Lost" @ <http://www.davidkushner.com/article/land-of-the-lost/>
- Christopher Solomon, *Baked Alaska* @ <https://www.outsideonline.com/1924416/baked-alaska-surviving-aniakchak-national-monument>

Assignments: "Out There" Discussion (10 pts.)
Quiz #2 (on Units 3 and 4) (5 pts.)
Project Planning forum (optional and unscored)

Schedule:

July 30 – Aug. 3 – Use Project Planning forum, as needed.

Aug. 2 – Post a response to the discussion query by midnight.

Aug. 3 – Revise your response (as needed), reply to colleagues, and take Quiz #2 (on Units 3 and 4) by midnight

V. Worlds Apart
(Aug. 4 - 8)

August 6 is the course withdrawal deadline.

Readings: (always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)

- Mitch Moxley, *The Reddest Carpet* @ <https://www.gq.com/story/north-korean-film-festival-exclusive>
- Tim Neville, *The Great Pleasure Project* @ <https://www.skimag.com/ski-resort-life/great-pleasure-project>
- Madeleine Drexler, *The Happiness Metric* @ https://madelinedrexler.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/the-happiness-metric_tricycle-article_madeline-drexler.pdf
- Sara Corbett, "Meet the Unlikely Airbnb Hosts of Japan" @ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/magazine/meet-the-unlikely-airbnb-hosts-of-japan.html>

Assignment: "Worlds Apart" Discussion (10 pts.)
Online conference on the term project (optional and unscored).

Schedule:

Aug. 4 - 8 – Conference forum on the term project (optional).

Aug. 7 – Post a response to the discussion query by midnight.

Aug. 8 – Reply to colleagues by midnight.

VI. The Blue Planet

(Aug 9 - 13)

Note: use this week also to work on your term project.

Readings: (always complete the readings before engaging in scheduled activities for a unit)

- Robert Kunzig, *The Will to Change* (available online as "Germany Could be a Model for How We'll get Power in the Future") @ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2015/11/germany-renewable-energy-revolution/>
- Antonia Juhasz, *Thirty Million Gallons Under the Sea* @ <http://antoniajuhasz.net/article/thirty-million-gallons-under-the-sea/>
- Helen MacDonald, *Hiding from Animals* @ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/magazine/hiding-from-animals.html>
- Bryan Christie, *Tracking Ivory* @ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tracking-ivory/article.html>

Assignments: "Blue Planet" discussion (10 pts)
Quiz # 3 (on Units 5 and 6) (5 pts)

Schedule:

Aug. 12 – Reply to the Unit VI discussion query by midnight

Aug. 13 – Revise your response (as needed), reply to colleagues, and take Quiz #3 (on Units 5 and 6) by midnight

VII. You, the Travel Writer

(Aug. 14)

Assignments: Term Project (20 pts)
Extra credit project (optional) (5 pts)

Both due by midnight Aug. 14.

Note: The course grade is determined by adding all the points you accrue. Total points available for the course = 105. A course score of 100–105 is an A+; a score of 95–99 is an A, a score of 90–94 is an A-, a score of 87–89 is a B+, a score of 84–86 is a B, a score of 80–83 is a B-, a score of 77–79 is a C+, a score of 74–76 is a C, a score of 70–73 is a C-, a score of 67–69 is a D+, a score of 64–66 is a D, a score of 60–63 is a D-, and a score below 60 is an F.