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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Engaged Participation*</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Lab including response essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Port Field Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Ongoing Journaling Entries</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Revised and Essays draw from journals</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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* 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*
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
Travel writing is an ancient impulse: people have been sharing accounts of their journeys ever since they first began to wander. The earliest wall paintings present the prehistoric predecessors of Bill Bryson and Paul Theroux recounting their adventures in the larger world. The Greek historian Herodotus is generally credited with writing the first travel book, *History of the Persian Wars*, with its vivid depictions of exotic sites, rites and fights, in 440 BC. Lonely Planet is one of the largest travel guide book publishers. They are passionate about travel, and how it brings people together to better understand the world.

What Makes Lonely Planet Travel Guides Unique?

- Unrivalled coverage
- Unashamedly opinionated
- We love this planet
- We love feedback
- Independent spirit
- Sense of Adventure
- Written by travelers, for travelers
- Integrity
- No advertisements or endorsements

What else do Lonely Planet travel guide books provide?

- Accurate, practical information
- Impartial recommendations
- Indispensable maps
- Best value tips
- Language guidance
- Health and safety advice
- Background information
- Sturdy construction

Lonely Planet publishes a variety of guides, including Lonely Planet travel guides are still the most common used by travelers but they’ve lost their edge over the past few years. For good or ill, Lonely Planet often made destinations, hostels, and restaurants. Sure, its guides became synonymous with mass tourism, but for me, they were a great resource to thumb over while on a bus or train, or in a hostel. I navigated with LP maps and used LP guides for basic activity information and to figure out transportation. But, lately, their quality seems to have gone down a lot. The last couple of times I’ve used their website and guides ended in frustration and disappointment and made me ask myself what the market really says. As I sat down to write this article, I asked readers on social media what they thought of Lonely Planet.