

Travel Writing

Faculty Contact Information

Name:

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Office Hour information:



Course Information

Course Description

As Tim Cahill, the legendary travel writer and former editor of Outside Magazine, once wrote, “It isn’t the traveling, it’s the writing.” Cahill, Andrew Bain, Rory MacLean, Sara Wheeler, Rolf Potts, Bill Bryson—these are writers with wildly different styles, and many of them travel to completely mundane locations, but they all manage to learn something about themselves, and why they travel, in the process of writing. In other words, it’s not where they go; it’s how they experience the place, and how they write about that experience.

Course Goals

The Travel Writing course examines the romantic sense of wanderlust that many people experience in their lives and discusses different ways of representing the experience of travel. This course is about reading and writing about travel. Students will study a selection of travel writing from different cultural and national perspectives. Students will write a portfolio of travel writing themselves as well as going on field trips to explore different aspects of London.

The course engages with different aspects of representing travel by thinking critically about the figure of the tourist to ideas about travel and gender and ethnicity to people watching and the figure of the flaneur (the wandering spectator). Through an exploration of these concepts, students discover what travel writing reveals about us and our culture as well as the cultures that we are visiting. In doing so students are encouraged to read and write about moving beyond the superficial tourist experience to think about representing the places they visit and the different that they encounter people.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Distinguish between the different styles of travel writing
2. Compare a range of approaches to travel writing
3. Differentiate between thinking and writing about travel and actually travel
4. Compose their own travel writing and critique the writing of others

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

| Assignment | Percentage | Grading Requirements |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Attendance and Participation | 20% | |
| Portfolio | 30% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Presentation | 20% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |
| Extended Travel Essay | 30% | Please see rubric on MyStudy |

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Portfolio

Due:

A portfolio of four short writing exercises.

Assessment 2: Presentation

Due:

10 minute presentation with photos or other visual aids plus 5 minutes of Q&A.

Assessment 3: Extended Travel Essay

Due:

2,500 words that develops an idea into a longer, more developed piece from the portfolio. This may be descriptive and self-reflective, but must also consider and reflect on critical and conceptual ideas discussed in class in order to consider the figure of the tourist/traveller.

Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

| | Relevance Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included | Knowledge and Understanding Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module | Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom | Scholarship and Style Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style; All work is the student's own |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| A 93-100 % | Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; | Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and | Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and | Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, |

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|---------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | Excellent and thorough thesis development | extensive wider reading | original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate | conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing |
| A- 90-92% | Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis | Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading | Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight; Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate | Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing |
| B+ 87-89% | Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout | Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading | Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives | Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing |
| B 83-86% | Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear | Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading | Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives | Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing |
| B- 80-82% | Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; | Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading | Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; | Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some |

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|---------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | Thesis is underdeveloped but clear | | Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections | use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent; Sound use of referencing conventions |
| C+ 77-79% | Some appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity | Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading | Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections | Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions |
| C 73-76% | May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity | Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module | Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive; Identifies experiential connections | Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions |
| C- 70-72% | Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent | Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module | Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning | Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions |

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|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| D 60-69% | Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis | Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading | Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning | Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions; Inaccurate use of referencing |
| F 0-59% | Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material | Lacks understanding of evidence and inappropriate or no wider reading | Lacks analytical skills, lacks evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning | Poorly written with little fluency; No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI |

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise notes. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all

possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Reading is allocated via MyStudy@FIE with a range of critical and textual extracts.

Hammersley, M., Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Culler, J. D. (1988). *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions*. United Kingdom: University of Oklahoma Press.

Rajesh, M. (2012). *Around India in 80 Trains*. India: Roli Books.

Additional Resources and Readings

A variety of online travel blogs, here are a few:

- <https://www.danflyingsolo.com/>
- <https://www.theblondeabroad.com/>
- <https://www.saltinourhair.com/sustainability/>
- <https://www.heyciara.com/>
- <https://www.atlasandboots.com/>
- <https://maptia.com/>
- <https://anywhereweroam.com/places/britain/>
- <https://www.travelwithapen.com/about-travel-with-a-pen/>
- <https://www.lorikemi.com/>

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- **Introduction:** What is traveling; what does it mean to each of us; what is it for? What is travel writing? What do each of us want from it?
- **Representational Shift:** the impact of social media, TikTok, Instagram and the confessional aspects of Travel Writing
- **Imagination:** Restlessness; Wanderlust; Storytelling
- **Discovery**
- **Gender, Ethnicity and Travel:** who gets to travel? Safety and privilege
- **Tourism and/versus Travel**
- **Journey and Destination**
- **Them and Us:** Do you feel more 'American' now you're out of America? Why and How?
- **Urban Neighbourhoods**
- **The Suburbs**
- **Ecology and Sociology of Travel:** Thinking critically about museums, Trip Advisor and fake reviews, ecology and carbon impact
- **How do They See Us?** Travel Writing from other countries

Possible co-curricular activities

- Frequent visits to interesting, historic and unique locations to inspire writing exercises
- Scavenger Hunt or Travel Game across the city

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk. If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are

not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.