SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

"To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour." Robert Louis Stevenson in El Dorado

Voyage: Fall 2014

Discipline: English Writing

ENWR 1559-503: Travel Writing (Section 3)

Faculty Name: Reade Dornan

Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Time: 9:25-10:40 B days

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides an introduction to the craft and art of travel writing. Travel shapes one’s personal and cultural transformation. Writing about it calls on powers of observation that sharpen the experience and fixes the memories. Students will consider the skills required to write compelling, engaging creative nonfiction about the people and places they have encountered: character sketches, concrete and vivid detail, point of view, narrative drama, and scene construction. We will read and discuss essays about countries on our voyage written by some of the world’s greatest travel writers. Writing assignments will include short essays about our ports of call, which will be read and discussed in a collaborative, respectful, yet challenging workshop. Students will keep a weekly journal, write short experimental pieces, and polish writing for publication.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
In this course students will learn to observe their surroundings and record their observations in a travel journal. Students will read travel narratives about ports of call; participate in a hands-on field lab; relive diverse cultures at the nib of a writer’s pen; explore languages and societies; and write in and out of class.
The more discerning and aware we are as “readers” of new cultures and environments, the more powerful we will be as writers. During this course we will explore options and alternative writing styles, techniques and experiments to help open the world of travel writing and discuss writing for publication. We will also examine ethics and issues that arise from writing about foreign cultures--how to be curious, find new adventure, develop insights, describe the Other.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS
AUTHOR: Don George (Hereafter, "G" in the syllabus)
TITLE: *Lonely Planet’s Guide to Travel Writing* (General Reference)
PUBLISHER: Lonely Planet Publications
ISBN #: 101743216882
DATE/EDITION: Sept. 2013, 3rd edition

AUTHOR: Lavinia Spalding (Hereafter, "S" in the syllabus)
TITLE: *Writing Away: A Creative Guide to Awakening the Journal Writing Traveler*
PUBLISHER: Travelers Tales
ISBN #: 1932361677
DATE/EDITION: August 2009

AUTHOR: William T. Vollman, ed. (Hereafter, "Best" in the syllabus)
TITLE: *The Best American Travel Writing 2012*
PUBLISHER: Houghton Mifflin
ISBN #:1-530-1516// 978-0-547-80897-0
DATE/EDITION:2012

Assignments
**Journal:** Without question you should aim to record something every two or three days in your journal. It becomes not only your eyes and ears on the world, but also your CD-ROM. You won't remember the sights and smells of that restaurant two days later nearly so well as today. Your journal will become the basis for your port papers and later your more polished essays. The journals are graded on participation in the conference, thoughtfulness, effort, and interest.

**Port Papers:** We are visiting 11 ports. You will need to turn in a 2-3 page paper for 5 ports of your choosing. I will offer assignments for all 11 ports, but you need to choose only five of them. The Port Papers are due at the beginning of the class following our port of call. They are graded on the care you take in trying to develop a paper with compelling beginnings and endings, focus, clarity, organization, voice, the curiosity you show about the city, and/or the care you take to experiment with writing the piece. They need not be polished but they should make a clean first draft. NB: An alternative to one of these papers could be to read all the author essays in (G) pp. 113-165 and write about the best advice you have taken away from them, or possibly, what they all say in common.
Essays: You will have the opportunity to lengthen and polish 4 papers this semester. Half of your grade will rest on the quality of these 4-6 page papers.

a. TWO of these Port Papers have been rewritten and polished, so they are enriched and improved. The two polished essays are due October 14 and November 12 respectively.
b. ONE Field Lab paper is due on November 26. It too should be as polished as you can finish it in the short time available to you.
c. and ONE Final Exam paper due November 28. Again, it should shine, shine, shine.

The 4-6 page Final exam paper counts as one of the four polished essays. It will compare three cities that stand out in your mind. You may borrow ideas from the Field Lab paper and your Port Papers for your final exam, but please do not plagiarize yourself by borrowing phrasing. In short, use language that is original with this paper. One of the three cities must evaluate Bridgetown as a “livable city” and the other two cities are ones you choose to write about. The Final should not read like a rough draft, but one that’s polished. It should be focused, organized, clear, nearly free of grammatical error, and contain well crafted language.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSEWORK

Depart Southampton - August 23:

B1 August 26: Introduction, Journal. Go over syllabus, assignments, and course requirements. "Here I Am Now..."


B3 - Gdansk/Rostock September 2: Discuss The Art of Good Travel Writing: pp. 12 - 22 (G) and Ch.2, pp. 18-28 (S). "A Night with the Ghosts of Greece" pp. 95-101.

*B4 - Gdansk/Rostock September 4: Ch. 3 pp. 29-50 (S); What makes a "livable city"? How to write and think about it. Discuss Gdansk/Rostock writing assignment--Write about either place as a "livable city"--or not.

B5 - September 11: Workshop the Gdansk/Rostock papers.

*B6 - Antwerp & Le Havre September 12: Voice: Who is Our Guide in this Place? Discuss essays in Best 2012: “How to Explore Like a Real Victorian Adventurer" by Monte Reel & "The Telltale Scribes of Timbuktu" by Peter Gwin. Prepare for the Antwerp & Le Havre papers.
B7 - September 21: No Class, Conferences (Sign up on October 12th). Bring your journal and be prepared to discuss 2-3 entries. Also, bring your paper on Antwerp/Le Havre, if you have it. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss your writing with me.

*B8 Dublin - September 23 * The importance of POV. "City of Walls" by Robin Kirk (Best 2012). Discuss Ch. 6, pp. 87-104 (S); Prepare for the Dublin paper.


*B10 Casablanca - October 6: Discuss Structure: Beginning, Middle & End. Discuss pp. 23-39 (G); Ch. 11 pp. 175-191 (S). Prepare for the Casa assignment.

B11 - October 12: Workshop one of 3 assignments--Dublin, Lisbon, or Casablanca. Assign Essay #1


B13 - October 20: Illuminating details: pp. 40-49 (G) "The Tijuana Sports Hall of Fame" by Bryan Curtis (in Best 2012); "Bringing Your Story to Life" and "Elements of Style" pp. 40-53 (G).

B14 - October 22: "Travels With Myself and Another" 107-173.


B16 - October 29 - Workshop: bring your paper on Tema or Dakar.

B17 - November 1: Second set of class CONFERENCES. Sign up on Oct. 29. Bring your journal and an idea of what you want to do for your final paper.

B18 November 4: - The Magic of Place: Making Your Setting Sing. Discuss Ch. 7, pp. 105-123 (S); "Las Vegas" by Simon Calder, pp. 55-58 (G);

*B19 - November 6: Rio de Janeiro/ Salvadore: "Garbage City" by Elliot D. Woods in Best 2012. Discuss assignment for the second essay (add research).

B20 November 12: In class workshop on Rio paper.

B21 - November 18: Polished Essay #2 due. In-class workshop.
The Field Lab
The Field Lab is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of our field lab. Our field lab in Bridgetown, Barbados is on November 24, 2014. Save that date.

Field Lab Description:
After four months of diverse ports of call, we have become expert at negotiating strange cities and adapting to new environs. With each new port, we have discussed and described cities in terms of their health, safety, sustainability, and lively human interaction. In this Field Lab, Bridgetown is the point of comparison for other cities we visit around the Atlantic. We will tour the downtown areas and gather information from a local expert about the city's history, demographics, economic standing, transportation patterns, and systems for bringing people together in open spaces. In the afternoon, we will meet with a university class at the University of West Indies, where we can discuss our findings and raise questions about the quality of life in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Field Lab Objectives and Assignments:
1. Study model examples of travel writing about cities;
2. Develop analytical skills by composing a Likert Scale survey based on personal values and apply the criteria to two other cities visited this semester;
3. Consider city design and the factors that influence it;
4. Meet with local Bajans to explore the factors that make their city livable, or not;
5. Develop descriptive tools for describing urban systems;
6. Write a 3-4 page descriptive paper that combines factual data, sound compositional elements, illuminating detail, and lively anecdotes. Paper should be clear, focused, well organized, and crafted as much as it can be with the short turn-around time.

Grading: 600 points in total for the semester
Requirements:
1. Three journal entries each week
2. Five Port Papers about 3-4 pages in length
3. Two out of five Port Papers edited as polished essays, 4-6 pages
4. One 3-4 page Field Lab essay on Bridgetown
5. One final exam that compares 3 cities on livability, 4-6 pages long
6. Full participation in the Field Lab
7. Class participation
Journals: 40 points for each conference (80 points total)
Port Papers: 30 points x 5 papers (150 points total)
Participation: 70 points (based on class discussion, in-class writing, participation in the field lab, class attendance, etc.)

Essays:
- Two polished pieces: 60 points each (120 points total)
- Field Lab paper: 80 points
- Final exam: 100

ATTENDANCE: Because daily attendance is crucial to the functioning of this class, you are permitted only TWO absences without question. Please save those days for emergencies-- heavy study schedule, external activities, long shore time--allow excused absences ONLY for serious illness accompanied by a doctor's excuse or equally serious event. Excess absences reduce your final grade in the course by a half grade (-.5) for each time missed beyond the allotted one. If you are having problems attending the class or accessing the plays so you cannot participate in class activities, please make new arrangements with me.

THE HONOR SYSTEM assumes that you do your own thinking, reading, and writing in this course. Plagiarism is the use of material that is in part or whole not entirely your own work without crediting those same portions to the original source. Since we're building on early drafts, you have permission to borrow language from your journals. You can borrow some phrases from your Port Papers, but you are expected to improve on your expression and structure from your Port Paper to your Essays. I may ask to read your Port Paper again to verify that you've worked honestly to develop it. Otherwise, you must credit ALL ideas, sequences of ideas, wording, facts, opinions and any other intellectual property to the person or group of people who generated them. This applies to taking material verbatim from the Internet and to short phrases that you might borrow from another source as well as to full length sentences or whole paragraphs. Failure to treat your information sources honestly is a serious breach of academic protocol and could lead to failure in the whole course. If you have any doubt about how to treat your sources honestly, please ask me to read your paper before you hand it in for credit.

LATE PAPERS are accepted only in case of very serious illness or if unmanageable circumstances, such as the ship's schedule, make the deadline too difficult to meet. You glean little benefit from a personal response paper after the class discussion, therefore papers are due at the BEGINNING of class.

**ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

AUTHOR: Gellhorn, Martha
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Into Africa"
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Travels with Myself and Another: A Memoir*
PUBLISHER: Tarcher/Penguin
DATE: 2001
PAGES: 107-238

FILMS: *Lost in Translation* and Bourdain video on Food