

**ENGCOMP 0500: Travel Writing**  
**Sydney Semester Abroad**  
Instructor: Barbara Edelman Spring 2020

**Course Overview**

Travel involves negotiation between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the self and the other, similarity and difference. Likewise, travel writing engages in relationship—the traveler to place, to people and other beings, to the traveler’s personal history—to all the relations that make a place unique. The work you do in *Travel Writing* will require that you observe your surroundings, reflect on your perspective in relation to those of other people, draw connections from many kinds of knowledge and disciplines, and hone your writing skills to produce thoughtful and carefully crafted documents. Assignments and trips are organized to provide you with some guidance and knowledge, but for strong travel essays, you’ll need to discover and go after what *you* are interested in. Throughout the semester, I’ll point out ideas that could make for a good feature, ask what you’re intrigued by, and make suggestions based on your shorter assignments; however, the discovery and choice will be your own.

**Required Course Materials**

Reading: All assigned reading will be available in digital form in the course reader. Most assigned essays are very short. I’ll ask you to complete the four chapters from the Bill Bryson book prior to the beginning of the semester and I encourage you to read the chapters from *Tracks* in advance also.

Additional required materials:

- a portable notebook to carry with you on outings and in which you’ll sometimes write by hand during class.

**Writing**

Two kinds of short essays assignments are designed to prepare you to produce a polished, feature essay—to help you collect material and to give you practice at composing and revising.

- You’ll write **FOUR** very short (200-word) “Travel Shorties” based on your adventures in Sydney and written from notes you take before class. You’ll write these on the spot, in class, and will turn each in by the end of class with only quick editing and proofreading.
- You’ll write **THREE** short (750-word) travel essays, the first based on your trip from home to Australia. These must be carefully edited and proofread.
- At some point during this process and during your own travels in Sydney and beyond, you’ll begin to get a sense of what you might write about in an extended magazine feature essay of 1,500- 2,000 words. For our final week of class meetings, each student will share a 5-10 minute presentation on their topic.

In addition to providing individual feedback on your essays, as I mark them, I'll collect sentences and paragraphs for us to go over. We'll review mechanics and sentence logic, organizational and rhetorical devices.

**Grading and Percentages:**

Travel Shorties	20%
Short Travel Essays	30%
Feature Essay	35%
Participation	15 %

**Citizenship:** All writing shared in this class and all discussion should maintain respect for others and for oneself. Racist, sexist, or discriminatory writing has no place here. All work should support the safe space of a writing and discussion-based classroom.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. (For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to [www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html](http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html).)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discuss</b>	<b>Due/Activity</b>
Week 1 1/20	<i>In a Sunburned Country</i> Bill Bryson, chapters 1, 4, 10, 13	Essay 1
Week 2 1/27	Bryson; “The Shock of Teapots” Cynthia Ozick	Botanical Gardens visit
Week 3 2/3	Chapters from <i>Tracks</i> Robyn Davidson	In-class Shorty
Week 4 2/10	<i>Tracks</i> Chapters 6 & 10	In-class Shorty
Week 5 2/17	“Utica Station” Kimiko Hahn	Essay 2
Week 6 2/24	“For the Lost in Translation” Klein-Baer	Field Trip (walk)
Week 7 3/2	“The Wonderful Thing About Tigers” Gray	In-class Shorty
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
Week 8 3/16	“The Sound of Silence” Lisa Abend	In-class Shorty
Week 9 3/23	TBA	Essay 3 due
Week 10 3/30		In-class workshop of Travel feature
Week 11 4/6		Workshop of Travel feature
Week 12		Final Presentations on Travel Features

Acknowledgement to Dr. Melissa Bender for some ideas and language in this course description.