

Travel Writing Sydney Semester Abroad

Instructor: Barbara Edelman edelman@pitt.edu

Spring 2020 Tarrawonga Room Th 9am-noon

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.

An important aspect of travel is to get to know oneself, and an important aspect of this course is to offer you a structure to deeply take in, preserve, and reflect on what the semester in Sydney means to you. You’ll be writing about your own interests and obsessions, and your experience will be the central subject of the course. You’ll be asked to observe with *all* the senses, to trust your creative process, to stretch and experiment with language, and to allow yourself the freedom to say things that may make you feel vulnerable.

For class meetings in the CAPA classroom, you will need

- journal and a writing implement
- lap-top or tablet
- the text under discussion

In these meetings we will

- discuss published (mostly short) pieces of writing, with a primary focus on craft—on what we can learn from the work as writers
- write in-class “travel shorties” based on journal notes and photos
- work together in class on your longer travel essays
- workshop (critique) first drafts of your travel feature

Some of our class meetings will take place as on-site visits to places of interest, where you’ll take notes in your journal. For these meetings you will need

- your journal and a pen or pencil
- your camera (phone)

Course Goals:

- ♦ To develop the habit of writing every day

- ◆ To use writing as a means of discovery--a way of generating inquiry and exploration as well as understanding
- ◆ To reflect on your relationship to place, to culture, to others, to your own past experience
- ◆ To practice a variety of compositional techniques

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 try to complete some of the four chapters from the Bill Bryson book prior to the beginning of the semester.

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. You'll have the option of revising TWO of your travel essays, due prior to 4/13.
- 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 comment on 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.)

Date	Discuss	Activity/Due
Week 1 on in 1/23	<i>In a Sunburned Country</i> Bryson Chaps , 1, 4, 10, 13	Essay 1: work class (Draft due 1/30)
Week 2 1/30	Bryson; “The Shock of Teapots” Cynthia Ozick	Botanical Gardens
Week 3 2/6	Chap 1 <i>Tracks</i> , Davidson	In-class Shorty
Week 4 2/13	Tracks, 6 & 7	In-class Shorty
Week 5 2/20	“Utica Station,” Kimiko Hahn	Essay 2, workshop (Due 3/4)
NO CLASS HAPPY SPRING BREAK		
Week 6 3/5	“For the Lost in Translation,” Klein Baer	Field Trip, tba
Week 7 3/12	“The Wonderful Thing About Tigers,” Gray	In-Class Shorty
Week 8 3/19	“The Sound of Silence,” Lisa Abend	In-Class Shorty
Week 9 3/26	TBA	Essay 3 Workshop (Due 3/25)
Week 10 4/2		Workshop Travel Feature
Week 11 4/9		Workshop TF
Week 12 4/16		Presentations on TF

