



Travel Writing in Paris

SECTION I: Course Overview

UNH Course Code: ENG350

Subject Area(s): English, Writing

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce young writers to the practice of travel writing through its evolution and development across genres. Students will engage with travel logs, journalism, essays, and readings from an array of styles to hone their own unique writing style and voice.

Students will dive into larger questions by focusing on places, finding their voice as they create their arguments related to themes presented in class. We will question cliché in travel writing and perfect our placemaking skills, using their current city as a living laboratory for classroom exercises.

By putting into conversation students' own abilities and identities, the class will use readings and examples to discuss broader notions of authenticity, cosmopolitanism, and othering to deepen their understanding of travel writing through prompts related to class discussions.

Students will engage with readings by academics and iconic Paris-based writers to debate the good and the bad, featuring historical and contemporary authors like James Baldwin, Alain de Botton, and Anai Nin as well as stories from journalistic publications like The New York Times and Afar.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Create original travel narratives that give meaning to experiences and places
- Evaluate contemporary travel writing from an informed place
- Explain the evolution of travel writing throughout different eras

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Name:

Contact Information:

Term: SEMESTER OR SUMMER

INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

The class meets once per week for 2.5 hours per session.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

Engagement	20%
Essay 1	25%
Essay 2	25%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Written Exam	15%

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, and to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#) and the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement will be graded.

“My Paris” Travel Essay (25%): In their first work, students will channel their personal journey of being in Paris to create a narrative based around a specific experience. Students will be expected to adhere to the lessons in the first four weeks of classes to create a meaningful narrative that brings in outside sources (academic, cultural, literary, cinematic, etc.) to build a more reflective personal work that unfolds like a traditional essay. The central focus is the student writer, and the essay should offer a takeaway that reveals something about the writer and their interaction with the place they travel or explore – in this case, some part of Paris. The essay should be four pages, double-spaced.

Midterm Exam (15%): The midterm exam is designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. It is comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course. The midterm exam will cover all concepts from the first half of the term and will have multiple choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay-response question.

“Big Paris Issue” Travel Essay (25%): In this final written assignment, students will synthesize lessons throughout the semester, but especially weeks 10-14 about issues in tourism and travel – authenticity, inclusion, sustainability – to tackle a bigger “issue” that they experience while traveling through Paris. It could be an in-depth report on overcrowding at the Louvre or a visit to someplace engaging with sustainable practice, but it must reflect what’s happening in Paris, keeping our feet on the ground. Students may opt for a more personal style – if the topic warrants it – or a more journalistic style, but they must include a solid travel narrative within

the commentary on a larger issue. Some factual reporting and even short interviews are encouraged. The final assignment should be five pages, double-spaced.

Final Written Exam (15%): Students will have the opportunity to apply lessons learned throughout the semester to a critical essay about a piece of travel writing that will be given to them. Students will need to channel the various authors, examples, and concepts discussed in the class to write a critique of a travel writing sample, referring to specific texts when possible. The final essay should be 3 pages long and must include 3-4 citations from relevant sources. The goal is to identify flaws and poor writing in the sample and to be able to explain clearly why specific passages run counter to notions of good travel writing.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field activities is a required part of coursework. In this course, you explore the city in which you are studying using a variety of tools. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and context on your context and the subject you are studying, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- Walking tour through a non-traditional part of Paris with professor (to be determined)

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required text(s) and/or the selected reading(s) listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

- I. REQUIRED TEXT(S):** You may purchase or acquire the required text(s) prior to departure or upon program arrival. The required text(s) are listed below:

De Botton, Alain. *The Art of Travel*. New York: Vintage, 2004.

- II. SELECTED READING(S):** The selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format).

Baldwin, James. "Equal in Paris." *Commentary Magazine*. 1955.

Becker, Elizabeth. *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013. Ch. 2 pp 43-75

Blaer, Madelene, Warwick Frost, and Jennifer Laing. "The Future of Travel Writing: Interactivity, Personal Branding and Wower." *Tourism Management* 77 (2020): 104009.

Bryson, Bill. *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001. Ch. 4 pp 39-51

Blundell, William E. *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing: Based on the Wall Street Journal Guide*. Penguin, 1988. Ch. 7 pp 158-187

Gopnik, Adam. *Paris to the Moon*. New York: Random House, 2001. Ch. 7 pp 78-85

MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. Ch. 3 pp 57-76

Brown, Molly McCully. "If You Are Permanently Lost" in Fuller, Alexandra and Jason Wilson *The Best American Travel Writing 2019*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2019. pp. 203-207.

Paramaditha, Intan, “On the Complicated Questions Around Writing About Travel” in Lakshmi, Padma, et al. *The Best American Travel Writing 2021*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2021. pp 182-187.

Pirolli, Bryan. *Travel Journalism: Informing Tourists in the Digital Age*. Oxon: Routledge, 2019. Ch. 1 pp. 17-30, Ch. 5 pp 75-87

Shepherd, Robert et al. *Cosmopolitanism and Tourism: Rethinking Theory and Practice*. Lexington Books, 2017. Ch. Intro pp vii-xxiii

Shipstead, Maggie et al. *A Paris All Your Own: Bestselling Women Writers on the City of Light*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2017. Ch. 17 pp 231-346

Twain, Mark. *The Innocents Abroad*. London: Arcturus, 2019. Ch. 15-16 pp 111-128

White, Edmund. *The Flâneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015 Ch. 1 pp 1-51

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: Collins, 2006. Ch. 13 pp 116-131

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.

KEY RESOURCES

In order to ensure you success abroad, CEA CAPA has provided the academic resources listed below.

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA CAPA student, you will be given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH). You may access the UNH online library [here](#). You must comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.
- **CEA CAPA Online Classroom – Canvas:** Canvas is the official LMS of CEA CAPA. Students should check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines about course material. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

COURSE CALENDAR
Travel Writing Through Paris

SESSION	TOPICS	ACTIVITY	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
1	Course Introduction: Review Syllabus, Classroom Policies	Course Overview	*Introduction quiz Readings: Syllabus Twain, Ch. 15-16 pp 111-128
2	Travel Writing Defined Explore history, genres, key motivations, and current manifestations	Lecture & Discussion	Readings: De Botton, Ch. 1 pp 3-26 Pirolli, Ch. 1 pp. 17-30 Zinsser, Ch. 13 pp 116-131
3	Travel and Place Establish connections between travel and place, notably Paris.	Lecture & Discussion	Readings: De Botton, Ch. 2 pp 27-64 Blundell, Ch. 7 pp 158-187
4	Perspective, Self, and Voice Discuss when, why, and how an author should be front and center in travel narratives.	Lecture & Discussion	De Botton, Ch. 6 pp 155-178 Bryson, Ch. 4 pp 39-51 Shipstead, Ch. 17 pp 231-346
5	Travel and Purpose Propose motivations for why we travel and write about it, tapping into personal narratives.	Lecture & Discussion	Readings: De Botton, Ch. 4 pp 99-126 Paramaditha, "On the Complicated Questions Around Writing About Travel"
6	Travel and Othering Pt I Who is the "Other" and why do travel writers care?	Lecture & Discussion	*Submit Assignment 1 Readings: De Botton, Ch. 3 pp 65-98 Shepherd, Ch. Intro pp vii-xxiii
7	Travel and Othering Pt II Examine ways that students may "other" in their own writing, notably about Parisians and locals.	Lecture & Discussion	Readings: Gopnik, Ch. 7 pp 78-85 White, Ch. 1 pp 1-51

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed

8	MIDTERM EXAM		
9	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel and Cliché</p> <p>Understand why “hidden gem” and phrases like it are problematic for travel writers.</p>	Lecture & Discussion Guest Speaker	<p>*Special Guest Speaker</p> <p>Readings: De Botton, Ch. 5 pp 127-154</p>
10	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel and Authenticity Pt I</p> <p>Peel back layers of what “authentic” means in the first place and how it applies to travel.</p>	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings: De Botton, Ch. 7-8 pp 179-236 Pirolli, Ch. 5 pp 75-87</p>
11	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel and Authenticity Pt II</p> <p>Experience Paris firsthand to attempt describing what makes the experience “authentic.”</p>	Field Study Lecture & Discussion	<p>*Special Excursion in Paris</p> <p>Readings: MacCannell, Ch. 3 pp 57-76</p>
12	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel and Boundaries</p> <p>Debate how travel can be limiting – or liberating – for certain people to understand how it affects our narratives.</p>	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings: Brown, “Permanently Lost” Baldwin, “Equal in Paris”</p>
13	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel, Sustainability and Overtourism</p> <p>Begin to understand the impact of travel writing on the world and how to be more conscious.</p>	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings: De Botton, Ch. 9 pp 237-272 Becker, Ch. 2 pp 43-75</p>
14	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel Writing and the Digital Revolution</p> <p>Embrace ways that travel writing exists online and discuss new challenges facing the genre.</p>	Lecture & Discussion	<p>*Submit Assignment 2</p> <p>Readings Blaeur et al, “The Future of Travel Writing”</p>
15	FINAL EXAM		

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this syllabus as needed

SECTION III: CEA CAPA Academic Policies and Standards

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

STUDENT LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery. beyond specifics of course offerings, that address student learning holistically and frame a larger learning context.