



Department of English and Writing Studies

Travel Writing 2219F Section: 650 Email: mchambe4@uwo.ca

Office: Room 1422 University College

Instructor: Melanie Chambers, virtual appointment

Course description: from memoir to insider advice to cultural observations, travel stories are a snapshot of a place through the eyes of a traveller. Students will communicate their travels --whether writing about their hometowns or exotic locales-- into engaging stories suitable for a variety of publications and online markets. Students will also create a mini guidebook and master the art of the review; as well, we'll discuss the evolution of the genre and ethical issues including differentiating advertising from editorial travel articles.

Texts: *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson

Recommended Texts: *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser

There are four major assignments for this course.

Grades and Assignments:	Due Dates: (workshop/final)
1. Hometown assignment 25%	Oct 14 (first draft); Oct 21 Final
2. Travel Blogs 35%	Nov 12 (first draft); Nov 19 th Final
3. Feature pitches 5%	Nov 26 th – no editing
4. Feature 35%	Dec 3 (first draft); Dec 8 Final

Peer editing: You will notice that every assignment requires a first draft, which will be used for in-class editing purposes. The first due date is when the peer edit draft is due. E. The purpose of this is to mimic the editor and writer relationship that exists in

a 'real world' scenario. Editing and rewriting are critical to improving and sculpting a story for publication. As an editor, you will learn to critique and help shape fellow students' work and as a writer, you must get used to adopting and/or rejecting editing comments and concerns. This work will be done in-class; therefore, if you're absent, this will reflect on your participation mark.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course **will** count as non-attendance and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Prerequisite(s): At least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT 1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

Attendance Policies

Discussion Forum Guidelines:

'The use of racist or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated.'

Note that 'attendance' as defined in this section is mandatory in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements as defined above for any week where there is Discussion will result in your earned final grade in this course being reduced by 3%. That penalty is cumulative to a maximum of five weeks. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for five or more weeks where there is Discussion will result in your earned final grade being reduced by 15%

The Forum is available between **Monday 8 a.m. until Friday at 5 p.m.** Forum questions will be based on weekly LECTUREs and readings.

Requirement: Assignment discussions. Before every assignment, I will meet online (post a calendar) with students to discuss their approach and concerns for each assignment. These will be 15 minute discussions to ensure you're on track and understand the requirements.

These are also great brainstorming sessions to determine your thoughts on your assignment, which is integral to travel writing.

Medical Accommodation Policy

Western has a comprehensive policy covering requests for accommodation by students who are not registered with Student Accessibility Services. All students should review this policy here, under the heading 'Accommodation for Illness – Undergraduate Students', noting the procedures, restrictions, and notice requirements: http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help

In Writing courses, students covered by this policy who are seeking academic consideration must proceed as follows.

Writing Studies' Basic Policy: students seeking academic consideration **on medical or any other grounds** for any missed tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments must either initiate a Self-Reported Absence (**for a grade component worth up to 30% of their final grade, but excluding final exams scheduled during the exam period**) or apply in person to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of their home Faculty and provide a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or other supporting documentation as required in accordance with official Western policy (linked above).

Students seeking academic consideration **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either:

- i. A Self-Reported Absence, or ii.
Academic consideration supported by the
Academic Counselling Office.

Exception: in Writing Studies courses, a student seeking academic accommodation **on non-medical grounds** for any missed in-class tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments **worth less than 10% of a final grade** *may* first consult directly with her or his instructor, who will – in his or her discretion – elect either to make a decision on the request directly or instruct the student to follow the procedures set out in **Writing Studies' Basic Policy**.

Please note that individual instructors will **not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related reasons (e.g. to

explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All medical documentation must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students who are or who feel they should be covered under Student Accessibility Services should review Western policy here:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

<p>WEEK 1 Sept 8-Sept 17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between a traveller and a tourist; What makes a good travel idea – the angle of your story; Qualities of a good travel writer (travel journalist)
<p>FORUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself (reveal your speciality, if you have one when you travel- what you like to do/see) • Comment on the readings: what does the information reveal about each place? Finally, what do you notice about the tone and style of each?
<p>READING</p>	<p>1. Stories online: Cuba, Poland, BC.</p>
<p>WEEK 2 Sept 19-24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a sense of place in travel writing.
<p>FORUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ POOR SENSE OF PLACE - how is this story lacking a sense of place? Provide examples of travelease (define in the Zinnser reading) or other cliches, too! • How does the Peru story reveal sense of place? Choose one example.
<p>READING</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peru Kuelap 2. Zinnser – <i>On Writing</i> 3. <i>Poor Sense of Place</i>

WEEK 3 Sept 26-Oct 1	LECTURE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing first person – your hometown
READING	1. Online: eight one-page stories.
FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment online about style and tone.
WEEK 4 Oct 3-8	LECTURE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre trip research
FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strikes you about Bryson’s use of facts in these chapters? Provide an example. • Find two facts about your hometown--what do they reveal? What is the central idea of your hometown that you might write about? How would these facts reinforce this (they don't have to, but they might!)
READING	<p>1) Chapters 1-8 Bill Bryson, <i>A Walk in the Woods</i></p> <p>2) Sample of hometown</p>
WEEK 5 Oct 10-15	(Thanksgiving Monday – no class Monday)
	EDIT HOMETOWN
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bryson Chapters 8-15
FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on Bryson’s sense of place.
WEEK 6 Oct 17-21	LECTURE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story styles and leads
Hometown Due	

READINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Polish Pierogies 3. Haida Gwaii 4. Italy and kids
FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lead sets the tone. Compare the story leads from the three readings. What are the differences in tone and style? Length? Sense of place elements? What kinds of story styles are they? • Find a lead on BBC. What about it do you find compelling?
WEEK 7 Oct 24-28	LECTURE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Blogs
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogs: read samples online • FINISH BRYSON
FORUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which blogs did you like/dislike and why? Was the information helpful? 2. Zoom chat about Bryson. Linked will be sent to your email.
Fall Study Break Oct 24--Nov 6	
WEEK 8 Nov 7-11	LECTURE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit Blogs / Guest speaker • NO readings
WEEK 9 Nov 14-18	LECTURE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature and pitch
READING	Cuban stories online

FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to write about for your feature? What is timely about—why would someone want to read about it now? • What are the angles (themes) of both Cuban stories? What new things do you learn about the country from the two writers’ approaches?
WEEK 10 Nov 21-25	<p style="text-align: center;">LECTURE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Markets and selling your work/freelance tools</p>
	FEATURE PITCH DUE Nov 14
No READING	
FORUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where could you sell your idea and why? 2. Post a new market and tell us about their audience (readers).
WEEK 11 Nov 28-Dec 3	Feature workshop
WEEK 12 Dec 5-8	<p style="text-align: center;">LECTURE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ethics in Travel writing</p>