

“Travel Writing and the Other”
English 120 College Composition II
Section 64611 Summer 2005

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Objectives

In his essay “Why We Travel,” Pico Iyer tells us that “We travel ... to lose ourselves; and ... to find ourselves.” Visiting new and different places and meeting new and different people causes us to think about what exactly makes those people different from us. One way of looking at these questions of difference is using the term “Other.” In simplest terms, the Other is everything I am not. Put another way, I know who I am because I am aware of the Other. Travel writing is an especially rich opportunity for investigating how we regard (construct?) the Other when we are away from home. We will pursue a number of connected questions in this course. In what ways does the Other help us understand who we are? In what ways does the Other prevent us from knowing who we are? Because we are away from home when we travel, cut off from the comfort of the familiar, might we become the Other and lose our identity? How are visual texts different (or the same) in terms of the Other?

We will work toward answering these questions by reading, viewing, discussing, and writing about a variety of texts. We will read some short fiction and non-fiction, a memoir, a graphic novel, view a film and a television program, and examine some on-line material. In the end, through investigating the Other, we will have a richer understanding our ourselves, our world and our place in it. Academically, we will refine our critical thinking, reading, and writing skills as well as research strategies, and facility with on-line materials. The variety of course texts helps us to understand the interdisciplinary nature of travel writing. The authors, living and dead, American and not, represent a range of cultures and experiences and can guide our own understanding of the Other.

Requirements

We will work toward the above outcomes through a variety of interrelated tasks, including small and large group discussion, informal in-class writing, and formal papers written outside of class. Specifically, you will write three papers that will ask you to explore the genres of travel narrative, analytic essay, and finally an analytic, researched travel narrative. This process will be further enhanced

through a series of four summaries of readings from the course texts. Details of these assignments are found below.

Grading		Scale	
4 Summaries	100 points	A	100-90 %
3 Essays	300 points	B	89-80 %
Editing Journal	100 points	C	79-70 %
		D	69-60 %
Total	500 points		

Texts

The Call to Write, Trimbur

Carnet de Voyage (Travel Journal), Craig Thompson

Safe Area Goraǵde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-1995 Joe Sacco

The Pocket Handbook Kirszner & Mandell

A dictionary (bring to every class)

A floppy disk specifically for this class

Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs who need special accommodations in this course are asked to share these concerns with me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

I assume that all work you turn in for this course is yours, and any material that you have acquired from an outside source is documented properly. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and will result in possible failure of the course. This includes work done for other courses used without informing that instructor or me. See NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>.

Late Papers

Late papers will not be accepted and receive a score of zero. Papers must be physically turned in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. No emailed or faxed papers.

Attendance

Important parts of the work for this course will be done in small and large groups. This means that your consistent presence is important to the success of the class as a whole. If you are unable to attend class, you must contact me via phone or email within twenty-four hours. You are still responsible for any work done or due in class that day. Similarly, you are responsible for contacting your group members if you miss a class. Not bringing books to class may result in your being marked absent for that class.

Because this course is so brief, two absences will result in the loss of a full grade from your final grade. Three absences will result in a loss of two grades. Four will result in failure. In order to be considered present, you must be in class for the entire course meeting time.

Paper Format

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point Times font. Your name, the date, the class, my name and the assignment are to be at the top of the first page. Don't forget a title. Any papers longer than one page must have page numbers.

Editing Journal

This is to be kept in a blue book. After you receive a paper back from myself or a peer, make an entry for that paper in the blue book. The entry should describe any mechanical errors and their corrections. Second, it should note any content-based comments. Third, it should contain any problems with MLA citations or the bibliography page. The goal of the editing journal is to create a critical record of your own writing so that you can better address your strengths and weaknesses. Your score will be determined by the comprehensiveness and organization of your journal. I will collect and check the journals periodically.

Summaries

You will write four summaries in this course. The summary will be announced in class for a travel narrative you were to have read for that day. These are to follow the paper format guidelines above and be exactly 250 words long and on one page. (Use your word processor to count the words and note the number of words at the top of the page). The summary should give the reader a brief, objective description of the story or excerpt you have read. Basic information such as title, author, setting, main characters, point of view should be included in the summary, as well as any other literary characteristics you deem important.

The first sentence of your summary should give the reader all the basic information he or she will need to understand your summary. For example: "Set in modern India, 'Scholar and Gypsy' by Anita Desai traces the difficulties an American married couple encounter while the husband researches his thesis." The rest of the summary will fill in the details, the characters' names, the nature of the conflict and its resolution, details about the setting (if necessary).

Points will be deducted if your summary fails to meet all of the above criteria.

Calendar

17 May	Introductions "Siegfried on the Rhine"* "Travels With Omar"*
18 May	<i>Call to Write</i> Chapter 2 "Letting Life Happen"* "Local Colour"*
19 May	"Travelogue"* "Chinese Funeral"*
20 May	"Scholar and Gypsy"* "The Art of Riding a Third World Bus"*
23 May	Subjective Essay due, hard copy and on floppy disk Peer Review
24 May	"Why We Travel"* 142-51 "Unforgettable Journey"*
25 May	<i>Carnet de Voyage</i> <i>Understanding Comics</i> & "Comics Terminology"* <i>Call to Write</i> Chapter 19
26 May	<i>Carnet de Voyage</i> "Called on the Carpet"*
27 May	<i>Carnet de Voyage</i>
30 May	Memorial Day No Class
31 May	Essay 2 due paper copy and on floppy disk Peer Review
1 June	<i>Safe Area: Gora</i> pp. 1-77 <i>Call to Write</i> Chapter 14
2 June	<i>Safe Area: Gora</i> pp. 78-154 "Frozen in Frøya"*
3 June	<i>Safe Area: Gora</i> pp. 155-227
6 June	Conferences (in my office 320D Minard)
7 June	Conferences (in my office 320D Minard)
8 June	"The Great Invisible Pheasant Hunt"*
9 June	Michael Palin <i>Full Circle</i> (film)
10 June	Last Day of Class, Essay 3 due

*These readings all may be downloaded from the course website.

Subjective Essay (Essay 1)

On the first day of class you will be interviewed by a partner about a memorable trip you took. Your partner will take notes on this interview, and give the notes to you at the end of class. We will then do some free writing on this journey. Using this interview and the free writing, write a two to three page (500 – 750 word) narrative of that journey. Keep in mind the motives that Iyer suggests we have for travel. Did your trip conform to Iyer's reasons for travel? Which reasons?

Image Essay (Essay 2)

While in the computer classroom, we will examine and analyze a number of visual representations of the Other. In this project, you will identify and analyze another example. Go to the National Geographic Society's on-line Photography Index and click on History and Culture:

(<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/siteindex/photogallery/history.html>). In the section labeled "People of Today," locate three images that you feel represent the Other, either for yourself or someone else. Download these three images and label them with your last name and a number, e.g. Aune1, Aune2, Aune3. Then go to the Discussion Board section of Blackboard, click on Image Essay. Then click on Add New Thread. In the subject type your name. In the message area of the form type in the name of the website (not the URL) where you found the images. Then click on the Browse button at the bottom to attach your first image. Click Submit and then OK to finish the process. You will need to do this three times, once for each image.

For your essay, choose one of the images on the Blackboard site that you did not upload and in a 2-3 page (500 – 750 word) paper discuss how the image represents the Other, and what the maker of the image seems to value. Be sure to download and insert the image into your essay. Think about the terms we will have discussed: foreground, background, framing, lighting, black and white vs. color. Is this visual representation similar to the representations in the stories we have read so far? How? Do images of the Other affect the viewer differently than verbal descriptions? How?

Final Essay (Essay 3)

In this course we have read and seen a variety of travel narratives, and we have discussed how meeting the Other is a means by which we form our own identity. For your final essay, I want you to return to your Subjective Essay. After having discussed and investigated travel narratives, how have your ideas about your journey changed?

In a five to six page essay (1,250 – 1,500 word) essay, revisit your travel narrative and reflect on your experience through free writing. Then conduct some research about your destination? Can you find some images of the place? How does it present itself to the world? How do others react to that place? Then turn to your own response to that place. To what extent did your trip involve an encounter with the Other? How did the journey affect your sense

of self? I encourage you to draw on the course materials as way to compare or contrast.

Grade Guidelines

These descriptions apply to the final grade in the class and the score on particular assignments.

A work is outstanding. It goes beyond the basic requirements of the assignment and the class. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are few, if any errors and none impair understanding. The work shows evidence of critical and original thinking. Ideas are clearly supported and explained.

B work is above average. It shows understanding of the given task and an understanding of the rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are errors but none impair understanding. Thinking is clear, though not necessarily highly critical or highly original. Ideas are supported and explained, although not always clearly or consistently.

C work is satisfactory. It shows familiarity with though not a complete understanding of the given task and rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are errors that impair understanding. Thought shows inconsistent critical engagement or originality. Ideas are too broad and not clearly supported with evidence. Writing tends to summarize or describe rather than analyze.

D work is below average. It shows an inconsistent understanding of the given task, text, and rules. There are more than single grammar, spelling, and typographical errors that impair understanding. Thought and writing are often disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre. Paper seems to be written quickly with little attention to revision or proofreading.

F work is unsatisfactory. It shows little if any understanding of the given task, text, or rules. There are numerous grammar, spelling and typographic errors that impair understanding. Thought and writing are disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre.

General Education Outcomes Applicable for English 120

- Outcome #1: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats.
- Outcome #2: Locate and use information for making appropriate personal and professional decisions.
- Outcome #4: Comprehend intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics.
- Outcome #6: Integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner.

Course Description: Concentrates on the process of writing analysis and persuasion essays requiring library research and emphasizes the appropriate use of information from sources, sound reasoning, and strategies for persuading readers.

Course Objectives

1. Students will learn to write clearly for a variety of specific purposes and audiences, specifically to write convincing, researched arguments.
2. Students will practice effective and efficient writing strategies. The writing process (inventing; developing; focusing; drafting; revising to improve focus, organization, development, and clarity; and editing) is emphasized in a series of researched essays. Instruction is given in writing unified paragraphs, effective beginnings and endings, and appropriate transitions as well as the importance of standard English spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation when writing for an academic audience.
3. Students will practice active reading strategies: to discover and acknowledge opposing views, to analyze and summarize claims and grounds from alternative perspectives, and to evaluate the arguments of other writers.
4. Students will begin to learn to construct arguments: to present a clear and significant thesis; to defend that thesis with claims that are supported with appropriate evidence; to persuade their readers through the use of appropriate rhetorical strategies; and to recognize common pitfalls in reasoning.
5. Students will learn to conduct library research. In addition to the basic resources used in English 110, they will learn to use specialized references, professional journals, databases, and, perhaps, fieldwork to gather specific, relevant, reliable information, to analyze alternative perspectives, and to use that information to write arguments. Correct and responsible use of MLA documentation is emphasized.