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Specialized Reporting & Writing: Travel Writing

CIMBA Program, Paderno del Grappa, Italy
Spring 2015

Professor: Dr. Charlene Bunnell

Contact Information:

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Course Description:

“This course focuses on the writing of travel articles for magazines or metropolitan newspaper travel sections. Students will read and discuss the work of accomplished contemporary travel writers and will write in a variety of travel story forms, such as the destination piece, journey article, travel humor, adventure travel, culinary travel, and holiday and historical travel.” (from CIMBA course catalogue). In addition to current writers, we will learn some history of this genre via excerpts from diverse writers through the centuries.

Goals & Learning Outcomes:

Through completing the reading / writing assignments, cultural events / trips, and classroom discussions / lectures, students will hone writing techniques, acquire a foundation of travel writing knowledge, gain cultural awareness, and appreciate the art of being a traveler.

Texts:

The Travel Writer's Handbook, by Louise P. Zobel. 1-57284-044-7 (6th edition)

On Writing Well, by William Zinsser. 006-089154-8

A Sense of Place, by Michael Shapiro. 1-932361-08-1

Course Packet

Supplementary viewings (in class); handouts

Depending up scheduling: local cultural events/trips related to travel.



Assignments (see details on handouts):

- 7 Short Assignments – as “homework” or in class; participation & discussion, 10%
- Informative Travel Guide w/ presentation, 15%
- 2 Feature Travel Articles (themed/ with visuals), 15% each; 30% total
- Travel Presentation: Itinerary – 36 Hours in ___ ?? ___, 15%
- “Interview with a Travel Writer” article (based on Shapiro’s *A Sense of Place*), 15%
- Final Exam (on readings, textbook, discussion, work), 15%

General Course Policies:

- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is submitting someone else's idea or work as your own, intentionally or unintentionally, without proper acknowledgment of sources. All sources must be documented according to a standard style (e.g., MLA, APA, CM). Incorrect acknowledgment or failure to cite sources will result in a zero grade for that project with the option to redo.

- **Grading System:** The +/- grading system for final grades and letter and percentage grade equivalents are as follows: A (95); A- (92); B+ (88); B (85); B- (82); C+ (78); C (75); C- (72); D+ (68); D (65); D- (62); F (ranges from 0 to 59). However, be aware that the University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences requires professors adhere to the following recommended grade distribution for upper-level courses:

	A	B	C	D	F	Average
Intermediate courses	18%	36%	39%	5%	2%	2.63
Advanced courses	22%	38%	36%	3%	1%	2.77

- **Attendance/Participation:** Regular attendance is expected per CIMBA guidelines – see below.
Attendance at all classes and CIMBA sanctioned activities is MANDATORY. All unexcused absences will have the following consequences:
 - 1st absence will result in a loss of a 1/3 of a letter grade in that class*
 - 2nd (cumulative) absence will result in a loss of an entire letter grade in that class*
 - 3rd (cumulative) absence will result in a dismissal from the program**Absences due to illness require a note from the CIMBA Undergraduate Office Staff and/or the Istituto Filipin medical staff. If a student is sick and cannot attend class, he/she must inform the CIMBA Staff immediately. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.*

If you miss a class for any reason, please keep to the course schedule and understand that you will be responsible for that day's material.

- **Writing:** Although we will review writing basics, you are expected to be able to develop a thesis or control statement suitable to the assignment, to construct effective paragraphs or sections and sentences, and to have sound grammatical and usage skills. Your writing is assessed on both content and style/grammar – please review the handout of each writing requirement's description for detailed assessment criteria.
- **Classroom Environment:** We generally learn and function best in a comfortable, collaborative environment of common courtesy and respect. Disrespect or harassment of any type will NOT be tolerated; see <http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching/policies.shtml> for UI's stated policies. Be professional: don't talk during presentations (faculty or student) and do not use electronic devices in class except for class purposes. Be prepared and on time and take those Italian siestas after class! Accommodations for students with disabilities are made.
- **Other:**
 - Enjoy any course-related cultural events, photo-walks, and trips, but understand that they are part of the course's learning experience and will be incorporated into your course grade through short assignments (directly) and the final exam (indirectly). Suggestion: take notes on these.
 - Preparation and participation are essential as this is not a lecture class – we learn from each other as we work on the various documents. Please come prepared; do not hesitate to ask questions or spark a digressive (but relevant) discussion; and grant others the courtesy of your attention and feedback.



- Some classes will be devoted to workshops which provide critical reader feedback on your work in progress. Be prepared for the workshop which may be peer reviews or instructor-led in small group work. Actively engage in these sessions and be a critical reviewer of peers' writing, in both content and presentation. Note: "critical" does not mean negative; rather, it is a careful, engaged analysis of the draft.
- Some assignments require documentation. Use a standard style such as MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), or CM (Chicago Manual). **ALL BORROWED MATERIAL MUST BE CREDITED TO ITS SOURCE, WHETHER YOU HAVE QUOTED, PARAPHRASED, OR SUMMARIZED.**
- **Saturday Classes:** Due to the extensive amount of travel time incorporated into the CIMBA Undergraduate program, we may have a few Saturday classes to ensure the appropriate amount of class sessions (per UI regulations). These Saturdays have NOT been confirmed yet; however, they will be arranged by the end of the first week of classes. Note that these Saturday classes will NOT be during any of the scheduled travel breaks.
- **My availability:** I am on campus nearly every week day and on some weekends. Please see me in the faculty offices or e-mail me if you need to schedule a specific time to meet with me. NOTE: although I check e-mail regularly, I do not have internet access at the apartment.
- **Technology & computers.** If you have a MAC or a PC Ultrabook, you will probably need a VGA connector for the overhead projector. Also, check to ensure compatible software applications for sharing and sending documents with each other. Sometimes saving documents as RTF (rich text format) or PDF aids in compatibility. Also, flash drives or USB's are very helpful to transfer large files that may take some time to send and download/open via e-mail.



Tentative Schedule Overview

You will receive handouts detailing the specifics of the course's assignments as well as the detailed course schedule probably the first or second class meeting or once the CIMBA calendar is finalized. However, below is a tentative overview of the semester:

- Classes 1-4: Introduction to and History of Travel Writing (short assignments)
- Classes 5-7: Preparing Informative Travel Guides (travel guide and short assignments)
- Classes 7-11: Writing about Place (feature article 1; short assignments)
- Classes 12-14: Writing about Culture (travel presentation & short assignments)
- Classes 15-19: Writing the Humorous Travel Tale (feature article 2; Interview with a Travel Writer; short assignments)
- Classes 20-21: Course Review and Final Exam



**University of Iowa CLAS (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)
Recommended Syllabi Insert w/ links for more information.**

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, [III.15.2](#). Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the [CLAS Code of Academic Honesty](#). Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies

Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather [omitted]

This link is only for Iowa location; in case of severe weather here, the CIMBA staff will alert you.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) and The University of Iowa [Operations Manual](#).