



English 333 – 02H- Approaches to Literature

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom, Professor of English

Office Location: HL 124

Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday, 9:30-10, 11-12 or by appointment

Office Phone: 903-886-5264

Office Fax: 903-886-5980

University Email Address: donna-dunbar-odom@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook(s) Required

The Best Travel Writing of 2014, edited by Paul Theroux (Houghton Mifflin)

Cleveland by Harvey Pekar (Z2 Comics)

Course Description

I love reading. I love writing. I love traveling. I love travel writing. This class will be an exploration of what it can mean to travel and the variety of ways we can define travel writing. You will be introduced to the concept of psychogeography and will be asked to read and produce travel writing—even if you don't travel farther than from Prairie Crossing to the Hall of Languages and back.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the term, students will:

- Have developed a definition of travel writing as a genre.
- Have a clear concept of what makes travel writing successful.
- Be able to identify some of the key components to travel writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments and Classroom Work

Weekly writing – Each week, we'll work with a prompt from the list below, perform the activity asked for, then write a page about the experience. I'm turning you all into psychogeographers, whether you like it or not.

Essay #1 – In an essay of 5-6 pages, please consider the following questions:

What does it mean to "travel"?

What do you need to know about the location to appreciate travel writing?

Once you've gotten some ideas about how you would answer these questions, use your reading of the essays by Key, LaSalle, Paterniti, Parrottet, and Power to help you develop your argument. You do not have to quote from each reading but you do need to make use of some of your reading substantively. You must have a clear thesis (argument) and support; do not ruminate on these questions, but, rather, develop a crafted response. Please use MLA Style.

Essay #2 – In an essay of 5-6 pages, please consider the following questions:

What does the best travel writing accomplish? What makes travel writing successful?

What are the key components to travel writing?

Why are people drawn to travel writing?

Select one or two of the questions, then draw your reading of the essays by Rinella, Sedaris, Swick, Whitehead, and Wilsey to help you develop an argument. You must quote from our reading. You do not have to quote from each reading but you do need to make use of some of your reading substantively. You must

have a clear thesis (argument) and support; do not ruminate on these questions, but, rather, develop a crafted response. Please use MLA Style.

Essay #3 – In an essay of 5-6 pages, please consider the following questions:

How can traveling make us more aware and observant of all places?

How can we look at the everyday places where we live and work through the eyes we use when we travel?

How is psychogeography a kind of traveling?

Select one or two of the questions, then draw your viewing/reading of Terry and Delisle to help you develop an argument. You must quote from our texts in substantive ways. For this assignment, you might also draw from your weekly writings. You must have a clear thesis (argument) and support; do not ruminate on these questions, but, rather, develop a crafted response. Please use MLA Style.

Final project – For your final project, you will produce a podcast or a graphic narrative that brings together visual and written text to develop your definition of travel writing and your experience of psychogeography (another kind of travel, as I see it). You're going to make visible something of your experiences as a psychogeographer. Basically, what I'm asking you to do is develop one of the weekly writing exercises into the final project. I'm still working out the details on this so I'm not going to offer more direction until I have a better sense of what we can do. Also, I need to find out how digital you all are. You will be sharing your work with me and the rest of the class. We'll talk more about this later in the term, and I'll provide more specific instructions.

Weekly writing assignments:

Getting Psychogeographical: We are all psychogeographers

1. Look behind you, look above you, look underneath you. These are your surroundings. What do you see?
2. Start walking until you see something particularly yellow. Notice THIS something.
3. Walk through a building you've never been in before. How does it make you feel? Describe it.
4. Ask someone where to find something really strange. Describe it.

5. Eat something you've never tried before. Notice if you like it or not. Try to figure out every flavor. Describe the experience.
6. Walk through campus/town listening to music you love. What stories do the words of the song tell you about what you're seeing?
7. Leave sentences from a book or song you love in several places around campus or town. Why did you select those places?
8. Find a place on campus or in town that you like and describe it for someone who can't see it.
9. Bring paper and pen on a walk. Leave notes wherever you find something of interest. Make a map for someone else to find the notes.
10. What's your favorite building on campus? Why? Describe it so that we can "get" why it's your favorite.
11. Choose someone who looks interesting. Make this person your guide. Follow him/her (without being a creeper) and try to see the walk through his/her eyes. What do you see?
12. Write down something you like about this campus or this town on a small piece of paper. Leave it where someone will find it later.
13. Walk through campus/town listening to music you love. If this were the soundtrack to a movie starring you, what could happen next in the movie?
14. Write your own instruction for the rest of us.

GRADING

Grading Policy

Your grade will be determined by your performance on essays, weekly writing activities, participation in our discussion, class participation, a final project, and participation in a final showcase of the projects.

I do not put individual grades on assignments. I know this will frustrate some of you, but I don't think letter grades lend themselves to interesting revision or to actual conversation about your writing. In fact, when I assign letter grades, I find my comments tend toward justifications of the grades rather than a real discussion of what you've written and how you can rework it. BUT at any time

of the term, if you want to know where you stand grade-wise, just come by my office with your work. I'll be happy to give you a ballpark grade. And if you're in any kind of trouble grade-wise, you can be sure I'll let you know.

Grading Criteria

Essays (3) 40%

Class participation 10%

Weekly writing 10%

Final project 30%

Participation in final showcase 10%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- To fully participate in online courses, you will need to use a current, Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Internet Explorer 9.0 or 10. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.
- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
 - sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - speakers or headphones.
- Depending on your course, you might also need a:
 - webcam
 - microphone

For courses where interactive tools are used, like VoiceThread or ClassLive Pro, headphones are suggested for use with recording and playback. We recommend a webcam with an integrated microphone, such

as the Microsoft LifeCam Cinema. All devices should be installed and configured before class begins.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. Java can be downloaded at: <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.
- You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - Adobe Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.
- For additional information about system requirements, please see: <https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Pearson LearningStudio (eCollege) Access and Log in Information

This course will be facilitated using Pearson LearningStudio, the learning management system used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

Pearson LearningStudio Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio.

Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Chat Support:** Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with a Pearson LearningStudio Representative.
- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.
- **Email:** helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

Accessing Help from within Your Course: Click on the '*Tech Support*' icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You will then be

able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

Policy for Reporting Problems with Pearson LearningStudio

Should students encounter Pearson LearningStudio based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed?

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or 1-866-656-5511
2. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
3. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
4. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

PLEASE NOTE: Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser **BEFORE** the course begins and to take the Pearson LearningStudio tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the Pearson LearningStudio platform. **ONLY** Pearson LearningStudio based problems are legitimate.

Internet Access

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

myLeo Support

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamuc.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at <https://leo.tamuc.edu>.

Learner Support

Go to the following link [One Stop Shop](#)- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

Go to the following link [Academic Success Center](#)- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

(See syllabus tool for content suggestions)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

My Course Policies and Procedures

Classroom activities:

The work we do in this class depends on your coming to class, every day, prepared to work. I count on you all to teach and learn from each other and to each be an important presence in our discussions.

Discussion is generative—in other words, we get smarter when we listen to each other's ideas and, in turn, clarify our own ideas for others.

I will do everything I can to make the atmosphere of our discussion a comfortable one; I do not tolerate disrespect, so you can rest assured that at no time will your comments be ridiculed or made fun of by me or anyone else in the class. I want this to be a place where intellectual inquiry is the norm. And if at any time you feel that someone has exhibited disrespect, let me know immediately. We should be able to challenge each other's reading and ideas in professional ways that stimulate discussion, not shut it down.

I'm always nervous that my humor will come across wrong or mean because I can be a tad on the sarcastic side. Let me know if you think I've been caustic or mean because I am never intentionally either of those—at least not in my classroom. :-)

Attendance: "Attendance" is mandatory. Do not disappear on me and then reappear without contacting me. I will not let you make up the work unless you experience something dire--and I don't wish that on anyone. If something is going on that's getting in the way of your class time, please let me know.

Late assignments: You must keep up with the reading and writing assignments. I will not accept late assignments unless you have received **PRIOR** permission from me. If you miss a weekly writing assignment, I will expect, in addition to the original assignment, a 4-page interpretive summary of that week's reading assignment—typed, double-spaced, carefully edited. Also, I will not comment on late assignments. Missing other assignments will result in similar (but longer) written assignments. If you experience truly exceptional circumstances (e.g. car wrecks, fires, and the like--God forbid), please contact me immediately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of someone else's work. If I find a student has intentionally made use of another's work without giving that person credit, that student will fail the course. We will talk about this some in class because I want everyone to be clear on this. It's a big deal in my world.

It will be tempting to cut and paste from the internet for some of your responses. Do not. To do so without correct citation will result in an F for the entire course.

If at any time you find yourself overwhelmed by the work required or you find yourself confused, please contact me. Don't feel miserable all by yourself. Share the misery with me!

Here's a link to the official University policy:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Complaints: Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 (“Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation”).

Departmental Chain of Command:

Undergraduate ENG, JOUR, RTV and SPC courses: Instructor ☐ Dr. Susan Stewart, Assistant Department Head or Dr. Hunter Hayes, Department Head

University Specific Procedures

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Tentative syllabus:

Week 1 – Aug. 31-Sept. 4 –

Introductions; set up rules for participation and use of electronics in class; what's travel writing?; what's psychogeography?

Week 2 -- Sept. 7-11 – Read:

Harrison Scott Key – “Fifty Shades of Greyhound”

Peter LaSalle – “Au Train de Fie: That Voice You Hear When Traveling”

Week 3 – Sept. 14-18 – Read:

Michael Paterniti – “This Must Be the Place”

Tony Perrottet – “Birthplace of the American Vacation”

Week 4 – Sept. 21-25 – Read:

Matthew Power – “Excuse Us While We Kiss the Sky”

Essay #1 due

Week 5 – Sept 28-Oct. 2 – Workshop Essay #1

Read:

Steven Rinella – “Dream Acres”

Week 6 – Oct. 5-9 – Read:

David Sedaris – “Now We Are Five”

Thomas Swick – “A Moving Experience”

Week 7 – Oct. 12-16 – Read:

Colson Whitehead – “Loving Las Vegas”

Sean Wilsey – “Open Water”

Week 8 – Oct. 19-23 – Essay #2 due

Week 9 – Oct. 26-30 – Workshop Essay #2; watch “Subdivided”

Week 10 – Nov. 2-6 – “Subdivided” discussion; Read:

Guy Delisle - Burma Chronicles

Week 11 – Nov. 9-13 – Essay #3 due (Monday or Wednesday); workshop Essay #3

Week 12 – Nov. 16-20 – Final project production begins. You will learn (or refresh your learning of) Audacity; we will have other workshops as we discuss the possibilities for the format you can choose for your final project (podcast, graphic narrative, etc.)

Week 13 – Nov. 23-27 – THANKSGIVING WEEK – Catch up and work days for final project

Week 14 – Nov. 30-Dec. 4 – Final Project production

Week 15 – Dec. 7-11– Final project due

Week 16 – Dec. 14-18 – Final project showcase

