

English 311 (DA, WI)
“Autobiographical Writing: Travel Writing”
Seville, Spain
Spring 2024
Dr. Daphne Desser
Office Hours: Also by appointment.
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Credits: Three

Prerequisites: one ENGL DL course or consent.

Course Description

This course in autobiographical writing will explore and analyze literary travel writings with a creative nonfiction focus and create a course-generated writing community in which you will interpret and respond to texts from diverse cultural contexts and explore ways to write about your travel and cultural experiences in Seville. Course reflections include: How can travel evoke a different way of thinking about yourself, story, cultural narratives, the world, and your presence in it? How can place, people, and customs come to life on the page?

Student Learning Goals

1. Through writing assignments, class and individual excursions, and via class discussions on travel and the negotiation of cultural and other differences, students will demonstrate increased awareness of their own cultural values and biases. Students will be given opportunities to reflect, in writing, on how their experience in Seville has enabled them to see how these biases might impact their ability to work with others.
2. Through class and individual excursions in Seville as well as student and published travel writing on Spain, students will demonstrate increased knowledge of diversity in writing and via class discussions.
3. Through the development of a writing community in Seville, students will improve their communication skills, with a particular focus on writing and speaking effectively with diverse individuals and groups.
4. Through readings and writing assignments on travel, with a particular focus on travel in Spain, students will demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints through written and oral analyses of their travel experiences.

Required Texts

Primary Texts:

Suleria, Sara. "Meatless Days."

Selections from:

Billington, Bernier, and Bates (ed), *Spain: The Best Travel Writing from the New York Times*. 2001.

De Botton, Alain. *The Art of Travel*. 2002.

Kimmerer Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. 2015.

Theroux, Paul. *The Pillars of Hercules: A Grand Tour of the Mediterranean*

Secondary Texts:

Selections from:

Farley, David G., *Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectuals Abroad*. Columbia and London: Missouri University Press, 2010.

Micallef, Roberta (ed.), *Illusion and Disillusionment: Travel Writing in the Modern Age*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Ramos, Christina. *Mapping the World Differently African American: Travel Writing About Spain*. 2015.

Course Policies

The Public Nature of Class Writing and Discussions

We will respectfully read each other's work and provide constructive criticism reflecting the genre. Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others, and in this course our purpose is to respectfully come together as a writing community. Remember that you will often be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about things that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny, or things you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effect on others.

Attendance

Attendance is required. I take roll each day at the beginning of class; if you are not present when roll is called, you will be considered absent. More than **five** absences will result in a grade penalty. If you miss more than five class sessions, your final grade for the course will be reduced by 50 points per class session over five that you miss. For example, if you miss eight class sessions this semester, and your final grade was 820/1000, it will be bumped down to 670/1000. (That's 150 points—3 penalized absences at 50 points each.) It would mean going from a B- to a D+! Importantly, there is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences—they are all absences, and they all count the same way. In the event that you do miss a class session, you are responsible for making up any in-class work. You are also responsible for finding out about any homework assignments and completing them on time. Do **not** expect to be able to hand in

something late or not do an assignment simply because you were absent on the day it was assigned or due; it still needs to be submitted on time.

Assignments

- You may not turn in work that was or will be required by another course.
- To complete this course with a grade of **D** or higher, you must complete all major written assignments. Failure to complete one or more major assignment(s) will result in an automatic failure for the course.
- All written assignments prepared outside of class should be professional in appearance, style, and tone: i.e. typed, free of grammatical error, and appropriate in form and content for the particular context.
- Make **two copies** of each assignment--one to turn in for evaluation and one to keep for your files to insure credit for all work.
- To receive full credit, all written assignments must be submitted on time, in proper format, and with the required supporting materials (e.g. drafts, peer reviews, cover sheets, audience profiles, etc.)
- You may turn in an assignment one class meeting after it is due, and 10% of the assignment's grade will be deducted. After that, no later papers will be accepted. For all assignments, students will be given an opportunity to plan and discuss their strategies for responding to the prompt. In addition, the first writing assignment will be graded more leniently than the subsequent ones as it represents the first graded work in our course.

Class Business

All class business (i.e. questions about grades or policies, suggestions, etc.) should be documented in writing as memoranda, preferably by e-mail.

Grading

To complete this course successfully you must complete all writing assignments on time, prepare for class, and participate in class activities and discussions online. You cannot receive a passing grade unless you have submitted all major assignments. "Major assignments" refers to the following:

- **at least seven** of the Writing Assignments. (This means you can miss a few and receive a reduced grade, but you cannot skip them altogether, as that will be missing, collectively speaking, a major assignment.)
- the Take-Home Final Exam

Your work will be posted in a discussion forum on Lualima or via its dropbox. However, if, for some reason, you email me any kind of written material as a submission of work for a grade, an email that fails to reach me or has a "missing" or "non-functioning" attachment will not be

excused. This means that you need to ‘cc yourself whatever you email me and test the attachment to ensure successful delivery. It also means that you have to maintain a “sent-mail” folder with all work sent to me via email; if ever I don’t receive an email from you, one that you claim to have sent to me on time, I will ask that you do the following: 1) open the original from your sent-mail folder; 2) either take a screenshot or create a pdf of that original e-mail in its original e-mail format, not a Word document; 3) e-mail me the pdf or the screenshot as an attachment. This process will ensure that you receive credit for it having been sent on time. If you do not have such a copy to attach, I simply will have no choice but to penalize your assignment according to the date that I actually receive it. This is a non-negotiable policy; your UH email accounts have nearly infinite amounts of storage space, so there is basically no reason whatsoever to not keep a sent-mail copy of all emails and all attachments for the duration of the semester. It’s simply your responsibility. Relatedly, in addition to keeping copies of all sent emails and attachments, you must also maintain copies of all your projects. If you do not keep a copy and your project gets lost or misplaced (or a server hosting the work you produced crashes), you will have to rewrite it, and if you cannot provide rock solid evidence of it having been produced and submitted on time, you will have to take the requisite penalties.

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 0-59
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Assignment	Point Value
Writing Assignments (11 at 8 points each)	88
Take-home Final Exam	12
Total	100

A+	967-1000
A	934 -966
A-	900- 933
B+	867 - 899
B	834 - 866
B-	800 - 833
C+	767 - 799
C	734 - 766
C-	700 - 733
D+	667 - 699
D	634 - 666
D-	600 - 633