

Monday: 6:15-8:30 PM

Prof. Katie McGovern

## **1 – DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an opportunity for students to focus first-hand on the art and craft of travel writing, with particular emphasis on Italy. Through reading, writing, and visits in and around the city center, students will explore places of historic, artistic, cultural and personal interest. They will learn "by example" from a selection of great travel literature from the world in general, and from Italy in particular. And they will learn "by doing," via a series of guided exercises and assignments that explore the distinctive qualities of travel writing and the ways in which this particular art can lead to a deeper understanding of their own experiences and cultural identity.

## **2 – OBJECTIVES, GOALS and OUTCOMES**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to travel literature and to provide the students with an opportunity to improve their writing skills through workshopping. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- a) a familiarity with travel literature;
- b) an ability to construct a relevant critical response to a piece of writing, with regard to both content and craft (constructive criticism, peer review, and the writing "workshop" process);
- c) an awareness of key aspects of creative-writing in general, and for travel-writing in particular (voice, character, setting, story, show-don't-tell, word-choice and sentence-construction);
- d) proofing and editing skills (attention to detail), as well as overall revision skills;
- e) an ability to self-assess writing in terms of both content and craft.
- f) an ability to draw from life experiences, such as excursions, to create a story or a travel writing entry.

## **3 - PREREQUISITES**

This is an intermediate level course which builds on basic writing skills that the student should already have acquired through standard high school and college English (literature) and/or writing classes. In addition, at least one of the following should be considered as a preferable prerequisite:

- one college level course in any kind of writing (college-writing, creative, academic, etc.).
- two college level courses that required regular writing as part of class assignments.

## **4 – METHOD**

One-part literary appreciation and one-part creative writing workshop, the course revolves around two complementary approaches:

- reading – a selection of travel-related literature.
- writing – from first draft to final draft.

Lessons will be centered on interactive approaches including presentations, discussions, "workshopping," group exercises, and class excursions.

This class is conducted as a workshop. In addition to attending classes, the student is expected to share his or her work with the class through a distribution of copies of their work and to speak in the class, both when the instructor calls upon the student and voluntarily.

Classes will roughly follow this format:

- 1) First 45 minutes: Travel journals and sketchbooks will be checked, and then students will take a 5 question quiz on readings. We will then correct the quizzes and discuss the readings the students did at home.
- 2) Next hour: Students will pass around copies of their work that they wrote at home. The students will read the stories in class, make suggestions (workshop) and the writers of the pieces will then get a chance to respond.

- 3) Last 15 minutes: Students will be given a writing exercise, which they will complete at home, type up, and bring to class to be workshopped the following week (plus do readings at home and write 5 pages in their travel journal).

Some classes will be excursions. These excursions may include museums, the theater, and other attractions.

## **5 - ASSESSMENT**

In order for students to improve their writing and their familiarity with travel writing, each student will be evaluated on the following:

- Write weekly essays and journal entries.
- Architecture students have the option to complete their sketchbooks with notes (instead of a travel journal), and these will be checked at the beginning of each class.
- Weekly quizzes on assigned readings.
- Participate in class and make constructive contributions to class discussions.
- Prepare for and participate in excursions, since excursions will be used as springboards to improve travel writing.
- Print out copies of weekly essays to share (workshop) with other students for their comments.
- Complete the reading assignments on time.
- Write consistently in the Travel Journals, in order to develop and maintain the habit of writing.
- Complete other in-class or take-home exercises as assigned.
- Draft and revise two Essays that are relevant to Travel Writing:
  1. The Mid-Term Essay will be prepared in THREE steps (Abstract/Idea, First Draft, and Final Version). Comments and feedback will be provided on the First Draft for each student to use for his/her Final Version.
  2. The Final Essay will be prepared in THREE steps (Abstract/Idea, First Draft, and Final Version). The Abstract / Idea will be presented and discussed in class for peer and teacher feedback. Then the First Draft will be submitted. Comments and feedback will be provided on the First Draft, for each student to use for the Final Version.

Please note: writing exercises will not be revealed beforehand as they should be spontaneous -- students will then get the chance to work at them at home afterwards!

## **6 - EXAMS**

In place of in-class exams, students will be required to submit two finished Essays (the Mid-Term Essay and the Final Essay). These will require addressing the multiple stages of the full writing process (draft, revise, edit, and proof).

## **7 – EVALUATION and GRADING SYSTEM**

30% Class Participation (reading discussions, in-class writing, quizzes, workshopping, and excursions)  
30% Writing Assignments  
15% Mid-Term Essay  
15% Final Essay  
10% Travel Journals

The following **grading system** will be observed:

0 - 59 = **F**,    60 - 69 = **D**,    70 - 72 = **C-**,    73 - 76 = **C**,    77 - 79 = **C+**,  
80 - 82 = **B-**,    83 - 86 = **B**,    87 - 89 = **B+**,    90 - 92 = **A-**,    93 - 100 = **A**

## **8 - ATTENDANCE and BEHAVIOR**

**Mandatory attendance** is a primary requirement for a responsible learning experience. Please note that:

- A. if the student misses THREE classes, the **Final grade** will be lowered by one full letter grade.
- B. If more than THREE classes are missed, the final grade will be "**F**" and **NO credits** will be given for this course.

**Punctuality is mandatory.**

Students must arrive in class on time: any lateness, leaving class during the lesson without notice, not showing up on time after the break, or leaving earlier, will impact the participation grade and the Final Grade. In addition:

- A. Three late arrivals or equivalent (10 minutes or more) result in one absence on the attendance count.
- B. Missing half a lesson or more will be considered as one full absence.

It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on any missed work and to keep track of his or her absences and tardies.

**PLEASE NOTE:** in case of outdoor meetings, all students are requested to arrive 5 minutes early to the meeting point, so the class can promptly enter any museums or churches at the specified time. We will not wait for you. Each student is required to know exact **meeting points** and time for each scheduled visit. Late arrivals or getting lost are considered absence. A no-show for an excursion counts as an absence. Lateness will be penalized.

**Make-up classes** are always mandatory since they are part of the course program.

**Class participation**

Students will be evaluated based on their ability to understand and apply the reading material to class discussions.

Each student will be expected to provide feedback in a respectful manner. A correct, active and responsible participation is highly recommended otherwise the participation grade will be strongly affected.

**Academic dishonesty:** Should issues of academic dishonesty arise (plagiarism and so on), the teacher will refer to the school's written policy on such matters.

**9 –READINGS & SOURCES****Required readings from:****Susan Cahill (Editor)**

excerpt from *The Smiles of Rome* (xix-xx) – “Overtures”

excerpt from *The Smiles of Rome* (185) – “ His letter to his brother William”

**Henry James**

“Daisy Miller”

**Steve Martin**

“Writing is Easy!”

**Pap Kouma**

I was an Elephant Salesman (chapter on “A Run on the Beach” p.92-97)

**Jerome Stern**

excerpts from *Making Shapely Fiction* (“Write What You Know,” “Character,” “Revision,” and “Workshops”)

**Rave \* SQ**

“One Day in Firenze: Some Very Personal Travel Instructions”

**The New York Times**

“36 Hours in Florence”

**The New York Times**

“In Rome, Monti is a Quiet Treasure”

**E.M. Forster**

excerpt from A Room with a View (Chapter 2, "In Santa Croce with No Baedeker")

**The New York Times**

"Florence, Then and Now"

**Federico Fellini**

"In Roma..."

excerpt from The Smiles of Rome (298-306) from Conversations

**Elizabeth Gilbert**

excerpt from Eat, Pray, Love – (Chapters 10-36)

**Edith Wharton**

excerpt from Italy in Mind (324-338)

**Michael Kimmelman**

"In Rome, Caravaggio Still Beckons Hoi Polloi"

**Naomi Epel**

excerpts from The Observation Deck ("Conduct and Interview," and "Set Realistic Goals")

**Other suggested readings:**

**Stravaganza** - City of Masks (Mary Hoffman)

**The Shape of Water** (Andrea Camillieri)

**10 - ADDITIONAL COSTS**

Throughout the course students will spend:

Between 10,00 - 50,00 Euro required for visits

Study materials (e.g. notebooks, folders, etc)

**11 – EXCURSIONS**

During the semester there will be several class excursions. Excursions are mandatory and each excursion replaces one class. These excursions may include museums, the theater, and other attractions.

**12 - MATERIALS**

Students are required to pick up a special **course reader titled Travel Writing**, containing the required excerpts of the above mentioned books. Students must be equipped with appropriate study and writing materials for personal use.

## **13 - CLASS SCHEDULE**

Please note:

- The readings follow the order in the syllabus. The readings will be assigned for the following week in class, depending on the pace of the class.
- The contents of individual classes may be changed throughout the course according to the class's progress, feedback, and other factors.
- Some activities may be rescheduled, and additional activities – when available and pertinent – may be included within regular class time.

### **1) Sept. 1 LECTURE IN-CLASS PROMPT & WRITING**

- ❖ Introductions.
- ❖ General presentation of the course.
- ❖ Detailed step-through of syllabus (ensuring clarity on assignments, expectations, requirements, etc.).
- ❖ In-class prompt (discussion/reading), and short writing exercise.

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment (subject: TBA).
- Start on Sketchbook/Travel Journals (to be ready for preliminary check / review) next week.

### **2) Sept. 8 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING] IN-CLASS PROMPT & WRITING**

- ❖ Check sketchbooks/travel journals.
- ❖ Quiz.
- ❖ Discuss reading assignments from previous week.
- ❖ Workshop the writing assignments.
- ❖ In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

### **3) Sept. 15 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING] PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP**

- ❖ Check sketchbooks/travel journals.
- ❖ Quiz.
- ❖ Discuss reading assignments from previous week.
- ❖ Workshop the writing assignments.
- ❖ In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

### **4) Sept. 22 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING] PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP**

- ❖ Check sketchbooks/travel journals.
- ❖ Quiz.
- ❖ Discuss reading assignments from previous week.
- ❖ Workshop the writing assignments.
- ❖ In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.

- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.
- **Complete Abstract / Idea for Mid-term Essay.**

5) Sept. 29 **LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
DISCUSSION / WORKSHOP [ABSTRACT/ IDEA FOR MID-TERM ESSAY]**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Submit the Abstract/ Idea for the Mid-term Essay.*
- ❖ *Discuss the Abstract/ Idea for Mid-term Essay.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- **Complete First-Draft of Mid-Term Essay.**

6) Oct. 6 **LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP FIRST DRAFT OF MID-TERM ESSAY]**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *Workshop First Draft of Mid-Term Essay.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.
- **Complete Final Version of Mid-Term Essay.**

7) Oct. 13 **LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP [SUBMIT FINAL VERSION OF MID-TERM ESSAY]**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ ***Submit Final Version of Mid-Term Essay.***
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

**MON. Oct 20 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**

8) Oct. 27 **LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP  
IN-CLASS PROMPT & WRITING**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

**9) Nov. 3 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP  
IN-CLASS PROMPT & WRITING**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

**10) Nov. 10 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*
- ❖ *Discussion and wrap-up before Midterm Break.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.

**11) Nov. 17 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignments.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.
- **Complete Abstract / Idea for Final Essay.**

**12) Nov. 24 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
DISCUSSION [ABSTRACT / IDEA OF FINAL ESSAY]**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Submit Abstract / Idea for Final Essay.*
- ❖ *Discuss Abstract / Idea for Final Essay.*
- ❖ *Workshop the writing assignment.*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.
- **Complete First-Draft of Final Essay.**

**13) Dec. 1 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [READING]  
PEER REVIEW / WORKSHOP [FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL ESSAY]**

- ❖ *Check sketchbooks/travel journals.*
- ❖ *Quiz.*
- ❖ *Discuss reading assignments from previous week.*
- ❖ *Submit First Draft of Final Essay.*
- ❖ *Peer Review / Workshop of First-Draft of Final Essay.*
- ❖ *Lecture and discussion looking back on course, final thoughts before last class (especially on Final Essay).*
- ❖ *In-class prompt (discussion/reading/excursion), and writing exercise.*

Assignment/s:

- Selected reading, along with Reading Response if/as specified.
- Complete Writing Assignment.
- Work on Sketchbook/Travel Journal.
- **Complete Final Version of Final Essay.**

**MON. Dec. 8 – IMMACOLATA – NO CLASS**

**14) Dec. 15 LECTURE + DISCUSSION [CLOSING & WRAP-UP]**

- ❖ ***Submit Final Version of Final Essay.***
- ❖ *Closing discussion and wrap-up.*