The Great Escape: Exploring Travel Narratives
IDSEM-UG 1688
TTh 2:00-3:15 pm
7 E. 12th St. Room LL21
September 6 – December 16

Instructor: Aaron Hamburger
aih204@nyu.edu/aaronhamburger@gmail.com/www.aaronhamburger.com
OFFICE HOURS: TH 3:30-4:30 and by appointment/1 Wash Place, Room 416

“Place is the crossroads of circumstance, the proving ground of, What happened? Who's here? Who's coming?...” — Eudora Welty

Why do people travel, why do they write about it, and why do they read about it? We’ll analyze the surprisingly complex answers to these three seemingly simple questions, as well as how they shape narratives focused on place. Along the way, we’ll consider questions of social identity and cultural difference, the search for adventure and “authenticity,” the relationship between tourism and colonialism, and the relationship of place to the self.

COURSE GRADING REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE:

33%: Two Projects
• PROJECT ONE: A stylistic imitation of an author we’re reading in class. The subject will be a memoir-style piece about a significant journey you’ve taken. The imitation will also include a 1-page critical preface explaining how the creative choices you’ve made reveal the style of the author you’re imitating. 7-9 pages total (including the preface).
  DUE OCTOBER 20TH, NO EXTENSIONS
• PROJECT TWO: A 10-minute class presentation about a tourist site in New York. Each student will be assigned an individual due date for his or her presentation.

33%: A Critical Essay
• A critical essay connecting your concentration to the topics we’ve discussed in class. You must reference at least two works from the reading list, one pre-World War II, one post World War II. 12-14 pages total. DUE DECEMBER 8TH, NO EXTENSIONS

33%: Class Participation:
• Meeting assignment deadlines. (Late work earns a maximum grade of C.)
• Thoughtful completion of pop quizzes on the reading and short homework assignments.
• Written critiques of fellow students’ work.
• Regular attendance in class.
• Active contributions to in-class discussions.

GRADING NOTE:
Grades on student projects and writing are based on a rubric of criteria that will be handed out with each assignment. Class participation grades are determined entirely by student effort at fulfilling criteria listed above.

Grades are as follows: A+ (one of the best students in a lifetime of teaching); A (excellent effort and work); A- (excellent effort, promising work); B+ (good effort, promising work); B (good effort, above average work); B- (above average work and effort); C (fair work and effort); D (poor, but passing); F (failure)
REQUIRED READING:
Six of the texts we’ll read are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore. The rest will be made available to you via online links or PDF files posted on Blackboard. Students should print out any readings made available digitally to work with them in class. See reading lists below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To purchase at NYU Bookstore:</th>
<th>Available via Blackboard:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Goodbye to Berlin</em> by Christopher Isherwood</td>
<td><em>Innocents Abroad</em> by Mark Twain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Wizard of Oz</em> by L. Frank Baum</td>
<td><em>Collected Essays</em> by George Orwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Art of Travel</em> by Alain de Botton</td>
<td><em>Slouching Towards Bethlehem</em> by Joan Didion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Small Place</em> by Jamaica Kincaid</td>
<td><em>A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Passage to India</em> by E. M. Forster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Blood Dazzler</em> by Patricia Smith</td>
<td><em>Essays</em> by Francine Prose and David Farley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
Any electronic device that must be shut off when a plane is about to take off must also be turned off while you are in class. Please be respectful of all members of the class. (And remember that the professor is also a member of the class!)

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
This class has no excused (or unexcused) absences. The policy is simple: missing more than two full class periods affects your class participation grade. Three tardies and/or early exits = one absence. Excessive absences jeopardize your chances of passing the class, regardless of work turned in. If possible, let me know before class if you must be absent. Also, find out from your “study buddy” what you’ve missed.

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

WRITING CENTER:
Though this is not a composition course, basic grammar and syntax skills are essential for clarifying your thoughts about the texts we’re reading. I strongly urge you to go to the Writing Center in Room 423 in the Gallatin Building. Appointments can be made online at: http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/undergraduate/writing/writingcenterappointments.html

“There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.” — Joseph Brodsky

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES
Please see attached list

INTRODUCTION:
The Dream of Travel

Sep. 6: Introductions/ A discussion of how we experience place.
   Homework: Complete the handout on place. Make sure you can access the Twain excerpts via Blackboard. Purchase books at NYU Bookstore.

*Sep. 8: CLASS TO BE RESCHEDULED*

Sep. 13: Translating places into words. Sign up for Conferences
   Homework: Read Innocents Abroad (Preface-Chapter 4, Chaps. 8-9). Find an ad for a cruise ship and compare and contrast it to the ad for the cruise ship in the Preface. Bring a list of at least 5 similarities and 5 differences to class.

PART ONE—TRAVEL WRITING BEFORE WORLD WAR I:
Who’s Looking? Who’s There & What are They Doing? Language & Place. Travel in Fiction.

Sep. 15: Begin discussion of Twain. What’s he looking for?
   Homework: Read Innocents Abroad (Chapters 19-20).

Sep. 20: Continue Twain discussion. What’s he writing about, Europe or America?
   Homework: Finish Innocents Abroad (Chapters 22 & 23, 58-Conclusion. Read “Martha Goes to Palm Springs.”

Sep. 22: Finish Twain discussion. Was it all worth it? Compare Martha Stewart & Mark Twain
   Homework: Read first half of Goodbye to Berlin (A Berlin Diary, Sally Bowles, On Ruegen Island).

Sep. 27: Begin Isherwood discussion. Is he a camera? People and place.
   Homework: Finish reading Goodbye to Berlin (The Nowaks to the end).

Sep. 29: Conclude Isherwood discussion. Is something missing?
   Homework: Read Orwell essay “Politics and the English Language” and “Marrakech.” Does Orwell stick to his own rules of language in his own work?

Oct. 4: Orwell and the Problem of Language
   Homework: Read Orwell essays “Shooting an Elephant” and “Riding down the Bangor.” What are Orwell’s blind spots? Or does he have any?

Oct. 6: Orwell continued/Brainstorm topics for critical essay/MIDTERM SELF-REFLECTIONS
   Homework: Read The Wizard of Oz (Beginning to the end of the chapter “The Wonderful Emerald City of Oz.”). Write up 3 OPTIONS for Critical Essay Proposal

Oct. 13: Real and Fantasy Journeys/ESSAY PROPOSAL with 3 OPTIONS DUE
   Homework: Finish The Wizard of Oz.

Oct. 18: Why do Kids Dream of Travel?
   Homework: Read A Passage to India (Chapters 1-11).
   Complete Class Project 1: Stylistic Imitation Essay

Oct 20: Travel in Fiction, The Real India/STYLISTIC IMITATION ESSAY DUE!!!!
   Homework: Read A Passage to India (Chapters 12-24).

Oct 25: Travel in Fiction, continued: Foreigner or Native?
Homework: Finish *A Passage to India*.

Oct. 27: Finish Pre-World War II Travel Writing  
**Homework:** Read “Slouching Towards Bethlehem” by Joan Didion

PART TWO—TRAVEL WRITING AFTER WORLD WAR II  
*Do They See What I See?*  *Blind Spots. Blowing Up the Genre. Why is This So Hard?*  *Professional and Non-Professional Travel Writing. Travel in Poetry.*

Nov. 1: Joan Didion: What’s new here?  
**Homework:** Read “Goodbye to All That”

Nov. 3: Joan Didion: The All-Important I. How is this piece universal and how is it specific?  
**Homework:** Read Jamaica Kincaid, Part 1.

Nov. 8: Kincaid: Ouch! How much of what you’re seeing is shaded by your perspective? How do you avoid the problem of being an “ugly tourist”?  
**Homework:** Read Jamaica Kincaid, Part 2.

Nov. 10: Kincaid: So how do we travel responsibly? Or can we?  
**Homework:** Read David Foster Wallace, Part 1. Find evidence of strategies employed by Twain, Isherwood, Orwell, Didion, Stewart, and Kincaid.

Nov. 15: Wallace: What’s the answer? All of the Above.  
**Homework:** Read David Foster Wallace, Part 2.  
Complete Rough Draft of Critical Essay

Nov. 17: Wallace: A Dead End?  
HAND IN ROUGH DRAFT OF CRITICAL ESSAY TO YOUR PEER EDITOR

Nov. 22: Meet in Revision Groups to Peer Edit  
**Homework:** Read *The Art of Travel*, Part 1.

Nov. 29: The Art of Travel: the Big Picture  
**Homework:** Read *The Art of Travel*, Part 2.

Dec. 1: The Art of Travel, Continued  
**Homework:** Read *Blood Dazzler*, Part 1.

Dec. 6: Poets on Travel, Amichai and Smith  
**Homework:** Read *Blood Dazzler*, Part 2.

Dec. 8: Poets on Travel, continued/CRITICAL ESSAY DUE!!!!  
**Homework:** Read Francine Prose and David Farley

Dec. 13: Professional Travel Writing  
**Homework:** Read TripAdvisor

Dec. 15: Non-Professional Travel Writing/Conclusion