

Reading Cultures: Travel
Humanities 14100, Winter 2012
Tues/Thurs
Section 11: 10:30 am –11.50 am, Harper 151
Section 4: 1:30am - 2:50pm, Cobb 219

Instructor: Roxana Galusca (rgalusca@uchicago.edu)

Office: Gates-Blake Hall 403

Office Hours: TuTh 3PM-5PM

Writing interns: Anne Carlton Buxton, Section 11 (annecarlton@gmail.com)

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Course description:

The fourth century philosopher Augustine once remarked that, "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page." Augustine was not the only one who perceived travel as the path to spiritual and intellectual fulfillment. In effect, human history could be described as a series of explorations, transcontinental journeys, and migrations. If there is one thing that defines human beings, this is the urge to mobility.

This class will address this urge to mobility by taking into account a wide variety of travels, displacements, and economic migrations, from the 18th Century West Africa to the 20th century Jamaica, the United States, and Japan. The travel narratives that we will study in this class invite us to consider the practice of traveling in its intersection with major historical events: the trans-Atlantic slave trade; the Reconstruction Era in the United States; British Empire; postcolonial independence and neocolonialism in the Caribbeans; and economic migration to the United States. In class discussions and writing assignments, we will ask the following questions:

- What is a traveler and how does economic and political power determine the form and type of travel on which one embarks?
- What are the historical circumstances that define traveling across centuries and how does the urge to mobility change in time?
- How do race, class, gender, and nationality inform people's needs to move?
- Should there be a right to mobility?
- What kinds of transnational exchanges and encounters are made possible by travel?
- In which ways does travel help to define, alter, or challenge understandings of "national borders," "foreignness," "home," and "the nation-state."
- What do travel narratives help to memorialize?

Required Texts:

Required texts are available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore. **All secondary readings will be available on the course's Chalk site.**

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Norton pkb., 0393926362

Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, Norton pkb., 0393974944

Kincaid, *Lucy*, Farrar Straus Giroux pkb., 037452733

Murakami, *Sputnik Sweathart*, Vintage pkb., 9780375726057

Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, pkb., 0452275695

Films

O, Brother Where Are Thou? Dir. Ethan Coen and Joel Coen. Touchstone, 2001.

Y tu mamá también. Dir. Alfonso Cuarón. MGM, 2002.

Grade Breakdown:

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|----------------|-----|
| Attendance | 10% |
| Participation: | 15% |
| Essay #1 | 20% |
| Essay #2 | 25% |
| Essay #3 | 30% |

Attendance and participation in all Writing Seminars (required for passing grade)

There will be a grade penalty on all written assignments turned in late.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Attendance and Participation:

Regular attendance, constructive class participation, and consistent and engaged reading of assigned texts are required from all registered students. In order to keep track of student attendance, I will pass around a sign-in sheet at the start of each class meeting—it is your responsibility to make sure that your name is on that sheet. Absences are excused for personal illness, family emergencies, jury duty and religious holidays. If you have to miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes and keeping up with all your assignments. Every unexcused absence will negatively impact your attendance and class participation grade.

2) Assignments:

For this course, you will write three papers: one three-page essay based on close reading; one four to six page essay; and one final eight to ten page argumentative paper.

Schedule

Tuesday, January 3:

Introductions

Thursday, January 5:

Heart of Darkness

Tuesday, January 10:

From Marianna Torgovnicka, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives:*

“Defining the Primitive/Reimagining Modernity,” pp. 3-18

“Traveling with Conrad,” pp. 141-159.

Thursday, January 12:

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, pp. 7; 19-70

Marcus Rediker et al, Introduction to *Many Middles Passages*, pp. 1-20

Tuesday, January 17:

Equiano, pp. 70-121

Edward Alpers, "The Other Middle Passage: The African Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean," in *Many Middle Passages*.

Thursday, January 19:

Equiano, pp. 121-178

"The Slave Trade is Merciful Compared to [This]: Slave Traders, Convict Transportation, and the Abolitionists."

Writing Assignment #1 due by email by 5PM

Tuesday, January 24:

Kincaid, *Lucy*, pp. 3-85

Screening of O, Brother Where Are Thou? 3PM, Room TBA

Thursday, January 26:

Lucy, pp. 85-176

Tuesday, January 31:

Discussion of O, Brother Where Are Thou?

Thursday, February 2:

Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* 2-84

Tuesday, February 7:

Cliff 85-160

Selections of *Life and Debt*

Thursday, February 9

Cliff 161-208

Tuesday, February 14

Reading TBA

Writing Assignment #2 due by email by 5 PM

Movie Screening, *Y Tu Mamá También*, Wed, Feb 15, 3 pm, Room STU 104

Thursday, February 16:

Film discussion

María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "In the Shadow of NAFTA: Y tu mamá también Revisits the National Allegory of Mexican Sovereignty"

Tuesday, February 21:

Sputnik Sweetheart, pp. 3-78

Thursday, February 23:

Sputnik Sweetheart, pp. 79-141

Tuesday, February 28

Sputnik Sweetheart, 142-224

Thursday, March 1

Visit to the Oriental Institute

Tuesday, March 6:

From Said's *Orientalism*, pp. 31-73 and pp. 201-226

Thursday, March 8:

Reading Period Week

Essay #3 due between March 12 and 16, by email. Last day: March 16 by 5PM