

TRAVEL WRITING IN AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

EN 592E: “TRAVEL WRITING IN AUSTRALIA: JOURNEY AND PLACE IN LITERATURE, AND CREATIVE WRITING”

Program Coordinator: Dr. Sharon Clarke

Principal Lecturer: Dr. Sharon Clarke

Consultation: Generally prior to, or following, classes
Ph: 9217 9910/email: sclarke@iinet.net.au

Course Contact 40 hours plus required 2 week on the road research trip:
“Small town Australia: from the ocean to the outback”;
including selected sessions at The Sydney Writers’ Festival.

This will be a “reading and research” guided excursion to south coast NSW and high country Victoria, considering the motif of journey and the evocation of place across a broad range of literary and film texts set in the regions visited. A major focus will be upon the living landscape of literature. Some inclusions: visit to D.H. Lawrence’s Australian seaside cottage where he wrote the novel *Kangaroo*; exploration of the town of Eden, setting for several course texts including Nadia Wheatley’s novel *The Blooding*, Katherine Thompson’s play *Tonight We Anchor in Two-Fold Bay* and Gillian Armstrong’s film *High Tide*; exploring the bushranger trails of infamous Ned Kelly into Victoria’s high country, setting for Peter Carey’s *True History of the Kelly Gang*, and Robert Drewe’s novel *Our Sunshine*; and a stay in the Georgian and now heritage-listed town of Braidwood, location of the Australian films, *The Year My Voice Broke* and *Flirting*.

Guest Lecturers Marilla North, scholar, biographer, editor, and writer;
Fiction and travel editor from Random House Australia;
Claire Scobie, travel writing workshop specialist.

COURSE SYNOPSIS

This course explores an eclectic collection of Australian literary and film texts which focus on a sense of place and the motif of journey, especially to, from, and of, “small town Australia”. The long road trip will visit the setting of each text and there will be an emphasis on students “experiencing” the place as a point of comparison with a writer’s evocation of that same place. In knowing the real place, students will thus gain insight when recognizing which details have been magnified, or where there have been departures from the real, and for what purpose such “manipulations” have been undertaken. Such knowledge will illuminate the writing process and inform a critical reading of texts. A critical exploration of each text will be undertaken in terms of small town Australia's cultural formation/ evolution. Aspects and contexts of

legend, history, geographical location, urban and rural landscape, climate, and people will inform this exploration. Where possible, relevant guest speakers from local communities – both settler and indigenous - will be invited to address our traveling group. Authors to be studied include: Mark Twain, D.H. Lawrence, Peter Carey, Robert Drewe, Olga Masters, Katherine Thompson, Dorothy Hewett, and Nadia Wheatley. Included in the course film texts are *Ned Kelly* (1970) & (2003), *High Tide* (1988), *The Year My Voice Broke* (1987) and *Flirting* (1989) and *Red Hill* (2010)

FORMAT

For this course, formal lectures, group workshops and seminar presentations have been organized. Attendance at all sessions is compulsory. In workshops and in presentations, students will be encouraged to explore other meanings to texts under consideration and to share their own ideas for creative writing pieces. There will be a strong emphasis on developing an insight into the writing process and undertaking textually-based and research-based analysis of set texts; this, in turn, will inform each student's evolution of an engaging and informative writing style. All students will be expected to contribute to all workshop and seminar discussions both on-the-road and within the classroom. Therefore they will need to prepare for each session by completing the reading designated. On return to the classroom, each student will also be expected to undertake a seminar presentation approximately 10 minutes in duration. This presentation should take the form of a prepared informed address, developed around a particular aspect of a text, as agreed upon with the course coordinator. The presentation should offer the class an analysis or 'reading' of the text, through the focus of a "sense of place". Each student should use their own research of that same place, their physical exploration and first hand observation, as a platform from which to launch a critical analysis. Following the presentation, it is expected that the presenter will generate some class discussion of the text and of the ideas which s/he has put forward; further it is anticipated that the presenter will be prepared to field questions on the text from the class. It is important that the presenter does not merely read a paper but s/he can use palm notes to cover the topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will need to meet the following requirements for the completion of this course. Failure to meet any of these requirements, therefore, will be viewed as a failure to meet the requirements specified for the completion of this course.

Attendance

Attendance at all workshop sessions on field trip, scheduled classes, guest lectures and seminar sessions is mandatory. Unexplained absence, or absence for an unsatisfactory reason, will be viewed as a failure to meet the requirements specified for the completion of this course.

Participation in Classes

That students participate in class, workshops and seminars is significant to the calculation of their grade in this element of the assessment outlined for this course. The degree to which they do so *proficiently* will determine the value of their score,

just as in the other elements of course work evaluation.

Written Assignments

All written work must be submitted punctually, with formal cover sheet, through the office and on dates specified. Failure to submit written work will be viewed as a failure to meet the requirements specified for the completion of this course. The coordinator is required to adhere to Program policy that no written work will be accepted later than the specified time for submission, in fairness to those students whose work is submitted punctually. Late penalties will apply except in cases of documented illness or extraordinary circumstance.

Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean".

Examination

A compulsory two-hour examination has been scheduled. Details of the examination date, time and rules will be published separately.

Reading List

For the pre-road trip classes on a History of Tourism and Travel Writing in Australia, the following texts will be used:

- I. Herodotus (c500 BCE): *The Edge of the Earth* 2pp
(plus Anon : *The Wanderer* an OE epic oral tradition poem Selections from the *Medieval Bestiary*.
Australian Lit. Library at BUSP: Geoffrey Chaucer (14th C): *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Nun's Priest Tale* (ALL)
- II. JC Beaglehole *The Life of Captain James Cook* Adam and Charles Black, London 1974
Chapter VIII Tahiti pp 172-195 12pp
- III. Ed. JC Beaglehole *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768-1771*
The Trustees of the Public Library of NSW in association with Angus and Robertson 1962
Volume II New Holland pp 48-137 40pp
- IV. Capt Watkin Tench *Sydney's First Four Years: A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and A Complete Account of the Settlement of Port Jackson. 1788-1791*
RAHS Library of Australian History, North Sydney 1961 pp121-161 20pp
- V. James Macle hose *Picture of Sydney and A Stranger's Guide in NSW for 1839*
Facsimile edition John Ferguson P/L St Ives, Sydney 1977

- Maps and pp 1-56 and Appendix pp 168-188 38pp
- VI. “Woomera” (aka William Delaforce) *The Life and Experiences of an Ex-convict in Port Macquarie*
Facsimile reproduction edited and published by K Delaforce NLA 1984 30pp
- VII. Julia Horne *The Pursuit of Wonder: How Australia’s Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed.*
The Miegunyah Press, MUP, Victoria 2005
Chapter *Writing it All Up: In which a brief history of nineteenth century travel writing is presented.* pp 175-197 11pp
- VIII. Indigenous Issues
- i) Colin Simpson *Adam in Ochre* A&R Sydney, 1951
Chapter: *White Delusion: They Are Not Dying Out* pp186-221 18pp
 - ii) Deirdre Stokes *Desert Dreaming* Rigby 1992 pp1-32 16pp
 - iii) Mudrooroo *Aboriginal Mythology* Thorsons, HC London 1994
pp 50-53 *Dreaming and* pp130-131 Papunya Tula 3pp
- XI. Mark Twain *The Wayward Tourist: Mark Twain’s Adventures in Australia.*
Introduced by Don Watson. pvii - xxxiii pp1-50, p151-187 40pp
(‘*Mark Twain: A Life*’ Transcript of ABC Interview by Ramona Koval with Ron Powers, author of recent Twain Biography 26 March 2006 9pp ALL)
- X. Zane Grey *An American Angler in Australia (1937)* Derry Dale Press, Lanham, Maryland 2002 pp1-76 38pp

During the road trip and during classroom sessions back at BUSC readings from the following texts will be integral to classes:

- D.H. Lawrence: *Kangaroo* Angus & Robertson Ed:1991
(Excerpt in course reader)
- Dorothy Hewett: *Neap Tide* Penguin Books 1994.
(Excerpt in course reader)
- Olga Masters: *The Home Girls* (short stories) UQP 1984.
(Suite of 4 selected stories in course reader)
- *Reporting Home* UQP 1990. (secondary source)
- Katherine Thompson: *Tonight We Anchor at Two-Fold Bay* (unpublished play script)
(The class will be cast in roles and read aloud this play during one evening in the place of its setting) A copy is provided
- Nadia Wheatley: *The Blooding* Penguin Books: Ringwood, Vic, 1989.
Full novel
- Peter Carey *The True History of the Kelly Gang* UQP 2000.
Full novel
- Robert Drewe *Our Sunshine* Picador 1991.
Full novel
- Douglas Stewart *Ned Kelly* (stage play in verse) Angus & Robertson, 1943.
Selected scenes
- The Jerilderie Letter* by Ned Kelly – secondary source (in course reader)

Film texts:

The Year My Voice Broke (1987) primary source Sequel: *Flirting* (1989)

High Tide (1988) primary source

Red Hill (2010) primary source

Ned Kelly(1970) secondary source

Ned Kelly(2003) secondary source (optional)

Kangaroo (1987) secondary source (optional)

Wuthering Heights (William Wyler's 1939 classic) – secondary source.

Further texts of relevance will include:

Bill Bryson: *A Sunburnt Country* (pub. in Australia as *DownUnder*)

Sue Williams: *Getting There*

Graeme Kinross Smith: *Writer*

Kate Grenville: *The Writing Book – a workbook for fiction writers*

Cynthia Dial *Travel Writing*

Doris Lessing "Foreword" to *The Golden Notebook*

John Colmer *Australian Autobiography*

Stephen King *On Writing*

Don George *Travel Writing* (Lonely Planet – Footscray Vic 2005)

Other Optional Suggested Reading

Marcus Clarke: *For the Term of his Natural Life* (novel - 1874)

Eleanor Dark: *The Timeless Land* (novel 1941)

Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations* (novel 1868)

Herman Melville: *Moby Dick* (novel 1851)

Joseph Conrad *Mirror of the Sea* (novel 1906)

ASSESSMENT

To complete the 'Assessment' component of the requirements for this course, it is necessary to perform the following tasks:

1) Workshop Sessions (10%) – On the Road and in the classroom

Undertaken on the long road trip and in the classroom, these sessions will be open brainstorming analysis of set texts and ideas for creative writing pieces. This will include open readings of plays and prose fiction selections for critical evaluation. Students will be expected to explore methods through which these writers evoke place and to what effect. There will be a high participatory expectation attached to these sessions.

2) Reporting back: The postcard (10%) – On the Road

"As haiku is to poetry so the postcard is to travel writing" (Clarke). Building from pre-departure instruction, each student will write and send five postcards to our guest lecturer, Marilla North, from various towns/regions of the road trip. This exercise is designed to capture the essence of a place and the experience of the writer in the fewest possible words: as the focus will be on succinct expression and creative evocation, each postcard should be written in the haiku form. Students are required to write and send 5 postcards from 5 different destinations/regions. An album will be compiled following the excursion.

3) OPTION 1: The real vrs the imagined –1200 -1500 word analysis (10%)

Select one detailed account of place from a set literary text and compare it to your own detailed account of that same place. Consider the author's word choice, phrasing, narrative voice, imagery, literary devices, use of juxtaposition, and other techniques to evoke this place and the relevance of such to the development of character or situation within the wider frame of reference of the text. Are there obvious departures by the author from the real? Analyze your own description of the same place. How might you use this in a creative writing exercise?

Aspects and contexts of legend, history, geographical location, urban and rural landscape, climate, and people will inform this exploration

Or

4) OPTION 2: Creative Writing Exercise – 1200-1500 words (10%)

Produce a creative writing piece (in any form) set in a place you have visited on the road trip which delineates a figure of relevance against that landscape. This could be the beginning of a larger project, in which case you would need to outline the further development of that project. This should be accompanied by a 200 word publishing proposal.

5) Class presentation (10%)

Aspects and contexts of legend, history, geographical location, urban and rural landscape, climate, and people will inform this exploration **of one set text to be nominated by the student from the reading list below:**

The Bleeding by Nadia Wheatley (young adult novel)

Tonight We Anchor in Two-Fold Bay by Katherine Thompson (play)

The Home Girls by Olga Masters (4 stories as nominated: "Leaving Home"; "Passenger for Berigo"; "The Sea on Sunday"; "The Rages of Mrs. Torrens".)

Our Sunshine by Robert Drewe

True History of the Kelly Gang by Peter Carey

Neap Tide by Dorothy Hewett

Tonight We Anchor in Two-Fold Bay by Katherine Thompson

NB: YOU CANNOT USE THE SAME TEXT FOR YOUR ESSAY AS THAT OF YOUR PRESENTATION.

6) A 2,000-2,500 word term paper (40% of overall grade)

This should address a chosen topic from the list marked "Term Paper Topics". As the major piece of 'considered' writing for this course, this is a **researched paper** that should follow the rules and practices of a formal essay, and include a bibliography. It is expected that this critical essay will be informed by your first hand contact with the place in which the text under analysis is set, your research of that place, as well as further relevant critical sources. Your knowledge of aspects and contexts of legend, history, geographical location, urban and rural landscape, climate, and people should also be integral to this essay. **You must focus on a text or texts different from that of your presentation.**

7) A two-hour examination (20% of overall grade)

Details of this examination are published separately.

Grading

A 94-100
A- 90-93
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72

D 60-69
F below 60