

## TRAVEL WRITING IN AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

Program Coordinator Dr. Sharon Clarke

COM JO 528: Travel Writing: Journalism and Creative Non-Fiction

Principal Lecturer: Professor Sue Williams

Consultation: Generally prior to or following classes  
Email: mail@suewilliams.com.au

Course Contact: 40 hours

Plus required 12 day on the road research trip:  
“Small town Australia: from the coast to the outback.”

This will be a “writing and research” guided excursion to south coast NSW and high country Victoria, considering the small town as destination and the geography, history, culture and people of such places. Students will be required to keep journals and collect information from interviews, publications, and their own experience in order to write travel articles and pieces. Some inclusions on the tour: a visit to animal and wildlife sanctuary of Montagu Island and the world-heritage breeding program of Mogo Zoo; an exploration of the town of Eden – born out of whaling and now surviving through logging - never far from controversy; an exploration of the bushranger trails of infamous Ned Kelly into the Victoria’s high country; and a visit to the Georgian (now heritage-listed) town of Braidwood, location of the Australian films, *The Year My Voice Broke* and *Flirting*, where history gained legal precedence over land developers.

Guest Lecturers: Claire Scobie, travel writer/journalist  
Antony Dennis, Editor *Travel & Leisure* magazine  
Sarah MacDonald, Author best-selling travel book, *Holy Cow*  
Jimmy Thomson, TV writer/producer; travel journalist, author

### COURSE SYNOPSIS

This course is designed to introduce students to “small town Australia” through the first hand experience of a long on-the-road research excursion, both preceded and followed by weeks in the classroom, studying examples of the genre and producing written work based on the research trip. There will be a focus on journalistic writing beginning with pitching articles and stories to local, national, and overseas newspapers and magazines. Early classes will also deal with writing journals as a research base. Where possible, relevant guest speakers will be invited to address the class. On return from the long road trip, each student will deliver a presentation drawn from their research which will focus on one area or aspect of a small town they have visited. Throughout the course, there will be an emphasis on producing written work centered on a sense of place and/or the journey either in the form of articles, extracts for a travel book or memoir, or other forms of factual accounts such as blogging.

There may be publication opportunities for student work considered of the highest merit. All assignments are drawn from research collected on the excursion.

### **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 share their own “in progress” work and contribute to the “in progress” work of others. There will be a strong emphasis on developing an engaging and informative writing style which can adapt to the shifting requirements of different text-types and different readers within the genre of travel writing. 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 as directed. Each student will also be expected to undertake a seminar presentation which will be approximately 15 minutes in duration. This presentation should take the form of a prepared informed address chosen from the list marked “Presentation Topics.” (Unless otherwise dictated by class numbers, there will only be one student presentation per topic). The presentation will take the form of two verbal pitches based on written pitches which then can be revised according to feedback prior to submission. Each pitch should be based on the student’s own research of a particular place, or theme built around places, from the road trip. Following the presentation, it is expected that the presenter will generate some class discussion of the ideas which s/he has put forward. It is important that the verbal pitch is not simply read from the written form.

### **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 Program 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.

#### **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.”

## 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* on OE epic oral tradition poem Selections from the *Medieval Bestiary*.  
Australian Lit. Library at BUSP: Geoffrey Chaucer (14<sup>th</sup> 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 VII 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 Maclehole *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* pp 186-221 18pp
  - ii) Deirdre Stokes *Desert Dreaming* Rigby 1992 pp 1-32 16pp
  - iii) Mudrooroo *Aboriginal Mythology* Thorsons, HC London 1994  
pp 50-53 *Dreaming* and pp 130-131 *Papunya Tula* 3pp
- IX. Mark Twain *The Wayward Tourist: Mark Twain's Adventures in Australia*  
Introduced by Don Watson pvii – xxxiii pp 1-50, pp 151-187 40pp
- X. Zane Grey *An American Angler in Australia* (1937) Derry Dale Press, Lanham, Maryland  
2002 pp 1-76 38pp

**During the road trip and during classroom sessions back at BUSC readings from the following texts may be integral to classes. Handouts from other works will also be distributed to be read for specific classes, especially examples from local and overseas magazines and newspapers.**

Bill Bryson:	<i>A Sunburnt Country</i> -pub. in Australia as <i>Down Under</i> (Doubleday, 2000).
Santo Cilauro et al	<i>Molvania—a land untouched by modern dentistry</i> (Hardie Grant Books, South Yarra, Vic, 2003).
Sue Williams:	<i>Getting There: journeys of an accidental tourist</i> (New Holland Press, Sydney, 2001).
Kate Grenville:	<i>The Writing Book—a workbook for fiction writers</i>
Cynthia Dial:	<i>Travel Writing</i>
Stephen King:	<i>On Writing</i>
Don George:	<i>Travel Writing</i> (Lonely Planet—Footscray Vic, 2005).
Michael Shapiro (Ed)	<i>A Sense of Place</i> (Travelers' Tales, San Francisco 2004)
Sarah Macdonald	<i>Holy Cow</i> (Broadway Books, a division of RandomHouse)

## **ASSESSMET**

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

### **1) Workshop Sessions (5%) Classroom**

Undertaken in the classroom, these sessions will encourage students to share work/ideas. In such an environment, students will present their work for feedback considering the finer details of style, description, integrated local voices and general evocation of place as experience. There will be a high participatory expectation attached to these sessions.

### **2) PUFFS AND LIVE JOURNAL ENTRIES/BLOGGING (10%)**

This comprises the 'puffs' by which you sum up travel stories/projects and present them in the most exciting, intriguing and accessible way, perhaps putting them on the web at the same time as part of a journal, twitter or facebook entry. Collectively such writing should amount to 250 words.

### **3) Oral presentation based on two draft ideas of written pitches (2 x 5% = 10%)**

A guide to [pitching](#) will have been included in earlier lectures.

### **4) Written Pitch (2 x 5% = 10%)**

These will be in the form of one 300-word pitch, and one 100-word pitch.

### **5) Written pieces: 2,860-3,000 words (40% of overall grade) and research portfolio for each (25% of overall grade) = 65%**

The student must produce written work with a word count adding up to no more than 3,000 words, comprising the following. It is expected that the Research Portfolio will form the basis of these pieces. These must include a 1,000-word piece suitable for magazine or newspaper; a 100-word piece as a short newspaper filler; a 500-word newspaper story; the first 400 words (only!) of a proposed 2,000-word article for a magazine or journal; an 800-word newspaper article; and a shot-list of six to eight pictures and/or moving images that establish something special or significant about your hometown or favorite place, no more than 25 words per shot. This will be covered in the class on Writing Travel for Television. An emphasis throughout this assessment will be placed on the word choice, facts checking and succinct expression.

**Research Portfolio**

You will be expected to keep a non-assessable journal while on the road trip; this will be for your own research and will be respected as a private document. Drawn from this, however, you will be required to compile a portfolio of your research and information-gathering specific to each of the pieces of work you submit, and this will be given in with each piece of work. This could include interviews recorded, visits to research facilities such as libraries, the town hall, information centres, your own notes on explorations of various areas, your ideas for finding out further information later, and the kind of on-line research you are undertaking. All of this could contribute to your “fact boxes” for articles.

**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