

JO528 Travel Writing in Australia: Journalism and Non-Fiction

Summer Syllabus

Instructor Name: Jimmy Thomson MA (Writing), author, BU educator, travel writer, newspaper columnist and tour guide.

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Guest Lecturers: Sue Williams, B.A.(Hons), travel writer, author of 26 books, and freelance journalist for multiple Australian publications.

Anthony Dennis, travel editor of Sydney Morning Herald, Sun Herald, Melbourne: The Age and Sunday Age;

Phillip Engelberts, founder and MD of PEPR public relations consultancy, specializing in the travel and leisure industry.

Brook Sabin, professional travel videographer

Various specialist and location-based travel writers and tour guides

Course Time: 40 hours plus field trips in and around Sydney

Course Credits: 4 BU credits; 2 BU Hub units

Course Outline

This Summer-only 8-week Program includes: an academic course and an internship placement in Journalism: Respectively, COM JO 528 Travel Writing in Australia: Journalism and Non-Fiction; and COM JO 411.

JO 528 carries 4 BU credits and 2 BU Hub units (Communication: Writing Intensive; and Intellectual Toolbox: Creativity/Innovation). JO 411 carries 4 BU credits. JO 528 can also transfer for BU graduate students. The Program begins with intensive classes in JO 528 after which students take a series of one-day curated field trips to research, carry out interviews and gather copy for forthcoming class assessments and exercises.

The teaching sessions will include how to plan, write and edit editorial copy in different forms for different media outlets, including magazine and newspaper feature writing, reviewing, promotional writing, blogging, photography and video creation. There will also be discussion of long form writing such as travel books and memoirs. The intention is to create an integrated program that will carry the students from exploring travel writing topics in all their iterations, from pitching idea to their final realization as a magazine style major written submission.

Course Description

This course will explore travel writing in all its myriad forms from providing information and advice, through reviewing travel products to creative non-fiction with a travel theme. Along the way we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What is travel writing and what are the different forms it takes?
- What are the differences between travel journalism and travel non-fiction?
- How do you keep a journal as a basis for stories?
- How do you use personal travel experiences and translate them to travel writing?
- How do you test the market for interest in a travel story idea?
- How do you build a travel story and what is your starting and end points?
- When is a first-person narrative appropriate and when should a story be told in the third person?
- What are the main components of a travel story.
- Why are story lengths so precise?
- How do you best use photographs and videos such as Youtube and TikTok to help tell a story.
- How you best integrate these visual elements into a written travel piece?
- How do you research, interview, and fact check?
- What is a "listicle" and why have list-based articles become a popular element in travel writing?

Students will employ a variety of strategies in answering all of the above questions. These include: attending lectures, classroom discussions, undertaking ungraded collaborative exercises in class, playing an active role in the field trips and presenting and writing a series of travel articles.

These pieces will notionally be aimed at a variety of real publications (newspapers, magazines) and internet sites (blogs, online publications) with varying lengths on different topics and in different styles based on reading and researching.

During the discussions, students will be taught different techniques to inspire their creativity, and how to channel this into what they are writing. They will be offered class feedback, personal tuition, tips to refine their writing, honest appraisal, all in an effort to hone their skills.

They will also be taught how to write travel for the screen whether for video, television factual, social media or drama forms; they will also incorporate graphic and multimedia elements into their written work, as appropriate.

FIELD TRIPS

The field trips, each across one day over five weeks, are intended to focus on the students' acquired creative skills by showing Sydney and its environs through tourists' and travel writers' eyes. They start in the second week of in-class teaching (due to public holidays) and continue weekly until the penultimate week of the course.

Each field trip will provide the basis for written assignments which will allow the students to bring theory and practicality together in long and short-form tasks. Students will be expected to take notes and photographs and interview official guides and members of the public on a one-on-one basis. For details on the proposed Field Trip please see the accompanying document **Travel Writing Essentials**.

Hub Learning Outcomes

Capacity: Communication

Area: Writing Intensive – one unit (only available to students who meet the prerequisite requirement).

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to craft responsible, considered, and well-structured written arguments, using media and modes of expression appropriate to the situation. During workshop sessions, students will be guided through the ethics of travel writing, providing balance, and accurate facts, crafted into interesting, compelling, stories, illuminating the pros and cons of visiting a place or attraction, including the ease or difficulty of the journeys.

Students will be trained in word choice and structure, as well as the use of different media to tell a story, all tailored to the publication or site for which they are writing. They will be given class feedback and individual tuition to make sure they are writing to the best of their ability.

Students will be able to read with understanding, engagement, appreciation, and critical judgment. There are a number of set readings for relevant classes, which are discussed thoroughly in class to illuminate understanding, and then assessed for their merit. As students develop their own writing, their engagement and appreciation of these texts will be enhanced. Students will be able to write clearly and coherently in a range of genres and styles, integrating graphic and multimedia elements as appropriate.

Students will write pieces aimed at a variety of publications (newspapers, magazines) and Internet sites (blogs, online publications) with varying lengths on different topics and in different styles based on reading and researching. Students will acquire a variety of techniques to inspire their creativity, and how to channel this into what they are writing. They will be offered in-class feedback, personal tuition, tips to refine their writing, and objective appraisal, all with the aim of honing their skills.

They will also be taught how to create travel video projects using available technologies such as their own cameras and cellphones and will also incorporate graphic and multimedia elements into their written work, as appropriate.

Capacity: Intellectual Toolbox

Area: Creativity/Innovation – two units*

*One unit satisfied by the Cross-College Challenge or other means Courses and co-curricular activities must have all outcomes.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate understanding of creativity as a learnable, iterative process of imagining new possibilities that involves calculated risk-taking, use of multiple strategies, and reconceiving in response to feedback, and will be able to identify individual and institutional factors that promote and inhibit creativity.

During the discussion of ideas, students will be taught different techniques to inspire their creativity, and how to channel this into what they are writing. They will be encouraged to try different approaches to see how they work thus learning to shape the creative process into workable solutions. They will be offered class feedback, personal tuition, tips to refine their writing, honest appraisal, all in an effort to hone their skills.

Guest speakers from the industry will talk about their individual experiences of hurdles overcome and challenges met to help students in their own endeavors to exercise their creativity, even under restrictions imposed by publications. A social event in which students will be able to meet a group of working travel writers will be organized, subject to availability.

Students will be able to exercise their own potential for engaging in creative activity by conceiving and executing original work. The class foundation of bringing prepared drafts of work to air and share amongst class members and the professor, with students listening to various feedback, assists in their engagement and creative activity.

Other Outcomes

JO 528 Course Objectives

This course has a strong focus on students understanding, interpreting, evaluating, and producing travel writing in all its forms. As the student moves from reading to writing travel copy, they also learn to use and implement the attendant components of research, interviewing, selecting subjects, keeping live journals, blogging, writing puffs, pitching, considering word choice, revising written pieces collaboratively, editing, and using photographs and multimedia.

COURSE OVERVIEW

JO528 is designed to introduce students to the various interests and activities that offer travel writers opportunities in a global city such as Sydney. Concurrently with classes, students will be undertaking internships with a variety of local journalism outlets.

At all times, 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 and blogs as a research base. Relevant guest speakers will be invited to address the class. Students will deliver presentations drawn from their research and experiences.

Throughout the course, there will be an emphasis on producing written work, centered on a sense of place, the journey, or a relevant theme, in the form of articles, or other forms of factual accounts such as blogging. There may be publication opportunities for student work considered of the highest merit. All assignments will be drawn from research collected on the excursions.

These objectives satisfy various Study Abroad Program and specific Sydney Travel Writing Internship Program outcomes under which this course operates; please see below the outcomes for these programs.

COM JO 528 has been approved by the College of Communications at BU and satisfies requirements of COM Majors and Minors. Credit transfers for other schools could be possible.

OVERALL STUDY ABROAD SYDNEY PROGRAM OUTCOME:

The student will “demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media”.

Travel Writing in Australia Internship Program Learning Outcomes (Specific). Students will:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of Australian culture through exploration of the city of Sydney, its multicultural suburbs, public amenities, ocean scape, climate and people, through travel, first-hand contact, interviews, research and interaction with texts.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, techniques of travel writing, based on personal experience of Sydney, its environs and people.
3. Demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of the journey as both an outward and inward mode of travel.
4. Demonstrate an understanding, through the internship placement and attendant academic course components, of Australia’s workplace culture, and of the specific professional context of the internship site, its mission, challenges, and constraints.
5. Demonstrate greater sensitivity to, understanding of, and tolerance for ambiguity and multiple philosophical positions and an increased awareness of cultural difference.

Format: Lecture, Seminar, Field Trips and Guest Speaker Course Pedagogy

JO 528 has a minimum of **40+ hours of classroom lectures and seminars** and several out-of-class field trips including an in-course-time visit to a major media publisher. There are an additional five all-day field trips exploring all aspects of the travel experience in and around Sydney where students will visit places of historical, cultural and social significance and encounter local experts, service providers and residents as they research, interview and recording events, history, and attractions of both high visibility and less well-known areas.

Formal lectures, group workshops and seminar presentations have been organized for this course. 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. This will include redrafting work and discussing it with the professor who will give feedback and suggestions for refining text.

The concept of redrafting and refining each student’s writing is a constant component of classes. Because this is ungraded, this learning tool promotes confidence in the student, stimulates their creativity, and hones their writing skills, allowing them to find their individual voice.

All students will be expected to contribute to all workshop and seminar discussions. Therefore, they will need to prepare for each session as directed including required readings for sessions as indicated on the schedule. See **Travel Writing Essentials**.

Each student will also be expected to undertake a seminar presentation (graded) in the form of two verbal pitches based on written pitches, the latter of which then can be revised according to feedback, prior to submission for grading.

Each pitch should be based on the student’s own research of a particular place, or theme built around places, from the field trips. Following the presentation, it is expected that the presenter will generate some class discussion of the ideas, which they have put forward. It is important that the verbal pitch is not simply read from the written form.

The course also includes a class visit to the travel section of a major newspaper publisher, where a senior national travel editor will outline and explain their job and take questions.

Classes run according to the overall schedule, in a general pattern of 16.5 hours of class work over four days in the first week, plus two hours of class (evening) and one field trip per week in the subsequent six weeks of the course. The final week will include a session of recap and review.

Books and Other Course Materials

Books and other course materials are provided to students through the BU Sydney library and blackboard learn (www.learn.bu.edu) to which students have been given registered access. BU learn also provides links to online sources and maintains a message board. The BU Sydney library holds a variety of books and DVDs of secondary sources, some on closed reserve which can only be used within the confines of the library but to which students all have access. There is also an up-to-date selection of travel publications (newspaper and magazine supplements) provided by the professor.

Readings from the following texts may be helpful to classes. Handouts from other works will also be distributed to be read for specified classes, especially examples from local and overseas magazines and newspapers. Use will be made of the Blackboard Learn online facility for discussion and further distribution of relevant material. Copies of the texts below will be available for use in the classroom at all class meetings.

Bill Bryson: *A Sunburnt Country* (pub. in Australia as *DownUnder*) (Doubleday: NYC) 2000.

Bruce Chatwin: *The Songlines* (Penguin, New York) 1988

Cynthia Dial: *Travel Writing* (Hodder Headline: London, UK) 2001

Zane Grey: *An American Angler in Australia (1937)* (Derry Dale Press, Lanham, Maryland. USA) 2002

Julia Horne: *The Pursuit of Wonder: How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed.* (The Miegunyah Imprint, Melbourne University Press: Melbourne) 2005

Stephen King: *On Writing* (Hodder and Stoughton: London) 2000

Sarah Macdonald: *Holy Cow* (Broadway Books, Random House: Sydney) 2003

Jan Morris: *Sydney* (Viking, Penguin, Sydney) 1992

Paul Theroux: *The Old Patagonian Express* (Penguin, London, 1980)

Mark Twain: *The Wayward Tourist: Mark Twain's Adventures in Australia.* Introduced by Don Watson. (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne) 2007

Sue Williams: *Getting There: Journeys of an accidental adventurer* (New Holland Press, Sydney, 2001); *Welcome to the Outback* (Melbourne: Penguin 2012); *Women of the Outback* (Melbourne: Penguin 2008); *And then the Darkness* (Sydney: ABC Books 2008)

Courseware (Blackboard/Learn)

www.bu.edu/learn/JO528

This is an active online link to all materials including course outline, criteria sheets, due dates of assignments, required readings, online links, and announcements.

Assignments and Grading

ASSESSMENT

To complete the 'Assessment' component of the requirements for this course, it is necessary to perform the following tasks. Delivery dates are subject to change to be notified before commencement of the course.

1. Workshop Sessions (15%)

Undertaken in the classroom, these sessions will encourage students to share work/ideas and Grade is accrued throughout the course. In such an environment, students will present their work for feedback considering the finer details of word choice, 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 LISTICLES (5%)

This comprises the 'puffs' by which you sum up travel stories/projects and present them in the most exciting, intriguing and accessible way. Listicles are basically lists of related items with accompanying explanatory texts such as "top ten hikes in NSW."

3. LIVE JOURNAL ENTRIES/BLOGGING (5%)

There will an opportunity to record your research and experiences in a running "blog", notionally for broad access to a reading public either as a stand-alone blog or theoretically as a "live" diary inclusion in a travel website. Blogs will be shared via the Blackboard learn platform and periodically per-reviewed in class. Students will also be encouraged to maintain notes and diary content for their own purposes and use in class projects.

4. ORAL PITCHES (5%)

An oral presentation based on two draft ideas of written pitches Taking place Thursday Week 4, in class. A guide to [pitching](#) will have been included in earlier lectures. Following in-class feedback, one of these pitches will be selected by the student,

5. WRITTEN PITCHES (10%)

These will be in the form of two 75-word pitches (2 X 5% = 10%) emailed to Jimmy on mail@jimmythomson.com and shared on Blackboard.

6. WRITTEN PIECES (40%)

2,800-3,000 words (40% of overall grade). Drafts will be reviewed and critiqued as work progresses; this means you will be expected to produce drafts for classroom discussion each week.

Major Submissions MUST be posted on Blackboard AND submitted as hard copy via the library by the designated deadlines. Some written work will be completed or reviewed "live" in class. Completed pieces or works in progress for in-class assessment and review must be presented as Google Docs with "editor enabled" links emailed to mail@jimmythomson.com and shared via Blackboard at least 24 hours before the relevant classes.

In total written work will include:

- a 100-word piece as a short newspaper filler.
- Puffs for real or hypothetical stories.
- A shot list for a proposed online video
- a 500-word newspaper travel **review**.
- an 800-word newspaper travel **news** article;
- **SUBMISSION 1:** A listicle on a topic set in class, of 10x60 words.
- **SUBMISSION 2:** a 1300-word personal travel-related experience piece, hypothetically suitable for a nominated magazine or newspaper. This must be a first-person piece but may incorporate elements from other formats studied in this course.

Submission pieces 1 and 2 **must** be delivered via the library **and** shared on Blackboard or emailed to mail@jimmythomson.com by their appropriate due dates. Non-Submission pieces only need to be emailed or shared on Blackboard the day before the relevant class.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Students will be expected to keep a journal of their field trips; this will be non-assessed for their 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, information centers, 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 “facts boxes” for articles. For the two major submissions, this is due THROUGH THE LIBRARY, along with written work.

ASSIGNMENT IDENTIFICATION

All electronic submissions **MUST** include, in the filename, the course code, the assignment name and the student’s surname in the filename of the document in the form
JO528-Assignmentname-studentname.docx.

Both MAJOR assignments **MUST** be presented for assessment on Blackboard. Class work and works in progress should be presented as Google.docs with links emailed for sharing and collaborative work. It is up to the student to ensure the documents have been received and are in editable the correct format. Written work presented in the wrong format and not converted by the deadline will be considered overdue. PDFs will not be accepted.

CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENTS

WORKSHOP SESSIONS – CLASSROOM (15%)

Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 15%: grading /100 Grade is accrued throughout the course. This will include the presentations on selected reading on Day 3.

Marking criteria:

Willingness to participate in class. 30% Offering and sharing opinions. 30%

Participation in discussion about their own work. 20% Participation in discussion about the work of others. 20%

PUFFS and LISTICLES (5%)

Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 5%: grading /100.

Marking criteria:

Ideas on how best to present puffs. 30%

Succinct, compelling and inviting presentation of significant themes, 30%.

Keeping to strict word length on puffs. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 20%

LIVE JOURNAL ENTRIES/BLOGGING (5%)

Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 5%: grading /100.

Marking criteria:

Ideas on how best to present blogs. 30% .

Succinct, compelling and inviting presentation of main themes including photos with blogs. 30%.

Relevance to concurrent activities 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 20%

ORAL PITCHES/PRESENTATIONS (5%)

Based on two draft ideas of written pitches. Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 5%: grading /100.

Marking criteria:

Ideas on how best to present an oral pitch. 30%

Clear and persuasive presentation of pitches. 30%

Ability to adapt and improvise when asked questions/challenged on pitch. 20%

Ability to talk confidently, without reading from notes or computer. 20%

WRITTEN PITCHES (10%)

Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 10%: grading /100.

Marking criteria:

Ideas on how best to present written pitches. 30%

Succinct, compelling and inviting presentation of main themes. 30%

Keeping to strict word lengths. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 20%

WRITTEN PIECES: (40%)

Percentage/weighting of overall grade: 40%: grading /100. Marking criteria:

SUBMISSION 1. A 600-word listicle (10x60 words) on a designated topic suitable for a mass market newspaper or online travel website.

Relevance of content for target market readership. 20%

Use of expression, good grammar, consistent tenses. 20%

Drawing on research and interviews. 20%

Tightness of writing and keeping to strict word length. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 10%

Relevance of photos to accompany piece. 10%

SUBMISSION 2: A 1300-word first-person piece suitable for a pre-identified magazine or lifestyle section

Strength and persuasiveness of hook and theme for piece. 20%

Use of expression, good grammar, consistent tenses. 20%

Drawing on research and interviews. 20%

Tightness of writing and keeping to strict word length. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 10%

Relevance of photos to accompany piece. 10%

The 100-word piece as a short newspaper filler;

Tightness of writing and keeping to strict word length. 30%

Strength and persuasiveness of news hook for piece. 20%

Use of expression, good grammar, consistent tenses. 20%

Drawing on research. 20%

Relevance of photo to accompany piece. 10%

The 500-word newspaper REVIEW;

Relevance of content for target market readership. 20%

Use of expression, good grammar, consistent tenses. 20%

Drawing on research and interviews. 20%

Tightness of writing and keeping to strict word length. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 10%

Relevance of photos to accompany piece. 10%

The 800-word travel NEWS article;

Strength and persuasiveness of hook and theme for piece. 20%

Use of expression, good grammar, consistent tenses. 20%

Drawing on research and interviews. 20%

Tightness of writing and keeping to strict word length. 20%

Willingness to experiment with creativity and different approaches. 10%

Relevance of photos to accompany piece. 10%

The shot-list:

Twenty pictures and/or moving images that conveys interest or significance of selected field trip location (no more than 25 words of description per shot, with images and suggestion of music to accompany).

Understanding principles of shot list 20%

Creativity of concept and theme. 20%

Choice of sample images to illustrate concept. 30%

Use of variety of sources for images. 10%

Rhythm and juxtaposition of images. 10%.

Choice of music 10%

The delivery dates and protocols for assessed work are contained in a separate document called "Travel Writing – Content, Submissions and Assessments" available on Blackboard.

Resources/Support/How to Succeed in This Course:

There are opportunities for students to meet professors face-to-face either ahead of or following class times; students can also make contact for longer meeting times via email or submit questions via email. Use of the Blackboard Learn facility is highly recommended as engagement is part of your assessment and their additional material may be posted there out of class times.

The most effective way to succeed in this course is to undertake the reading and writing projects as they appear on the timeline of the syllabus. If students fall behind, it will result in them losing track of in-class lectures or in-progress exercises, thereby being disadvantaged. Student time management is thus a crucial component of this course.

Another aspect, which will aid success, is the willingness of each student to share work and listen to constructive criticism of this work, both from the professor and the rest of the class. Such suggestions are applied to work at the discretion of the writer.

Professors are notified of students with documented disabilities or special needs ahead of first classes and offer assistance to these students in line with BU policy, which is also BU Sydney policy.

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING: CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES.

Course members' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of both the professor and all student members of the class to ensure a positive learning environment. It is thus understood that any member of the class who demonstrates behavior which undermines this positive learning environment will: firstly, be questioned and counseled regarding this behavior, seeking a satisfactory outcome; secondly, upon further recurrence, be brought into the delivery of the class material in an effort to involve them more; lastly, in light of the behavior continuing, the student will be expelled from the learning space for the rest of that day's class, and a grade deduction will be implemented as for "missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons". (There is no precedent for this thus far on our programs.)

Attendance & Absences.

Attendance at all designated sessions including those with Guest Speakers and Field Trips is expected. There are no optional absences from class sessions.

Attendance at all designated sessions including those with Guest Speakers is expected. There are no optional absences from class sessions.

In the case of missing field trips, an extra article of 1000 words is expected based on a topic devised by the professor and pertinent to the missed field trip.

Any student missing class without verifiable extraordinary reasons will be penalized through grade deduction in fairness to those who do attend. This includes any guest speaker sessions, and field trips. The grade deduction is equal to 5% of the workshop- sessions grade per transgression.

BU Sydney Policy adheres to the general BU campus policy of Religious Observance, which would fall under "verifiable extraordinary reasons" as mentioned in various places above and below.

Assignment Completion and Late Work.

Completion of all writing tasks is expected. All written work must be submitted in hard copy through the BU Sydney Library by the time set down in the course outline as well as in electronic form. For all assignments, an additional soft copy should be emailed to the professor (see **ASSIGNMENT DELIVERY**). Our policy on late submission of work mirrors that of absenteeism in that, unless there is a verifiable extraordinary reason, there is a grade deduction imposed which amounts to 5% of the assignment grade per day.

Similar grade deductions are applied to any student who proves to be a habitual disruptive classroom presence, after counseling and other strategies have failed. (There is no precedent for this thus far on our programs).

Academic Conduct Statement, including expectations for academic honesty, reference to consequences for cheating or plagiarism, course-specific guidelines for, e.g., extent of

allowable collaboration on assignments, and URL for Academic Conduct Code:
<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

All students attending courses under the auspices of BU Sydney must have read BU's policy on academic honesty and understand the consequences of cheating or plagiarism. Within this course, all submitted written work is expected to be that of the individual and only class exercises are collaborative efforts, as indicated. Please see BU's Academic Conduct Statement:

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

Students on a BU Program are advised that the penalty 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".

CLASS SCHEDULE

A detailed rundown of the class schedule (inc. Detail of Class Meetings: Date, Topic, Readings Due, Assignments Due) is contained in the **Travel Writing Essentials** document.

Grading Scale

A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	below 60

BU Sydney - Travel writing - Class schedule					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	CLASS CONTENT NOTES
Week 1 -	3pm - 6pm	10am - 1pm	10am - 1pm	10am - 1pm	See rest of syllabus (above) and "Travel Writing Essentials", for more detail on class content. All classes in Classroom 3.
		2pm- 3.30 pm	2pm- 3.30 pm	2pm- 3.30 pm	
Week 2				6.30-8.30 pm	Review Blogs, check and discuss progress on Submission 1
Week 3	Field Trip 1			6.30-8.30 pm Guest Speaker	Review Blogs, check and discuss progress on assignment 1
Week 4	Field Trip 2	Submission No. 1 due (via library and B'board) 6pm	6.30-8.30 pm Internship Class	6.30-8.30 pm Guest Speaker	Review Blogs, Assess and discuss written pitches
Week 5	Field Trip 3			6.30-8.30 pm Guest speaker	Review Blogs, check and pitch assignment 2 in writing
Week 6	Field trip 4		Internship papers due	6.30-8.30 pm	Review Blogs, assignment 2 writing intensive
Week 7	Field Trip 5 Submission No 2 (via library G Blackboard) by 10am			6.30-8.30 pm Internships End	Review Blogs and Portfolio
Week 8	G-30 - 11-30 Review session		Students leave		

Travel Writing Course Essentials

The intent of this course is to introduce students to travel writing, its myriad forms and the real-world opportunities and challenges that they present, in a practical fashion while exploring the underpinning philosophies of travel writing.

With a mixture of written work, in-class assessments and oral presentations, it is helpful for students to know what is required to be presented, when and how. The course structure, deadlines and submission dates for each element can be found on the Class Schedule at the end of this document.

Please be aware that class content can change depending on students' ability to master the different concepts being studied. For more details of the assessments and their relative grade weighting within the course, please refer to the Travel Writing Syllabus.

MAJOR WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

There are two major submissions for this course, and they **MUST** be presented both to the library by the due times and dates **AND** via Blackboard Learn according to the same deadlines.

IN-CLASS SUBMISSIONS

Throughout the course you will be required to prepare written exercises for presentation and discussion. These must be prepared on Google.Docs with links submitted by email **the day before** the class at which they will be presented to mail@jimmythomson.com or via Blackboard. Submissions presented as PDFs will NOT be accepted.

STUDY, SUBMISSION AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The first week of the course will involve four intensive days of study of and work on the basic elements of Travel Writing in its many forms.

After this introductory week, a large part of this course will take the form of collaborative review of works in progress, all with the aim of reviewing and refining student's written work. Students will be expected to give and accept constructive criticism from their peers, especially during "live" collaborations. With that in mind, work for discussion and review in class should be presented as Google Docs with the possible exception of the Shot List which may be presented as a Powerpoint or similar if the student so desires.

1) WORKSHOP & DISCUSSIONS (assessed throughout the course)

Undertaken in the classroom and during field trips, these sessions encourage students to share ideas in an inclusive and supportive environment. Students can present their thoughts, opinions and work ideas for feedback, often considering the finer details of word choice, style, description, integrated local voices and general evocation of place as experience. There is a high expectation of active participation in these ongoing sessions.

2) SHOT LIST

As covered in class (Session 4a), students should create a shot-list of twenty pictures and/or moving images that establish something evocative and meaningful about their allocated topic. This includes no more than 25 words per shot description with a suggestion of music to accompany the entire package. Students may prefer to present this as a Powerpoint.

3) ORAL and WRITTEN PITCHES

Based on students' written pitches, the idea is that we simulate a scenario where students are making verbal pitches of two different story ideas to a commissioning editor. A guide to [pitching](#) will be covered in class lectures. One of these pitches is likely to form the basis for students' major 1300-word submission.

Using feedback from the oral pitches, students will create two written 75-word pitches, one of which they are likely to choose as the basis for their major submission.

5) PUFFS

As described in Week 1, puffs are short summaries of the stories that follow them in print or on-line – they are also known as hooks, teasers and write-offs, among other terms that vary from publication to publication.

6) BLOGS

As your blogs will be available for assessment on Blackboard throughout the course, this does not have a single deadline as most of the work has been done over the preceding weeks, starting in Session 2b in Week 1. However, this is when you finally lock them off and print them out (or create a Word doc) and submit them as a record of work done. You will be given a couple of days' grace leading up to the deadline so that you can complete the task without it interfering with other work.

7) PORTFOLIO PIECES

Each student must produce written work with a word count adding up to no more than 3,000 words (no less than 2,860), comprising the following mandatory elements.

- **SUBMISSION 1:** Listicle (10 x 60 words).
- **SUBMISSION 2:** a 1300-word personal travel-related piece.
- a 100-word piece as a short newspaper filler.
- A shot list for a proposed online video.
- a 500-word newspaper travel **review**.
- an 800-word newspaper travel **news** article

It is expected that these pieces will form the core of Students' Portfolios, adding to the various elements addressed throughout the course.

8) RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

You will be expected to keep a non-assessable journal related to your field trips 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, information centers, 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.

To reiterate, both major submissions **MUST** be presented both to the library by the due dates and times **AND** submitted on Blackboard by the same deadlines. PDFs are not acceptable.

Field Trips (Mondays – Dates, locations and content may change)

FIELD TRIP 1: Food for Thought – An [Aboriginal "Bush Tucker" and culture walk](#) with a local guide from Coogee to Clovelly will be followed by a trip to some of Sydney's iconic eating and drinking venues, including Harry's Café De Wheels, Woolloomooloo Wharf, Barangaroo and ending up at the legendary Marble Bar (as featured in the movie They're a Weird Mob).

FIELD TRIP 2: Blue Mountains and beyond – Beginning on Sunday with a visit to [Featherdale Wildlife Park](#), students will be taken to the Norman Lindsay Gallery before checking in to accommodation in Katoomba and a meal at our favourite restaurant

there. Next day students will ride the [Katoomba Scenic Railway and Skyway](#) and walk around the edge of the valley to Echo Point and the Three Sisters. Finally we will enjoy a guided tour of the historic [Hydro Majestic](#) Hotel in Medlow Bath, with its strong connections to America.

FIELD TRIP 3: Tourist Trails – Like typical tourists, students will take ferries across [Sydney Harbour to Taronga Zoo](#), visit the Opera House, eat lunch from the many ethnic foods available at Circular Quay then hop on a light rail trip to in the historic [Queen Victoria Building](#) shopping mall, ending up in Chinatown.

FIELD TRIP 4: Making History – While also being one of the youngest nations on the planet, Australia is home to the oldest continuous living culture with First Nations ancestry stretching back 60,000 years. The entire breath of Australia's history will be vividly illustrated through visits to the [Australian](#), [Maritime](#) and [Powerhouse](#) museums and [Hyde Park Barracks](#).

FIELD TRIP 5: Reality Bites – Starting with a visit to a newspaper office's travel section, then a top travel PR's offices, Students will be led on a short "crime tour" of the lively entertainment centre of [Kings Cross](#), then dine informally with a varied and interesting group of working travel writers who will share their real-life memories of their journeys, tribulations and triumphs to excite and inspire the next generation of itinerant scribes.

The field trips will be organised to tie in with the students' formal studies so that each outing informs and provides material for the theoretical work and practical exercises they will undertake in class.

BU Sydney - Travel writing Summer 2024 - Class schedule					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	CLASS CONTENT
Week 1 -	3pm - 6pm	10am - 1pm	10am - 1pm	10am - 1pm	
	1A: What is Travel writing? What's in this course. Students to select published content for presentations.	2A: All about pitches and knowing your market	3A: Listicles (Allocate Submission #1 topics) Interviewing.	4A: Videos and shot lists. Puffs and headlines. Presentations	See the rest of this document (above) as well as specific fact sheets, for more detail on Week 1 Content
		2pm- 3.30 pm 2B: Blogging and using all your senses	2pm- 3.30 pm 3B: Facts and figures	2pm- 3.30 pm 4B: Travel News, reviews and fillers	
Week 2			Submit 100-word filler on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm Guest Speaker	Review Blogs, Work on 100-word filler in class. Prep for shot- list.
Week 3	Field Trip 1 Bush Tucker Walk etc		Submit Shot list on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm Personal experiences Guest Speaker	Review Blogs, check and discuss progress on assignment 1 Discuss Shot list in class - prep for Oral Pitches
Week 4	Field Trip 2 Blue Mountains	Submission No. 1 due (via library and Blackboard) 6pm	Submit Oral Pitch notes on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm Places and Journeys Guest Speaker	Review Blogs, check and discuss progress on assignment 1 Oral pitches for Submission No. 2 discuss written pitches
Week 5	Field Trip 3 Taronga Zoo		Submit written Pitches on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm Digital vs print Guest speaker	Review Blogs, and written pitches. Prep for 500 word News story
Week 6	Field trip 4 History		Submit 500-word Review on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm	Review Blogs and pitch assignment 2 Discuss 500-word Review story. Prep for 800 word News story
Week 7	Field Trip 5 Visit to working offices plus travel writers' dinner Submission No 2 Blackboard & library by 10am		Submit 800-word News story on Blackboard and email	6.30-8.30 pm Blogs, videos and portfolio review	Review Blogs and portfolio. Review 800-word Travel News Story
Week 8	9-30 - 11-30 Review session				