

# WR355.01 Travel Writing

Loyola University Maryland

“When something human is recorded, good travel writing happens,’ writes Paul Theroux. Hopefully, you too will aspire to this maxim, and work to improve your powers of observation, description, and storytelling along the way” (Foreword by Jason Wilson, *The Best American Travel Writing 2011*).

“Like all the best travel writers he has an eye for the telling detail, selecting the fertile fact from the accumulated millions, and for the glittering setpiece” (review of Ryszard Kapuściński’s *Travels with Herodotus* by Sara Wheeler, *The Guardian*).

## Course Description

“Students explore the prose genre of travel writing while living and studying abroad. They read in the canon of contemporary and traditional travel literature—newspaper and magazine articles, short pieces, literary essays, and nonfiction books. Inspired and informed by their adventures in the ‘here and now’ of travel abroad, they write a weekly travel blog and two major essays. Concentrating on their host city, students also produce a research project (‘My City Quest’) that reflects on their experience and what it is like to live and study in another country as well as on the culture, traditions, and people of their study abroad destination” (*Loyola University Maryland Undergraduate Catalogue 2017-2018*).

## Learning Aims for WR355

- To develop knowledge of the world beyond itself
- To develop a language of cultivated response
- To discern rhetorical and stylistic strategies that best suit particular arguments, situations, and audiences
- To develop an appreciation of language

To produce finished, polished texts that show competence in the standards of English usage and style, students will:

- Write widely across genres and for a variety of purposes, showing an ability to adjust your style appropriately to audience and situation
- Develop a distinctive voice with original ideas through frequent practice
- Situate yourself in a larger intellectual conversation in developing and researching ideas
- Write multiple drafts of extended works to extend rhetorical strategies learned in Effective Writing
- Develop an ability to critique other’s writing constructively and to use the same to effectively work collaboratively through frequent group exercises (workshops) and conferences
- Learn to use technology to further your writing through daily exposure, understanding both the various forms and media and their rhetorical effects

## Required Texts and Materials

*Lonely Planet's How to be a Travel Writer*, Don George, with Janine Eberle, 2017.

Documents available on Moodle (please be prepared to download and read documents from Moodle; you will not need to print these readings unless you so choose)

## Writing for a College Audience

Essays and travel blog entries that you submit for this class should be considered public writing. Requirements for the class include sharing your work with your peers and your instructor. Please make sure that your essays and blogs are appropriate for a college audience.

## Honor Code

The Honor Code states that all students of the Loyola Community have been equally entrusted by their peers to conduct themselves honestly on all academic assignments.

The Students of this University understand that having collective and individual responsibility for the ethical welfare of their peers exemplifies a commitment to the community. Students who submit materials that are the products of their own minds demonstrate respect for themselves and the community in which they study.

All outside resources or information should be clearly acknowledged. If there is any doubt or question regarding the use and documentation of outside sources for academic assignments, your instructor should be consulted. If you use quotations, paraphrases, summaries, or ideas from another writer, you must cite that writer using proper MLA citation techniques. Any violations of the Honor Code will be handled by the Honor Council.

You are responsible for upholding the Loyola University Honor Code at all times. Violations of the Honor Code will result in failure of the assignment and most likely failure of the course.

You are encouraged to network with others in the class to help you clarify instructions or review class materials; however, do not confuse normal and healthy networking with plagiarism or academic misconduct. If the instructor is convinced academic misconduct has occurred, the university's Honor Council will be notified.

**Special Needs** – To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS), Newman Towers West 107, at [DSS@loyola.edu](mailto:DSS@loyola.edu) or call (410) 617-2750/2062. If you have already registered with DSS and requested an accommodations letter (and DSS has sent the letter to your professors via email), please send me an email so that we can discuss the accommodations you might need in this class.

## Evaluation of Performance and Course Requirements

I will read and respond to your assignments throughout the semester; however, I will not assign grades until the end of the semester. I want you to have the opportunity to progress as a writer and to encourage you to take more risks in your writing and your thinking. **I will assign Midterm grades, but because WR 355 Travel Writing heavily stresses revision, your Midterm grade will be recorded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.**

I have scheduled student conferences on the syllabus. But I also encourage you to email me and discuss your progress in the class. If you are concerned about the grading procedure in the class, please do not hesitate to email me.

## Grade Distribution

- 50% - Course Portfolio – (3 revised essays)** grade based on thoroughness and achievement of general course goals; students must submit the portfolio to pass the course; a failure of the portfolio constitutes a failure in the course
- 25% - Travel Blog– (12 blog entries)** grade based on thoroughness and consistency of travel blog as well as your response to your peer's blog (**2 response letters to a peer's blog**)
- 20% - Reading Responses (6 total responses)-** grade based on thoroughness, degree of care taken in critical analysis and progression throughout the semester
- 5% - Writing Exercises (5 total writing exercises) –** grade based on thoroughness of completion

## Course Portfolio

Essay 1: Person essay: 4+ pages

Essay 2: Place essay: 4+ pages (**midterm project— “My City Quest”— that will be based on the place where you are studying abroad; this project will have a required research component**)

Essay 3: Food essay: 4+ pages

Note: all essays must be on a person, place, or food you have encountered while studying abroad

Essays must be submitted on due date. **Late drafts will result in 10 points off the final essay grade.**

If you miss an assignment during the semester, you will not be able to make up assignments at the end and include it in the portfolio. Final drafts of the major essays cannot be included in the portfolio if they have not received a response from the instructor during the semester.

**Additional information about the essays: 1). Students must complete an acceptable draft of each essay for the portfolio to be complete. A portfolio will fail if a student does not submit an acceptable draft of ONE of the 3 major essays.**

**2). Students cannot change a topic from the first draft of an essay to the final draft; the final draft is a revision of the first draft, not a completely new essay.**

**3). Essays are to be a different assignment than the blog entries; for example, students cannot copy and paste a blog entry and count that as an essay; the essay must be different from a blog entry; you can use material discussed in a blog entry in an essay, but a copy and paste entry from the blog will not be accepted as an essay submission.**

## Travel Blog

You will be asked to write an entry (minimum requirement for each entry is 7-8 paragraphs; you may, of course, write more than the minimum requirement) on your own travel blog each week throughout the semester. Please see Course Schedule for each week's topic. You will also be asked to comment on a peer's travel blog (I will provide instructions on how to complete this portion of the assignment). I will assign a grade to the collection of blog entries at the end of the semester. You must complete all 12 blog entries and both responses to your peer's blogs for the Travel Blog portion of your grade to be complete. As with the Course Portfolio, you will not be able to make up blog entries at the end of the semester. For example, if you skipped several weeks of blog entries, you will not be able to log in all the entries at the end of the semester. Your blog grade will be based on thoroughness of blog (blog entries that do not meet the minimum requirement of 7-8 paragraphs will not be able to receive full credit.)

## Reading Responses

You will be asked to comment on readings in a 2-3-page typed reading response. I will grade these responses throughout the semester with a grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory; however, I will assign a grade to the whole collection of responses at the end of the semester. You must complete all 6 reading responses for the reading response portion of your grade to be complete.

## Writing Exercises

These exercises (250-300 words each) are designed to help you develop your writing skills. A complete effort will result in full credit.

## Grading Scale

The following grade scale may be found in the *Loyola University Undergraduate Catalogue*:

"In calculating a student's quality point average (QPA) on a per credit basis, the following values are used: *A* = 4.000; *A-* = 3.670; *B+* = 3.330; *B* = 3.000; *B-* = 2.670; *C+* = 2.330; *C* = 2.000; *C-* = 1.670; *D+* = 1.330; *D* = 1.000; and *F* = 0.000.

The grade of *C* rewards a successful academic performance. Grades of *C+*, *B-*, *B*, *B+*, *A-* and *A* measure additional gradations of accomplishment.

- A**     **Denotes outstanding achievement that is truly distinctive.** The grade of *A* is earned by that student whose performance is highly accomplished--that is, who, grounded in the discipline, consistently shows superior mastery of course concepts and skills, offers leadership in class discussion and activities, and reliably takes the initiative in seeking knowledge beyond the formal confines of the course.
- B**     **Denotes achievement well above acceptable standards and is a mark of distinction.** The grade of *B* is earned by a student who surpasses the standard performance with work that, in its rigor, originality, and creativity, is evidence of a firm command of course material within the framework of the discipline and of active engagement in learning in and out of class.
- C**     **Denotes an acceptable level of achievement in the course and is the standard for graduation from the University.** The grade of *C* is earned by a student who successfully completes the requirements for the course laid out in the syllabus. The *C* student learns the course material, understands the nature of the discipline, develops requisite abilities and skills, and improves facility of expression through productive engagement in class and sufficient study outside of class.

The following grades describe substandard performance:

- C-**     *Unsatisfactory.* Denotes academic performance below the standards for the course. The grade of *C-* earns academic credit but with a QPA value of 1.67.
- D**     *Inadequate.* Denotes work of inferior quality that barely meets the objectives for the course. The grade of *D* is the lowest passing grade and a mark of inadequate performance.
- F**     *Failure.* Denotes work below minimal standards of competence required to pass the course. A failing grade earns no academic credit; the course does not satisfy prerequisite or degree requirements.

## Student Success

This class provides an opportunity for you to further develop your writing skills and your critical thinking skills. You can glean more from the class by following these points:

1. **Read each selected reading and participate in learning activities in a positive way.** Your active participation will allow you to gain more from the daily readings, and you will be more interested as well.
2. **“Attend” class regularly.** You are expected to read the selected readings on Moodle and assigned chapters from the textbook. I will also post podcasts throughout the semester. Please make sure to listen to those. Through these podcasts you will receive information and understanding needed to complete written assignments correctly and to prepare for peer assessment. The reading assignments will provide examples of the types of essays that you will write in the class.
3. **Submit assignments on time:** Assignments are to be submitted on the day they are due. I understand most of you will be traveling during the semester. Please notify me before you travel if you anticipate internet interruptions. If you see that a travel date will coincide with an assignment due date, please submit the assignment BEFORE you leave for a trip.
4. Be sure to keep up with the due dates for assignments. I will not offer extra credit assignments.
5. **Respect your peers and your environment.** You are expected to act with appropriate reverence in the online classroom. This includes responding to each other with respect.
6. **Conference with your Instructor.** I have scheduled online conferences through email on the syllabus for me to write to you and discuss your midterm progress. But I also encourage you to email me if you have concerns, questions, or problems. I will be glad to talk with you and discuss any conflicts or extenuating circumstances you may have. **Please note that it is best to discuss conflicts and problems as soon as they occur so that a solution can be found before an assignment is due.**
7. **Use this document as the policies and procedures manual for this course.** It provides detailed information for completing this course and will help you know what is expected.

### Instructions for Starting Your Travel Blog:

- Google has a free blog setup—Blogger; to set up your blog, please go to this website: <http://www.blogger.com>
- This is a trusted, reliable (and free) blog tool; it also has a quick and easy setup; if you wish to use another site, please let me know
- **If you are not familiar with setting up a blog**, please go to this website for a quick overview of how to set up your blog with Blogger: <https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-google-blogger-1616420>
- You may determine your own design
- Pictures are not a requirement of the travel blog assignment; if you choose to place pictures on your blog, that will be fine (please remember that pictures you post on your blog should be considered public; pictures should be appropriate for a college audience); the grade for the blog, however, will be based on content, not design
- **Please enter one Travel Blog entry per week**
- **As soon as you set up your travel blog, please email me the website address for your blog (the blog will be made public to our class)**