

English 50: Writing Intensive Seminar in English: Travel and Education

Spring 2022

Instructor: Alex Sherman

Time: Monday and Wednesday, 9:45-11:15 AM, at 60-107

Office Hours: Monday 12-1 and Thursday 3:30-4:30 PM, and by appointment, in WISE office (Building 460 2nd floor)



Image from *Aparajito*, dir. Satyajit Ray, 1956

Course description

What does it take for a young person to develop into a well-rounded member of a society? Two common answers are education and travel, and they are often combined into one, whether in the residential university and the experience of “leaving for college,” the promotion of study abroad programs, or media and advertising that present tourism as self-fulfillment. Education takes the form of the journey; travel is educational.

The travel-education connection dates back to at least eighteenth-century Europe and is part of broader ideologies of individual development. This course seeks to understand the nature of that connection within this bigger framework. It does so by investigating the historical relationship of two literary genres, travel literature and the novel of education (*Bildungsroman*), tracing the travel-education relationship from the Grand Tour through the globalized present. We will foreground issues of (post)colonialism, racism, gender, sexuality, and class, and their related critical approaches, to understand how these genres shaped and were shaped by historical forces. Not only will we gain perspective on this literary and cultural history (and writing skills), but we will better understand our

positions within educational systems (both formal and informal) and interrogate the organization of those systems.

Primary texts

A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy (Laurence Sterne, 1768; ISBN 9780199537181)

Jane Eyre (Charlotte Brontë, 1847; ISBN 9780393264876)

Season of Migration to the North (Tayeb Salih, 1966; trans. from Arabic by Johnson-Davies, 1969; ISBN 9781590173022)

Aparajito (dir. Satyajit Ray, 1956; Bengali with English subtitles; available through the Stanford Library website via Kanopy)

Suggested: *Pather Panchali* (Ray, 1955; Stanford Library via Kanopy); *The World of Apu* (Ray, 1959; on reserve at Green Library)

A travel blog of the student's choosing

Secondary texts

Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (excerpt)

Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (excerpt)

Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (excerpt)

Travis M. Foster, *Genre and White Supremacy in the Postemancipation United States* (excerpt)

Susan Lamb, *Bringing Travel Home to England: Tourism, Gender, and Imaginative Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (excerpt)

Reinhart Koselleck, "On the Anthropological and Semantic Structure of *Bildung*"

Bakhtin, "The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism"

Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (excerpt)

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (excerpt)

Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (excerpt)

Helene Snee, *A Cosmopolitan Journey? Difference, Distinction and Identity in Gap Year Travel* (excerpt)

Ian Munt, "The 'Other' Postmodern Tourism: Culture, Travel and the New Middle Class"

Shaun Regan, "Peripatetic philosophy: Sterne and cosmopolitanism"

Sharon Locy, "Travel and space in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*"

Saree Makdisi, "The Empire Renarrated: *Season of Migration to the North* and the Reinvention of the Present"

Learning goals

This course will help you to:

- Articulate the historical relationships between travel and education in literature from the eighteenth century through the present, both orally and in writing
- Recognize how the historical ties between travel and education shape contemporary culture
- Become comfortable sharing and discussing writing-in-progress
- Build an archive of primary texts that best addresses a topic or argument
- Efficiently dissect, summarize, and deploy critical and historical background sources
- Weave together your claims and textual evidence to make an extended critical argument

Assignments

Four weekly responses (10% total, 2.5% each): By the end of weeks 1-6, write a 300-500 word response to that week's reading. See the assignment guide for more details. Since there are only four responses due over six weeks, note that you may skip two weeks. Due by Friday at 11:59 PM of each week.

Two analytical précis's of critical reading (10% total, 5% each): An extremely valuable but less-heralded skill of an English degree is learning how to summarize, analyze, and take what you need from a secondary text. What is the argument? How is it proved? What is at stake? Why do you care? Why should we care? To develop these skills, two times during the quarter, you will write a précis of a secondary text, then post it on Canvas for your classmates to use. I will also ask you in class to briefly summarize the reading for the rest of us (not a formal presentation, just talking for about 5 minutes). See the assignment guide for details on the purpose and form of a précis. I will distribute a sign-up sheet where you will choose which secondary text to write on. Due by the start of class the same day that the assigned reading is due. **Note:** Because of their length and density, writing a précis on Koselleck or Bakhtin's "Bildungsroman" essay counts double (i.e., you need only write that one for the term).

Close reading, or seeing the world in the text (15%): A necessary part of your final assignment—and debatably the major skill of an English major—is analyzing specific passages to demonstrate bigger claims. Pick a passage from *A Sentimental Journey* or *Jane Eyre* (less than a page, more than a sentence). Write 750-1000 words analyzing how formal features of that passage can help us understand larger structures in the history of travel, education, and the formation of individuals. The goal of this assignment is to practice making analysis as specific as possible in the evidence you choose, the claims you make, and the way you prove them. More details are in the assignment sheet. Note that you may choose a passage from *Season of Migration to the North* instead, but you will be at a disadvantage as we will have only finished discussing that novel the week before the assignment is due. Due by Sunday 11:59 PM on 5/1.

Presentation on a travel blog (10%): After our historical survey and before focusing wholly on the final project, we will examine the contemporary linkage between travel and education by looking at the genre of the travel blog. In order to give a broader sense of this genre, each of you will find your own blog of interest, then present on it to the class. (Note that a blog will likely be the simplest kind of text to examine, but you can look at other forms instead or additionally, such as social media pages, journalism, or even private correspondence.) You will briefly summarize your blog's background before analyzing it to see what it can tell us about the way travel and education are (or, perhaps, are not) linked today. Besides the intellectual and historical payoffs of this exercise, it will also help you practice choosing your own texts for the final paper. More details are in the assignment sheet. Due in-class on 5/9.

Final paper (25%): You will write a polished 12-15 page research paper with at least one primary text and at least four secondary sources. The paper should ideally use the primary text(s) to make a bigger but still specific argument about travel and education, which argument should be connected to a bigger conversation in secondary texts. This is not a close reading or an argument solely about interpreting the primary text; this is you making an original claim, using a literary text to articulate it, and connecting it to arguments others have made. As such, the goal of the assignment is to help you develop the ability to use literary and critical texts to discuss larger problems, structures, and patterns. You must seek out **at least one primary text of your own** to write on, though I

encourage you to write a comparative essay that also uses primary texts from the course. (The travel blog you present on counts as a primary text from the course, not a new one.) Only two secondary readings from the course count towards the four required secondary sources, but you are very welcome to use more. Note that you are welcome to write a paper that is not about travel, education, or their connection, but that it might be more difficult for me and your fellow students to give you feedback. Due by the end of the scheduled exam time for the course.

Paper proposal (5%): To help you write the final paper, you will present a proposal for your final paper to the class. You should articulate a topic, relevant primary (and perhaps key secondary) texts, a basic argument, how you will go about demonstrating it, and what the bigger stakes are. The proposal should be about 300 words and no longer than 500. In class, we will discuss the proposals and you can add what you feel confident about, what you're nervous about, and what you want feedback on. The goal is to give everyone a chance to talk through their plans for the final and to help one another out. This assignment is graded only on completeness. Due by 11:59 PM on Tuesday 5/17 in order to give everyone time to read each others' proposals before class on Wednesday.

Draft of final (5%): At least two thirds written (i.e., at least 8 pages), plus an outline of the rest if incomplete. The goal is to give people in your workshop group enough to go on when they give you feedback. I will also provide written feedback to you. Due by 11:59 PM of 5/30.

Participation (10%): This class is a cooperative learning environment. The purpose of class discussions is to practice thinking together in ways that will ultimately enrich your writing, so your participation in class discussions is vital. We will spend the first day of class talking about what rich but respectful classroom discussion looks like for us.

Schedule

Note: The schedule may change during the quarter. I will announce any changes in advance.

Week 1: Introduction and genre theory

M 3/28: Introductions, discussion norms, and study abroad

W 3/30: Genre theory: Bakhtin "Chronotope", Barthes, Levine, Foster

Week 2: The Grand Tour (18th century)

M 4/4: Grand Tour backgrounds: *The Spectator*, Addison, Richardson, Smollett, Piozzi; *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*

W 4/6: Individualizing the tour: *SJ* (to end), Lamb

Week 3: The ideal of the *Bildungsroman* (19th century)

M 4/11: Self-formation: *Jane Eyre*, Koselleck

W 4/13: Self, society, and history: *JE*, Bakhtin "Bildungsroman"

Week 4: The ideal of the *Bildungsroman* (19th century)

M 4/18: Becoming normal: *JE*, Moretti

W 4/20: The impossibility of self-formation: *JE*

Week 5: The postcolonial *Bildungsroman* (20th century)

M 4/25: From periphery to center: *Season of Migration to the North*, Said

W 4/27: The impossibility of development: *SMN*, Esty

Week 6: Images of travel and education

CLOSE READING DUE Sunday 5/1 at 11:59 PM

M 5/2: Medium specificity: *Aparajito*; Optional: *Pather Panchali* and *The World of Apu*

W 5/4: Class discussion on the history of travel literature and *Bildungsroman*; Snee, Munt

Week 7: Wrapping up and beginning to write

M 5/9: **PRESENTATIONS DUE** on travel blogs

W 5/11: Closing discussion: what is the relationship of travel and education?

Week 8: Proposing a paper

M 5/16: Writing models: Regan, Locy, Makdisi; research time in class

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE Tuesday 5/17 at 11:59 PM

W 5/18: Discuss paper proposals in class

Week 9: Drafting

M 5/23: **NO CLASS:** Drafting (one-on-one meetings)

W 5/25: Exercises to beat writer's block

Week 10: Revising

M 5/30: **DRAFT DUE** by 11:59 PM; **NO CLASS** (Memorial Day)

W 6/1: Workshop papers in class

Final essay due week 11

Logistics

Absences: You get two free absences if you email me before class, no questions asked. For each day you miss, either write an additional reading response or turn in a response that's twice as long as usual, due by the end of the week. Beyond that, absences will negatively impact your participation grade.

Canvas: Secondary readings will be posted on Canvas. For the weekly responses and critical précis's, you should post them under Discussions. All assignments must be submitted via Canvas.

Accessibility: If you have a letter from the Office for Accessible Education (OAE), **please forward it to me in the first week of class.** The sooner I am aware of accommodations, the better I can make them.

Office Hours: I encourage you to come to office hours often, especially at the beginning of the quarter to introduce ourselves and throughout the paper writing process. I have set office hours, but I am very happy to make appointments.

Late assignments and extensions: Late assignments will lose a half letter grade for each day it is overdue (e.g., an A paper turned in two days late becomes a B paper). For either, but not both, of the major assignments (the close reading and the final), you can email me and get a 24 hour extension, no questions asked. For all other assignments, no extensions will be given because the class activity depends on your timely completion of the work. If you have major extenuating circumstances, please email me and we can figure something out.