

ENGLISH 108: COLLEGE WRITING AND RESEARCH

Fall 2006

Missouri Western State University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

Section 38: 1:00-1:50 MWF, Murphy 219

The Traveler's Eye

**“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes
but in having new eyes.” Proust**

Instructor: Tom Pankiewicz
Office: Eder 222R
Phone: 816-271-4156
Office Hours: MWF 2:00–3:00, T 10:00-12:00, and by appointment.
E-mail: <mailto:pankiew@mWSC.edu>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

For the specific course objectives for English 108, please visit the English Department web site, <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng108.asp>.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lunsford, Andrea A. *Easy Writer*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006.

Fools Crow and *Ceremony*: Texts required in English 210.

Several notebooks

Bookmark the following web sites:

The OWL at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

Re: Writing site at Bedford/St. Martins: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting/>.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PHILOSOPHY

Over the summer flying home from a trip, I began reading *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton. A few pages into the book I read these lines,

We are inundated with advice on *where* to travel to; we hear little of *why* and *how* we should go—though the art of travel seems naturally to sustain a number of questions neither so simple nor so trivial and whose study might in modest ways contribute to an understanding of what the Greek philosophers beautifully termed *eudaimonia* or human flourishing (9).

These lines caught my attention. They seemed so true. I actively seek places I should visit, but I never invest much thought into why I should travel to a place or how I should prepare myself more than packing clothes and cash.

When I finished this passage, I looked up from the book and began to daydream about Outdoor Semester and teaching English 108. I realized that it is easy to become a parasite-type of traveler. In the Outdoor Semester, Jim Grechus has planned where we are traveling; he has a plan of what we should see, what we should do, what we should experience, even what he hopes we will talk about. To accomplish his plan, he has made the physical arrangements so we can focus on the experience and not worry about such necessities as food and lodging. We can sit back, letting Jim do the work and reserve our thoughts for end-of-semester evaluations. De Botton asks us to think deeper by questioning why we are traveling, how we are preparing ourselves for travel, and in what ways travel leads to an understanding of “human flourishing.” Jim can answer these questions for himself, but he cannot respond for us. These questions are critical for our participation in the Outdoor Semester. The more I thought, the more I became convinced that I should organize this course around the examination of these critical questions.

In Ray Bradbury's novel about censorship and mind control *Fahrenheit 451*, one of the characters explains why he breaks the law to read. First, he explains readers find quality information in books. Books, the character says, have pores, features, details that invigorate the mind and lead to thought. Second, he mentions readers need time to digest the information or need leisure to study what has been read. Third, he states readers must have the freedom to act on what they have learned through the first two actions. On the airliner that day, I knew that that is what I want my English 108 students to do. Outdoor Semester students will learn quality information from two treks, from several academic disciplines, from research, and from experts—geographers, travelers, educators, musicians, and literary scholars. Students will have time—three weeks in the field and a semester of thematically connected classes—to study this information. Finally, students will have the opportunity through writing and research to act on their ideas.

Over the next few weeks, I constructed the course. Here's my plan:

1. Home Journal. In a notebook, write a journal of observations, re-creations, reactions, and thoughts. You will include in the home journal both assigned and free choice entries. Write several entries each day.

The purpose of the journal is to gain fluency in control of language, in observation, and in the comfort of putting ideas on paper.

This is also preparation for the field journal you will keep on both the north and south treks. We will study ways to develop journal entries. We will examine Welch's rhetorical devices in *Fools Crow* for journal ideas. We will read and discuss several of your journal entries in class.

2. Research a site to be visited on the north trek. Select one site from the itinerary of the north trek. Research that site using encyclopedias, books, essays, maps, and other library materials. Be ready to share your research findings while traveling north.

The purpose of this activity is to prepare for the north trek and to become an expert about one stop on this journey. It addresses one of the critical questions: How does one prepare for travel? Because we will share the list of experts prior to departure, I hope it will make each of you feel that you have an important role in the journey.

3. Field Journal, North Trek. Write a field journal of observations, re-creations, reactions, and thoughts. Write several entries each day. Try to write 1000 words each day, capturing the physical journey as well as your reactions to it. Include in this journal observations about geography, activities, music, literature, and, if possible, interviews.

The purpose is to study the North Trek in depth, to respond to the critical questions of how and why we travel and what is meant by human flourishing. I hope your journal will raise numerous questions that you will answer.

4. Travel Article, North Trek. Write an essay about one event, one activity, or one place you experienced on the North Trek. This article must be focused on a thesis, illustrated and supported with descriptive details (your field journal and the journals of others, and interviews will be helpful here) and written for a specific audience. Your topic, by the way, does not have to be on the site you researched.

The purpose of this essay is to focus on one topic and study it in depth. It is also intended as a scholarly essay, using and interpreting such sources as journals and interviews as well as the areas of the Outdoor Semester community—geography, music, literature, outdoor education and Native American studies. It should help respond to the critical questions of how and why we travel and what is meant by human flourishing.

5. Annotated Bibliography. Select one place or activity that will be experienced on the south trek. Research that topic using encyclopedias, books, essays, maps, and other library materials. Prepare an annotated bibliography of your research, using MLA documentation.

The purpose of this activity is to prepare for the south trek and to become an expert of sorts about one stop on this journey. It addresses the critical questions: How does one prepare for travel and why do we travel? This bibliography should identify basic research texts to review as well as providing a forum for summary and reflection. The Annotated Bibliography will be collected, printed and distributed to all of the travelers.

6. Field Journal, South Trek. See above.

7. Travel Article, South Trek. In addition to the details mentioned above, this essay will be supported with several documented sources.

8. Research Argument. Synthesize your experience in Outdoor Semester in a documented essay. The essay should be at least 10 pages in length and focused on an argumentative topic generated by the Outdoor Semester.

This essay may argue your response to one of the critical questions of how and why we travel and what is meant by human flourishing. This essay may research one of the questions raised during your travel and present your ideas in the form of an argument. This essay may be an argumentative version of one of the travel articles.

I realize that this is the most unclear or general assignment. That is due to my reluctance to suggest a topic. For example, if I would have written that you must argue for or against the Outdoor Semester in a research essay written for an audience of university administrators, the essay assignment would be clear. I do not wish to offer such a hand out. I know in an ideal class you would select your research topic early in the semester and research it throughout the treks and writing. That is my dream, but I know how hard that is to accomplish.

During this unit, we will also examine how Silko uses synthesis in the development of *Ceremony*.

I know that a syllabus should be concise. I also know that if I want you to focus your attention on these critical questions, I need to provide the background of my thinking. I also want you to notice that this course is constructed on a sequence of assignments, not an isolated series of writing activities.

Now, it is on to the basic policies that must be included in a syllabus.

Policies:

Attendance Policy:

In order to improve student learning and to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100-level courses. A student will be given an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, provided

the student gives prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event; however, there are no other excused absences, exceptions or “make-ups” for this attendance requirement. *Furthermore, the maximum number of absences allowed before the midterm report, October 18, for this class is five (5).* Thus, when you have six (6) you will be reported to the Registrar’s Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class. The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate. *If you miss seven class periods, you will receive an F in the class.* If you know of any circumstances likely to make this policy difficult for you this semester, you may wish to consult with your advisor to review your options.

Late Work:

If you miss a class session, you are responsible for all material covered and assignments given during your absence. All out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Late in-class writing assignments will not be accepted.

Late essays will not be accepted unless you receive permission at least one day before the due date. If you are facing difficulties in completing a task paper, schedule a conference (leaving a message on my answering machine or sending me an e-mail are insufficient) to discuss the problems with me. During our conference, we will set a new deadline.

Grading Policy:

The components of your grade in the course are:

- Home Journal and Research – 10%
- Field Journal, North – 10%
- Travel Essay, North – 10%
- Annotated Bibliography – 10%
- Field Journal, South – 15%
- Travel Essay, South – 15%
- Research Essay – 30%

Student Disability:

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expressions of abilities should contact Missouri Western's special needs coordinator, Michael Ritter, for possible certification of special needs and expert recommendations for assistance. You should also contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another’s work, falsifying documents or academic records or any other fraudulent classroom activity. You will receive a grade of F (0 points) for any paper/ assignment/exam that shows evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism and forfeit the opportunity to revise. You have the burden of proving that a paper showing evidence of cheating or plagiarism has in fact been written by you. You should keep thorough evidence of your writing processes for all papers so that you can meet this burden of proof. Violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or the designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report Forms. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental website and refer to the 2006-07 Student Handbook and calendar on page 21 for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>.

Miscellaneous:

Civility and Cooperation -- Missouri Western requires all students to help us maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. Therefore, silence your cell phones before class begins. All students will treat their classmates, teachers, and student assistants with civility and respect, both inside and outside the classroom. Students who violate this policy may, among other penalties, be counted absent and asked to leave. You should review your Missouri Western student handbook for further information.

Essay Format -- Papers must be word-processed, double-spaced and use 12-point Times New Roman. Be sure to save each assignment on the university’s “P” drive, or a computer disk or jump drive, and keep a hard copy of each assignment for yourself.

Place your name, professor’s name, course, date, and draft number in the upper left hand corner. Center the title.

Center for Academic Support -- In addition to conferences, you may find help with your writing at the Center for Academic Support. There is no cost to students for using these services. I encourage you to make use of these services throughout this course.

Personal note -- I want to emphasize that I am here to help. Please feel free to come see me if you have *any* problems or questions. You can make an appointment to conference about any paper or homework assignment, to discuss your progress in class, to clarify or question something that was discussed or done in class, etc. Communication is very important between an instructor and his students and, as a result, I will make myself available to you for any reason.

