



LT/CW 358 WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW: INTRODUCTION TO IMMERSION WRITING
IES Abroad Dublin

DESCRIPTION:

Over twelve weekly sessions, this course will facilitate student engagement with a genre of writing that merges the boundaries between literary art and research nonfiction. Creative nonfiction is the writing of the real. Although it employs many of the same literary devices as fiction, creative nonfiction allows the writer to engage with moments and events from real life, and in so doing, to seek a new understanding of these experiences. In this module we will explore creative nonfiction through immersion writing: an approach that encourages exploration of both the world around and the world within. A central facet of immersion writing is the use of the self as a tool of discovery to produce work that is revelatory but that is not solely about the self. As part of their study abroad experience, students will experiment with approaches such as Travel Writing, Journalism and Memoir, with authenticity and inventiveness serving as keystones in the process.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Students attend a weekly 2.5-hour session. The sessions are intended to encourage participative engagement with texts and to foster writing skills through in-class writing and workshop exercises.

Guest speakers such as travel writers, journalists and other creative nonfiction practitioners will complement and augment the students' experience of this course.

Students will receive a general introduction to each of the three genres of creative nonfiction. We will consider some of the key issues associated with each (see weekly class schedule) and explore a variety of approaches to the written forms:

Travel Writing: Place, Self and Experience

1. 'Travelogue'

This sub-genre of travel writing includes the writer's perceptions, impressions and comments on the travel experience in a way that engages the reader as an 'armchair traveller'.

2. 'Journeys of (Self)Discovery' - Travel Writing as Personal essay

This is a form of essay that explores how exposure to an unfamiliar environment and/or the experience of travel reveals new aspects of the self or brings new perspectives to familiar or unexplored questions.

Journalism: Experience, Assess, Critique

1. Review

All students will visit, experience and write a critical assessment of an exhibition, festival or other cultural event (this does not include theatre or film).

Or

2. Immersion Feature

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Students will write an immersion feature piece on a topic which piques their interest. Students should select their own topics which will be discussed in class in advance of the assignment due date.

Memoir or Personal Essay: Recall, Reflect, Write

1. Students will write a personal narrative based on a significant life experience in the style of memoir.

Or

2. Students will write a personal essay that uses their lived experience that illustrates a wider question or thesis

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- **Short Writing Assignments** - 40%
- **Portfolio Work** – 50%
- **Attendance and Participation** – 10%

Short Writing Assignments

Students submit **six** 500-word assignments in response to a specific prompt set by the course instructor. This work will be graded at regular intervals. All written work is submitted via Moodle.

Portfolio Work

Students submit a total of **three** portfolio pieces: one from the Travel Writing section (Travelogue) of the course and one each from Journalism (Review or Immersion Feature) and Memoir/Personal Essay (Linear Narrative or Memory Fragments). The word length for the Travelogue (10%), Review or Immersion Feature (10%) and Memoir Narrative or Segmented Essay (10%) is 1,000 - 1,200 words, increasing to 2,000 - 2,200 for the Personal Essay (20%).

Students will submit drafts of their portfolio pieces and will receive feedback from the course instructor. Students will also have the opportunity to have selected items of work read and discussed in class, allowing them to revise their portfolio pieces for final submission and grading at the end of the semester.

Please see assignment schedule for submission deadlines for all written work.

Reading:

Students are required to study readings for discussion in class each week. Material will be distributed in class the preceding week and also made available on Moodle. As these readings form the basis for class discussion, good preparation is essential for effective class participation. Continuous evidence of lack of preparation will be reflected in the participation component of the Attendance and Participation grade.

Attendance and Participation

The ambition in including a participation component is to facilitate students learning from each other and to give them the opportunity to practice and develop listening, speaking, and persuasive skills.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize that creative nonfiction encompasses a variety of genres and approaches
- Understand the potential of applying the tools of fiction to real life experiences and events
- Write candidly and clearly about personal experience and their experience of the world around them
- Appreciate and articulate how immersion writing can serve as a means of responding to and making sense of a new culture
- Analyze and critique their own work and the work of others in a proactive context
- Remain mindful of the need to re-imagine aesthetic possibilities rather than merely revise texts
- Present their work in a professional manner

ATTENDANCE POLICY:



IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor, and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction. Class attendance, including course-related excursions, is mandatory.

Excused Absence: Students can be excused from class in the case of a documented medical issue, family emergency or appointment at INIS.

Unexcused Absence: All other absences from class are unexcused e.g. travel/travel delays, family and friends visiting. Each unexcused absence will result in a 3% deduction from final grade.

Pattern of Absence: If a student shows a pattern of absences or tardiness, they will be subject to an Academic Review including, but not limited to, a letter sent to their school, a probationary period, and/or exclusion from the programme.

Missed Class Content: In the case of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student to source and review all content covered in that class (e.g. through Moodle, from class peers etc.)

Missed Assessment: Absence on the date of scheduled assessments does not entitle the students to a rescheduling of these assessments.

Punctuality: Students are expected to be on time for all classes, a pattern of late attendance will negatively affect participation grade.

Students must email the lecturer (professor) before class begins to report an absence.

Participating in course-related fieldtrips is required.

To apply for an excused absence:

1. Report your absence to your lecturer before class begins.
2. If you are absent due to illness or an INIS appointment, submit documentation to the Academic Coordinator, who can excuse the absence on your behalf.
3. Failure to communicate with your lecturer and/or failure to provide supporting documentation may result in an unexcused absence.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 1	Exploring the Genre: Purpose and Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the course syllabus• Introduction to Travel Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected Travel Essay from Synge, J.M. <i>Travelling Ireland: Essays 1898-1908</i>, ed. Nicholas Grene. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2009;• 'Introduction to Immersion Writing' in Hemley, Robin. <i>A Field Guide for Immersion Writing: Memoir, Journalism, and Travel</i>. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012. Death of a Fisherman by Caelainn Hogan (<i>The Dublin Review</i>)
Session 2	'The Strange Happiness of Being Abroad': Introduction to Travelogue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to travelogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Memory of War' from <i>The Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe</i> by Colm Tóibín. London: Picador, 2001; Chapter 10, 'Writing Travel' from <i>The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing</i> by Tim Youngs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Selected articles in <i>The New York Times</i> and <i>Harper's</i>.

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 3	Travel Writing - Gender and Sexuality (followed by Guest Speaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and Travel Writing Travel and Sexuality 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'J.J. Smythe's' in <i>Whoredom in Kimmage: Irish Women Coming of Age</i> by Rosemary Mahoney. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. 'Ceasefire Babies' by Lyra McKee (Mosaic, 2016) (Additional readings may be nominated by the guest speaker)
Session 4	Travel as Quest or Inner Journey (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel and self-exploration Approaches to writing a travel personal essay 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Validate Me?' by John Butler'; 'F is for Fone' by Claire Kilroy from <i>Winter Papers Vol. 1</i>, eds. Kevin Barry and Olivia Smith. Roscommon: Curlew Editions, 2015. Selected articles by Roisin Kiberd, Emma Dabiri and others.
Session 5	Journalism: Function and Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journalism and its components Immersion Journalism 1 (key components) 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract from 'Immersion Journalism' in <i>A Field Guide for Immersion Writing</i> by Robin Hemley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012; selected feature pieces by Doirean Ní Ghríofa and Conor Pope Reading and discussion of selected student travelogues
Session 6	Journalism: Reviews and Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches to Writing Reviews 1 (key components) 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract on writing reviews from <i>Writing for Journalists</i> by Hicks, Wynford with Sally Adams, Harriett Gilbert, Tim Holmes and Jane Bentley. <i>Writing for Journalists</i> (3rd edition). London: Routledge, 2016; selected contemporary reviews including a feature and review about Sinéad O'Shea's 'A Mother Brings Her Son To Be Shot' Reading and discussion of selected student travelogues
Session 7	Journalism: Reviews and Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersion Journalism 2 (selecting and approaching the topic) Writing Reviews 2 (Guest Speaker topic) 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest Speaker: Journalist (Readings will be nominated by the guest speaker)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 8	Quest or Inner Journey (2): The Personal Essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first half of this session will focus on how to approach writing a personal essay. 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract from <i>The Situation and the Story: the Art of Personal Narrative</i> by Vivian Gornick. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. 'The Personal Essay: A Form of Discovery' by Joseph Epstein in <i>The Norton Book of Personal Essays</i>. NY: W.W. Norton, 1997. Selected articles by Philip O'Ceallaigh and Hugo Hamilton. Reading and discussion of selected student journalism pieces
Session 9	Notions of the Self: Immersion Memoir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Memoir Memoir and Autobiography 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 (pp. 11- 20) of 'Immersion Memoir' in <i>A Field Guide to Immersion Writing</i> by Robin Hemley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012; Selected writing by Emilie Pine, Sinéad Gleeson and Edna O'Brien Reading and discussion of selected student personal essays
Session 10	Memoir: Alternative Approaches (followed by Guest Speaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memory Fragments Hybrid forms of Life Writing Guest Speaker: Life Writer/Essayist 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Some Notes on Names and Deeds' by Kevin Barrv. <i>The Stinging Fly: in the Wake of the Rising</i>. 33.2 2016. ; Introduction and Chapter 1 of <i>Girls will be Girls</i> by Emer O'Toole London: Orion, 2015.
Session 11	Memoir and Truthfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues of honesty and authenticity in non-fiction 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gay Talese's "ethical mess": Fact-checking lapse raises old questions about New Journalism; Joan Didion's "Sentimental Journeys"; Fintan O'Toole 'Trial Runs for Fascism' Reading and discussion of selected student personal essays
Session 12	Reading and Discussion of Nominated Portfolio pieces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will nominate one of their draft portfolio pieces to be work-shopped in class. 	<i>Required Readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required Readings: Gay Talese's "ethical mess": Fact-checking lapse raises old questions about New Journalism; Joan Didion's "Sentimental Journeys"; Fintan O'Toole 'Trial Runs for Fascism' Reading and discussion of selected student personal essays

SCHEDULE FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Week	Work Due
1	Short Writing Assignment 1
2	Short Writing Assignment 2
3	Short Writing Assignment 3
4	Portfolio 1 Travelogue
5	Short Writing Assignment 4
6	Portfolio 2 Journalism Feature or Review
7	Short Writing Assignment 5
8	Short Writing Assignment 6
9	Portfolio Memoir or Essay
10	Editing Portfolio pieces
11	Editing Portfolio pieces
12	Completed Portfolio pieces

FINAL PORTFOLIO WORK DUE WEEK 12

REQUIRED READINGS:

Recommended readings will be available on Moodle. Copies of required reading will be provided in both hard copy format and made available on Moodle (it may not be possible to make all the journalism items available on Moodle as well as in hard copy).

- Abbott, H. Porter. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Banville, John. *Time Pieces: A Dublin Memoir*. Dublin: Hachette Books, 2016.
- Barry, Kevin. 'Some Notes on Names and Deeds'. *The Stinging Fly: in the Wake of the Rising*. 33.2, 2016.
- Brown, Terence. *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004.
- Butler, John. 'Validate Me?' *Winter Papers* Vol 1, eds. Kevin Barry and Olivia Smith. Roscommon: Curlew Editions, 2015.
- Crofts, Andrew. *Writing Handbooks: Ghostwriting*. London: A & C Black, 2004.
- de Nie, Michael and Karen Steele, eds. *Ireland and the New Journalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Fleming, Carole, Emma Hemmingway, Gillian Moore and Dave Welford. *Introduction to Journalism*. London: Sage, 2006.
- Fleming, Marie with Sue Leonard. *An Act of Love*. Dublin: Hachette Books, 2014.
- Gornick, Vivian. *The Situation and the Story: the Art of Personal Narrative*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

- Gutkind, Lee. *You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide to Writing Creative Nonfiction – From Memoir to Literary Journalism and Everything in Between*. New York City: De Capo Press, 2012.
- Gébler, Carlo. 'The Graduate Society'. *Confessions of a Catastrophist*. Derry: Lagan Press, 2015.
- Hamilton, Hugo. *The Speckled People*. London: Fourth Estate, 2003.
- Healy, Dermot. *The Bend for Home*. New York City: Random House, 2012.
- Hemley, Robin. *A Field Guide for Immersion Writing: Memoir, Journalism, and Travel*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.
- Hicks, Wynford with Sally Adams, Harriett Gilbert, Tim Holmes and Jane Bentley. *Writing for Journalists* (3rd edition). London: Routledge, 2016.
- Kilroy, Claire. 'F is for Fone'. *Winter Papers Vol 1*, eds. Kevin Barry and Olivia Smith. Roscommon: Curlew Editions, 2015.
- Fleming, Marie (with Sue Leonard). *An Act of Love. One Woman's Remarkable Life Story and Her Fight for the Right to Die with Dignity*. Dublin: Hachette Books, 2014.
- Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction*. London: Vintage, 2011.
- MacNeice, Louis. 'Letter to Graham and Anne Shephard'. W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, *Letters from Iceland*. London: Faber & Faber, 1937.
- Magan, Manchán. *Angels and Rabies: A Journey through the Americas*. Dingle: Brandon, 2006
- ——. *Manchán's Travels: A Journey through India*. Dingle: Brandon, 2007.
- Maher, Mary, ed. *How Far We Have Travelled: The Voice of Mary Holland*. Dublin: Townhouse, 2004.
- Mahoney, Rosemary. *Whoredom in Kimmage: Irish Women Coming of Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- McGahern, John. *Memoir*. London: Faber & Faber, 2006.
- O'Brien, Edna. *The Country Girl: A Memoir*. London: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- O'Faolain, Nuala. *A Radiant Life: The Selected Journalism of Nuala O'Faolain*. New York City: Harry N. Abrams, 2011.
- O'Faolain, Nuala. *Are You Somebody: The Accidental Memoir of a Dublin Woman*. New York City: Holt Paperbacks, 2009.
- O'Faolain, Sean. *An Irish Journey*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947.
- O'Toole, Emer. *Girls will be Girls*. London: Orion, 2015.
- Pine, Emilie. *Notes to Self*. Dublin: Tramp Press, 2018.
- Sampson, Denis. *A Migrant Heart*. Montreal: Linda Leith Publishing, 2014.
- Synge, J.M. *Travelling Ireland: Essays 1898-1908*, ed. Nicholas Grene. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2009.
- Tóibín, Colm. 'Memory of War' from *The Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe*. London: Picador, 2001.
- Youngs, Tim. *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013
- Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze* (2nd edition). London: Sage, 2002.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

RECOMMENDED ONLINE, ARCHIVE, AND EXHIBITION RESOURCES:

- The Irish Times <http://www.irishtimes.com/>
- <http://www.irishtimes.com/>
- The Irish Independent <http://www.independent.ie/>
- <http://www.independent.ie/>
- The Irish Examiner
- Radio Telefis na hEireann: Ireland's national public-service media organization
- National Archives of Ireland
- National Print Museum
- National Library of Ireland <http://www.nationalprintmuseum.ie/>
- <http://www.nationalprintmuseum.ie/>
- Irish Film Institute & Irish Film Archive.