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. Practitioners explore both the world around them and the world within. 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. As part of their study abroad experience, students will experiment with approaches such as Travel Writing, Immersion Journalism, and Immersion Memoir, with authenticity and inventiveness serving as keystones in the process.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Students will engage with weekly topic areas through short presentations, guided discussion, group work, and research and writing exercises that will focus on experimentation, craft and the nurture of individual style. Students will also be introduced to some classics of Irish creative non-fiction.
- Guest speakers such as travel writers, and journalists and other creative non-fiction practitioners, field trips to sites of cultural, historical, and artistic significance, attendance at public readings, exhibitions, and film screenings will complement and augment the students' experience of this course.
- Moodle will be used to facilitate student engagement with primary and secondary resources.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Attendance – 10%
- Short Writing Assignments – 40%
- Portfolio Work – 50%

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. A set of simple guidelines will be introduced at the start of Session 1. These guidelines will be discussed in detail so that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Below is an outline of these guidelines:
- **Outstanding Participant:** Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas are consistently substantive and insightful, and persuasively presented. Absence would significantly diminish the quality of class discussion.
- **Good Participant:** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and insightful, and often persuasively presented. Absence would diminish quality of class discussion.
- **Adequate Participant:** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas are sometimes substantive and insightful, but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Absence would diminish quality of class discussion.
- **Non-Participant:** Little or no contribution in class. Subsequently, there is limited basis for evaluation. Absence would not affect the quality of class discussion.
- **Unsatisfactory Participant:** Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide little insight, and are rarely constructive. Absence would improve the quality of class discussion.

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
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: Recall, Reflect, Write

1. Students will write a personal narrative based on a significant life experience.

Or

2. Students will explore how to write linked memory fragments or vignettes from their lives which may have no obvious significance, but which have remained in the memory.

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 instruction and the lecture/discussion format, regular class attendance is mandatory. Any missed class, without a legitimate reason will be reflected in the final grade. A legitimate reason would include documented illness or family bereavement. Travel, (including travel delays) is not a legitimate reason.

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<th>Session</th>
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| Week 1  | Exploring the Genre: Purpose and Practice  
Introduction to the course syllabus  
Introduction to Travel Writing | • Selected Travel Essay from Synge, J.M.  
• Introduction: ‘An Introduction to Immersion Writing’ pp 1 – 10 in Hemley, Robin. **A Field Guide for Immersion Writing: Memoir, Journalism, and Travel.** |
| Week 2  | ‘The Strange Happiness of Being Abroad’:  
Introduction to Travelogue | • ‘Letter to Graham and Anne Shephard’ by Louis MacNeice from W.H. Auden and Louis |
### Approaches to travelogue


### Week 3

**Travel Writing - Gender and Sexuality (followed by Guest Speaker)**

- Women and Travel Writing
- Travel and Sexuality


### Week 4

**Travel as Quest or Inner Journey (1)**

- Travel and self-exploration

- Approaches to writing a travel personal essay


### Week 5

**Journalism: Function and Practice**

- Journalism and its components

- Immersion Journalism 1 (key components)


- Reading and discussion of selected student travelogues

### Week 6

**Journalism: Reviews and Features**

- Approaches to Writing Reviews 1 (key components)


- Selected contemporary reviews

- Reading and discussion of selected student travelogues

### Week 7

**Immersion Journalism: Guest Speaker**

- Readings will be nominated by the guest speaker

### Week 8

**Travel as Quest or Inner Journey (2): The Personal (Travel) Essay**

- The first half of this session will focus on how to approach writing a (travel) personal essay.


- Reading and discussion of selected student journalism pieces
| Week 9 | Notions of the Self: Immersion Memoir  
Introduction to Memoir  
Memoir and Autobiography | • Chapter 1 (pp. 11-20) of ‘Immersion Memoir’ in *A Field Guide to Immersion Writing* by Robin Hemley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012  
• Reading and discussion of selected student personal essays |
|---|---|
| Week 10 | Memoir: Alternative Approaches (followed by Guest Speaker)  
Memory Fragments  
• Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Girls will be Girls* by Emer O’Toole. London: Orion, 2015.  
• Chapter 3 (pp. 21-33) in *Ghostwriting* by Andrew Crofts  
• Chapter One of *An Act of Love* by Marie Fleming (with Sue Leonard) |
| Week 11 | Memoir and Truthfulness  
• Reading and discussion of selected student personal essays |
| Week 12 | Reading and Discussion of Nominated Portfolio pieces  
Students will nominate one of their draft portfolio pieces to be work-shopped in class. | |

**REQUIRED READINGS:**


RECOMMENDED ONLINE, ARCHIVE, AND EXHIBITION RESOURCES:
• National Archives of Ireland
• National Print Museum
• National Library of Ireland
• Irish Film Institute & Irish Film Archive
• The Irish Times
• The Irish Independent
• The Irish Examiner
• Radio Telefis nhEireann: Ireland’s national public-service media organisation