

LIBA 102: Travel as a Method of Inquiry

Section 48 TR 1-2:15 Hume 113

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Course Description

When we think of “research,” we usually imagine ourselves shuttered away in a library, huddled over a computer screen, or working long hours in a lab. This course introduces another way of research: travel. We often travel for pleasure or work, but we rarely think of travel as a means to scratch an intellectual itch. Yet travel can be an integral part of the research experience—if we take seeing with our own eyes or gaining first-hand experience as a serious way of learning.

We will explore how travel can be used as a research tool—a “**method of inquiry**”—both for specific purposes (to pursue a clearly-defined “research project”) and as a broader way to enhance your liberal arts education (for example, through study abroad opportunities). We will do this in three ways:

- 1) You will learn how others have used travel as a way to explore a research question by reading two “travelogues” (a narrative of someone’s travels). You will also have a chance to practice travel writing, using Oxford as a reference point.
- 2) You will learn about study abroad opportunities available through Ole Miss and develop a plan to integrate one program into your academic career.
- 3) You will work on an independent research project on a topic of **YOUR** choice. You will develop a research question, carry out independent (but guided) research, and outline a research proposal that integrates travel as a key component.

LIBA 102 Goals & Objectives

LIBA 102 is designed to develop undergraduate student’s research, writing, and critical thinking skills. In this course, we will work on the following skills or benchmarks:

- Firm grasp of the mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) of college writing.
- Properly cite references and format a bibliographic reference list using Chicago style.
- Identify “scholarly” sources and distinguish between credible and less-than-credible sources of information.
- Develop a good research question.
- Use the library effectively.
- Familiar with study abroad opportunities at Ole Miss.
- Read texts “critically” (for ideas and structure).
- Give a research presentation to a peer audience.
- Comfortable with new technologies and different kinds of “texts.”

We will work on the above skills and benchmarks in various assignments, both in and outside of class throughout the semester.

Course Texts

The following books are *required* for this course:

Ballenger, Bruce. 2009. *The Curious Researcher*, 6th Edition. New York: Longman.

Larkin, Emma. 2006. *Finding George Orwell in Burma*. New York: Penguin.

Symmes, Patrick. 2000. *Chasing Che: A Motorcycle Journey in Search of the Guevara Legend*. New York: Vintage.

Additional *required* readings (articles, book chapters, and films) are posted online or available on course reserve at the University Library and listed (by author, title) in the course schedule.

General Course Requirements

Below is a summary of the course requirements:

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Class Participation | 14% |
| Online Portfolio | 10% |
| Writing Assignments (x7) | 49% |
| Peer Review | 7% |
| Research Proposal | 20% |
| Research Presentation | 10% |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | 100% |

Attendance Policy. You are expected to arrive on time and stay until class is over. If you will miss class or arrive late/leave early, you must notify me ***before*** class. You are allowed ***THREE*** “personal day” absences (for any purpose, including health or family emergencies).¹ Additional absences result in an automatic 5% reduction from the final semester grade. Also, in accordance to the LIBA 102 university-wide guidelines, ***if you miss more than six classes, you will automatically receive an “F” for the course.***

Participation. Because this is a seminar, active, engaging, and meaningful class participation is essential. I expect everyone to complete readings ***before*** the class for which they are assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them. To assist you with the readings, I will post reading guides online to help guide your reading. Participation accounts for a significant portion of the semester grade (14%). Keep in mind that ***attendance is NOT the same thing as participation.*** Active, meaningful participation involves answering questions that I pose to the class, raising interesting or relevant ideas for discussion, and asking good questions about material you do not understand.

Online Writing Portfolio

You will produce an *ONLINE* portfolio that shows the progressive development of your writing, research, and critical thinking skills in the form of a personal blog. The blog allows you to include multimedia, and some writing assignments will require you to include photographs. You will also post your research presentation to your class blog.

By the second week of class, you should have a personal blog set up for this class. Two simple blogging tools are **Posterous** (<http://posterous.com>) and **Tumblr** (<http://tumblr.com>). Both are free, flexible, and easy to set up.

¹ Special consideration will be given under extraordinary circumstances (such as a serious, prolonged illness). But the best defense against absence penalties for unforeseen events is to not miss classes unnecessarily.

Writing Assignments. As a key component of your writing portfolio, you will write seven 500-600 word essays (about two pages) using a “five-paragraph essay” format. Good writing is developed within constraints. The **five-paragraph essay** contains the following parts: an introductory paragraph, three distinct “body” paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. I will provide an overview of this format in the first week of class, as well as specific guidelines (or “prompts”) for each individual assignment. Each short essay is worth 7% of your semester grade; together all writing assignments are worth almost half (49%) of your semester grade.

In addition to submitting your assignments in class, your essays **must be posted to your class blog before class** on the day they are due. In addition to grading your essays, I will select the best one(s) to highlight on my own blog. The purpose of this is to help you consider a broader audience. I also encourage you to share your blog posts with your friends and family.

Other Portfolio Components. You are encouraged to post additional materials to your class blog, so long as these are relevant to the class. Examples include brief reflections on class readings, updates on the progress of your research project, or insights from your transition to college. These additional posts will count towards your online participation grade, which is worth 10% of the semester grade.

Semester Research Project

Each student will develop a research project on a topic of his/her own choice. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate the various research, critical thinking, and writing skills you develop throughout the semester. Although you are free to pursue to any topic, you must incorporate travel as a research strategy. Because research is a multi-step process, your semester research project involves a number of interrelated components, including several of the short essay assignments.

Peer Review. You will take part in a peer review process meant to help strengthen your final research proposal. A first draft of your research proposal is due **April 13**. I will assign each of you a peer review partner. You and your peer review partner will exchange copy of your drafts and each of you will be responsible to providing peer comments (**April 20**) to the other. I will provide peer review worksheets to help guide you. While peer review is not graded, failure to participate in the peer review process (either by failing to submit a rough draft or failing to provide peer comments) will result in a 5% reduction in your final grade.

Research Presentation. You will give a brief presentation based on your research project in front of the class. The presentation must be both informative and engaging, and must fit a specific format: You will use PowerPoint (or another presentation software) to develop a slideshow with 7-10 slides that must be presented in under ten minutes. The research presentation is worth 10% of the semester grade, and will be scheduled during the last week of the semester.

Research Proposal. You will write a research proposal, which will serve as the capstone for the course. A research *proposal* is like a research *paper*: Both use “*scholarly*” sources as the foundation. Unlike a traditional research *paper*, however, a *proposal* outlines *future* research. Because our course is about *travel as a method of inquiry*, you must structure your research proposal around a **clearly defined research question that requires TRAVEL as a key component**. Using our readings as an inspiration, develop a topic you would like to explore (the life of a famous historical figure, a particular cultural setting, a historical controversy, etc.) and develop a concrete, detailed proposal for how YOU would study this by “going there” in person. We will work on this proposal throughout the second half of the semester.

The research proposal must be 1,200-1,500 words (about 5-7 pages), not counting the title page and bibliography. References and citations should follow **Chicago citation style** conventions (we will cover this in class). The research paper is worth 20% of the semester grade and is due on **April 30**, the Friday before final exams week.

Additional Issues & Class Rules

I do not allow the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices in class. The same goes for reading newspapers, sleeping, or working on materials for another course. Such behavior disrespects me and other students. If you are unable to actively attend class and participate, do not attend class.

Communication. Email has become the most common way for students and faculty to communicate outside of class. I will attempt to answer your messages promptly, but note that emails sent *after* 6 pm will not be answered until *after* 8 am the following day. Additionally, you should remember to keep your messages “professional” and respectful (e.g., use proper salutations, such as “Professor/Dr. Centellas”). Check your university account (*name@olemiss.edu*) frequently. I will use that address when sending important messages related to the course.

Special Accommodations. If you have a learning disability or other documented issues, please see me immediately to make appropriate arrangements to help you meet the course requirements.

Academic Integrity. You must follow the University of Mississippi’s Academic Discipline Policy. All student work is expected to be original; **plagiarism** (in any form) will not be tolerated. Students are also expected to behave in a respectful manner toward both the professor and other students. Violations will be subject to disciplinary action according to University policy, as specified in the University *M Book*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading/Assignments |
|--------|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | R 1/21 | Introduction | Hand out syllabus and go over course requirements |
| Week 2 | T 1/26 | Traveling to learn about sports | <i>Dhani Tackles the Globe</i> , "Ireland" |
| | R 1/28 | Traveling to learn about food | <i>Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations</i> , "Korea" |
| Week 3 | T 2/2 | Rethinking research writing | Ballenger, Introduction <i>Chasing Che</i> , Introduction (pp. xv-xviii) Rohter, "Che Today?" Essay 1: Reflection on Dhani Jones in Ireland <i>or</i> Anthony Bourdain in Korea |
| | R 2/4 | Che Guevara | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters. 1-2 (pp. 3-51) |
| Week 4 | T 2/9 | Before you begin your journey (meet in the library) | Ballenger, Ch. 1 Select a library book to help you start Essay 2: What would you like to learn about? |
| | R 2/11 | Che Guevara (cont.) | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters. 3-4 (pp. 52-102) |
| Week 5 | T 2/16 | Becoming an "academic traveler" (meet in Study Abroad office) | Study Abroad, "Go Beyond the Grove" |
| | R 2/18 | Che Guevara (cont.) | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters. 5-7 (pp. 103-160) |
| Week 6 | T 2/23 | Uncovering the past (meet at James Meredith statue) | JFK Library & Museum, "Integrating Ole Miss" NPR, "Ole Miss, 40 Years Later" Essay 3: Where would you like to study abroad? |
| | R 2/25 | Che Guevara (cont.) | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters 8-9 (pp. 161-219) |
| Week 7 | T 3/2 | Narrowing your research topic (meet in the library) | Ballenger, Chapter 2 (pp. xx-xx) Select two "scholarly" articles on your topic Essay 4: Civil rights and Ole Miss |
| | R 3/4 | Che Guevara (cont.) | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters 10-11 (pp. 220-255) |
| Week 8 | T 3/9 | | Ballenger, Chapter 3 (pp. xxx-xxx) Brief in-class research presentation Essay 5: What do you know so far? |
| | R 3/11 | Che Guevara (cont.) | <i>Chasing Che</i> , Chapters 12-13 & Epilogue (pp. 256-302) |

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| 3/14-3/20 *** SPRING BREAK - NO CLASSES *** | | | |
| Week 9 | T 3/23 | Working with references | Ballenger, Chapter 4 |
| | R 3/25 | In search of George Orwell | <i>Finding George Orwell</i> , Prologue & Acknowledgements (pp. 1-6; 291-294) Orwell, "Why I Write" & "Shooting an Elephant" |
| Week 10 | T 3/30 | Finding Faulkner in Oxford (meet at Rowan Oak) | Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" East, "Oxford-In-Yoknapatawpha." Essay 6: Bibliographic essay |
| | R 4/1 | George Orwell (cont.) | <i>Finding George Orwell</i> , Chapters 1-2 (pp. 7-118) |
| Week 11 | T 4/6 | Starting to put the pieces together | Ballenger, Chapter 3 Bring your research materials to class Essay 7: Where did you find Faulkner? |
| | R 4/8 | George Orwell (cont.) | <i>Finding George Orwell</i> , Chapter 3-4 (pp. 119-230) |
| Week 12 | T 4/13 | Preparing to revise the draft (meet at Writing Center) | Ballenger, Chapter 5 Bring draft of research paper to class |
| | R 4/15 | George Orwell (cont.) | <i>Finding George Orwell</i> , Chapter 5 (pp. 231-286) |
| Week 13 | T 4/20 | Working with revisions | Peer review comments due |
| | R 4/22 | Avoiding "Death by PowerPoint" (meet in computer lab) | Work on class presentations Kapterev, "Death by PowerPoint" |
| Week 14 | T 4/27 | | In class research presentations |
| | R 4/29 | | In class research presentations |
| 5/2-5/8 *** FINALS WEEK - NO CLASSES *** | | | |

Additional Required Readings

These additional *required* texts are available online through the course website. They should be approached with the same attention as assigned textbooks.

East, Charles. 1998. "Oxford-In-Yoknapatawpha." *Virginia Quarterly Review* Summer: 475-489.
<http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1998/summer/east-oxford-in-yoknapatawpha>

Faulkner, William. 1930. "A Rose for Emily."
<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb05/workshops/fiction/faulkner1.asp>

John F. Kennedy Library and Museum. 2002. "Integrating Ole Miss: A Civil Rights Milestone."
<http://www.jfklibrary.org/meredith>

Kapterev, Alexei. "Death by PowerPoint (and how to avoid it)." <http://www.career-service.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/99000014/Materialien/Death-by-Powerpoint.pdf>

National Public Radio. 2002. "Ole Miss, 40 Years Later." NPR, September 29–October 1.
<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/olemiss>

Orwell, George. 1936. "Shooting An Elephant." <http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/887>

-----, 1946. "Why I Write." <http://www.readprint.com/work-1259/George-Orwell>

Rohter, Larry. 2004. "Che Today? More Easy Rider Than Revolutionary." *New York Times*, May 26. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/world/letter-from-the-americas-che-today-more-easy-rider-than-revolutionary.html>

University of Mississippi. 2008. "Go Beyond the Grove." University of Mississippi, Study Abroad Office. http://outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad