

## UWP 110 – Travel Writing

This is a very preliminary DRAFT but it will give you a good sense of the course. If you have questions please contact me at [amclarke@ucdavis.edu](mailto:amclarke@ucdavis.edu)

UWP 110 focuses on writing engaging personal narrative generated around your experiences in Dublin. It leverages what you learn in the Irish Culture course and allows you to reflect on your own experiences of the city or of your travel outside Dublin. It requires 4500 words of graded writing.

While we do some informal work on travel guide writing, our focus is on the creative non-fiction genre of the travel essay. Most of the readings that you are assigned are in this mode.

If you are not “a writer,” please don’t lose too much sleep about how you will do in this course compared to those who plan a writing-centered life. My goal is always for everyone to succeed. The skills you will use in this class as those that apply to all writing – analysis, detail, control of word/sentence/form, attention to audience, development of voice, etc. It should be both fun and useful.

**110 (Travel Writing)** is loosely connected with the Irish Culture class (taught by Irish faculty).

### General Policies

#### Attendance

You must make every effort to attend every class session. Absences can your work and repeated absences may lead to being dismissed from the program. If you choose to follow the grading contract, more than one absence will break the contract.

#### Draft Workshops

Plan to do a lot of workshops. Participation in the assigned draft workshops for each essay is required. To get complete credit for workshops, you must come to the workshop, have a completed draft in electronic form, share these electronically with your group and with me AND carefully read and respond to your classmates’ drafts.

#### Assessment

I will assess some of your work in mandatory one-on-one conferences. Other work will be assessed via Canvas. All grading will be based on a rubric you will have access to when assignments are set.

#### Plagiarism

A handout on avoiding plagiarism will be posted on the class website, and we will discuss how to avoid plagiarism for each assignment. I forward suspected cases of plagiarism to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Plagiarized work receives a “0” and/or breaks the grading contract, most importantly it might cause you not to pass the class AND to get sent home.

### **Grading Contract**

While I do adhere to the UWP grading rubric, I offer an (optional) grading contract. This means that I will not assign a firm/set in stone grade for your paper. I will instead return it with comments and with an indicator of whether it is in the A or B range or if it falls below a B and therefore needs to be revised. This is optional and you can choose at any point not to do contract grading – if you do start with the contract and change later, your initial grades will hold regardless of any revisions you undertook.

#### **You are guaranteed at least a B if you:**

1. Attend every class, showing up on time and staying the full time—illness can only be excused with a doctor’s note.
2. Hand in all papers and drafts on time—note the “get out of jail free” pass to hand in a paper one week late without penalty and the draft dodge, a pass to miss a draft session – 1 of each per course.
3. Bring drafts that meet the relevant criteria to class on draft days and provide thoughtful feedback during class workshops
4. Complete all informal writing assignments.
5. Rewrite papers until they are of “B” quality – the formal report and the final travel essay must both be of B quality when handed in

If you do not do all the above, you are not guaranteed a B. If you have kept to the contract through the end of the quarter, your grade on the final report for 104I or final essay for 110 will determine your grade in each class (if it is higher than a B). To earn higher than a B, you must produce writing of outstanding quality, conforming to the departmental standard for excellence in writing.

#### **Things that Break the Contract**

Missing class

Missing more than one draft per course

Not submitting the required amount of work on draft days

Turning in work late (anytime on the due date after class has started)

Being asked more than once not to use your electronics for something other than class work

Plagiarizing

Not revising work until it is of B quality

#### **Non-Contract (Standard) Grading**

If you opt not to do the contract or fail to meet the contract requirements, grading will revert to letter grade/percentages. Each missed class or draft will reduce the participation grade by a full letter grade (from an A to a B, for example). Late papers will drop the participation grade by a full letter. Every instance of being asked not to use your electronics for other than class work will drop the participation grade by a full

letter grade. If you break the contract, you will not be able to revise any papers to bring them up to a B and your original grades on all work will stand.

### **The Golden Rule**

Writing is hard to share. Your fellow students deserve your full attention when they have the floor, and your appropriate and respectful feedback on their writing. During class please be awake, pay attention to whomever has the floor, and do not text, web surf, etc. during class.

### **Assignment Overview by Percentage**

You will write three progressively more complex essays as we lead up to a long final essay due on the last day of class.

Profile of a classmate	0
#1	15
#2	15
#3	20
#4 – Long Essay	40
Peer Workshop Participation/informal work	10

These are only preliminary descriptions of the assignments. Much more information will be available on Canvas just before the program begins.

### **Profile of a Classmate**

#### **Due Dates**

You will work on this in class and at home. The final produce must be posted before the second class.

For this assignment you will interview a classmate and use the information you elicit to draft a clear and concise written profile of ABOUT 300-500 words. Consider this the kind of profile you might expect to find on a company website – it has both an internal and an external audience, so it should straddle the gap between information of interest to outsiders (the kind that puts a face to a name) and information of interest to insiders (is this the kind of person you can talk *Game of Thrones* with?)

In class, we will begin by collectively generating **interview questions** to guide your interviews.

Then, pairs of students will alternately play the roles of **interviewer** and **interviewee** in two 15-minute interview sessions.

During the interview, gather as much information as you can and take notes to assist you in precise recall: you can select and organize the most relevant information later.

Immediately after the interviews, write an informal but informative profile, selecting and organizing biographical information and quotations to introduce the student interviewed to the instructor and to the class.

Along with facts and opinions gleaned from the interview, you may also include your impressions of the person. Descriptions — dress, gestures, facial expressions, and other distinctive characteristics — can enhance the report of information and make it come alive.

It is important here not just to report but to interpret — you are creating an impression of this person. What is your angle or emphasis?

When you are done, check your facts with your interviewee. Save yourself an electronic copy to work on at home.

Use the first and last names of the person interviewed as the title for this essay.

## **A Whole New World - Assignment One**

Write an essay about a very limited experience you have had here in Dublin (or while traveling here) that showed you either “that you’re not in Kansas anymore” OR that reinforced your sense that no matter where you go the world people are the same.

This topic requires narration, description and analysis. Analysis means that you do more than tell us what happened; you tell us what it means.

### **Due Dates TBD**

#### **Requirements:**

About 1,000 words

This is a formal essay — use MLA page formatting; give it an inventive title; use a traditional shape (beginning, middle and ending); emphasize detail; find the most logical narrative structure; develop the analysis subtly but be sure it is clear to us by the end what it all adds up to; use natural diction but revise every sentence for concision, correctness and elegance.

## The Trip Report – Assignment Two

Choose a place in Dublin that we are **not** visiting as a class. Research the place, keeping good notes about what aspect of Dublin it represents, about how you got there, what your specific experiences were, what the highlight(s) were, whether you would recommend it, what specific hints you have about getting there, getting around, etc.

Then, write a trip report in the style of a specific travel publication – a specific blog, or online travel site, magazine, or travel book. An example is *Insider Dublin*  
<https://www.visitdublin.com/insider-tips/our-stories>

Such a report combines useful information with the perspective of the writer, giving the reader the sense that they are being taken there by a friend who will show them around and help them know what to focus on.

### Requirements:

At least 1000 words

Go to a site that is new to you and **go by yourself**. Do all the work of figuring out how to get there on your own. Do not talk to anyone about your experiences before you begin to write

This will involve **research**, which you should do ahead of time and recheck after your excursion. You will follow your target publication's lead in terms of how to cite sources. Hand in a **separate list of works cited** in MLA style.

Turn in a copy of your target publication OR a URL to it OR a PDF.

Humor is a good thing in travel writing – just be sure you fit the style of your target publication.

Include photos – either photos you've taken or photos from other sources (if you didn't take them, include the source in your list of works cited).

## Writing About an Event – Assignment Three

Event TBD

Due Dates TBD

### How to Prepare

More Information to come, but you will be writing about a large scale event happening in Dublin from the perspective of a visitor.

We will create a course-sourced Wiki for the event—all research notes, web links, photos, etc. posted there are **fair game** for everyone to use as they write up their own articles or guides. You should include your name, the date gathered, and any bibliographic information that someone using your source might need.

### **What to Write**

*Option One:* As a group, create a “what to expect” guide to the event for next year’s UCD students – this should be about 1000 words and should include pictures, graphics, etc. or should be a video of about 5-7 minutes with a 1000 word process essay – separate ones for each student.

*Option Two:* On your own, write an article or a blog post for the Study Abroad site reporting on the cup to a future UC Study Abroad student—you should write between 1250 and 1700 words.

### **Before, During and Just after the Event**

Keep your eyes open for any enriching details and usable units of information; keep very good notes about where things come from.

## **A Travel Essay - Assignment Four**

**Topic** An extended travel essay that combines narration and analysis to present some aspect of your experience of Ireland

**Length** 2000 words

**Due Dates** TBA

### **What it is**

This is an open topic essay – you do need to target a specific publication, you do need to incorporate research (which can include interviews) and to document this research, you do need to write about Ireland from the vantage point of an outsider looking in—but you determine what you are going to write about and for what publication.

### **What it is not**

This is not a trip report – you are not writing it so someone can use your essay as a tourism guide; it is not a blog post – it should be a more analytical and crafted piece of writing, a durable piece, than most blog writing aspires to.

### **Samples**

The *Prized Writing* essays on Canvas would all fit the criteria of the assignment.

The essay “Why We Travel” is longer than you need to write but a great model of writing not about the specific experience but about a larger question. Along the same lines are the essay by Santayana (“The Philosophy of Travel”) and the Nat Geo piece (“The Rebirth of Awe”).

**Ideas (more to come here)**

Reread Travel pieces 1-3 to see if one of them could be expanded.

Write a now and then article. Find a piece written about a trip to some part of Ireland, visit that place and write about what you learn from comparing your experiences.

Find a theme that recurs in travel writing about Ireland and do your own take on it.

Use this essay assignment as an excuse to do something a little crazy—like having a trains/busses/ferries adventure – then write about it not to show someone else how to do it, but to write about what the experience taught you about yourself.

Thinking about “Why We Travel” and/or “The Rebirth of Awe” use your own reasons for and discoveries during this trip to Ireland to consider why you travel or why you felt compelled to study and/or intern abroad and what you learned from it.

Anything else that has to do with Ireland, seen from your vantage point.