

# **"THE WORLD IS A BOOK"**

## **AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING AND THE TRANSOCEANIC IMAGINARY**

**Course number:** ENP.01024UB

**Room:** Seminar Room 34.D2  
(Attemsgasse 25, Top Floor)

**Time:** Friday, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

**UniMeet link:** <https://unimeet.uni-graz.at/b/bra-fba-zwk-ei4> (in case we need to go online)

**Lecturer:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan L. Brandt · **Email:** [stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at](mailto:stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at)

**Office Hours:** Thur, 4:00-6:00 p.m. (<https://moodle.uni-graz.at/course/view.php?id=24980>)

**Course tutor:** Veronika Rom ([veronika.rom@uni-graz.at](mailto:veronika.rom@uni-graz.at))

**Description:** Embark on a journey through American travel writing, exploring its impact on the transoceanic imaginary and cultural perceptions. Delve into the captivating realm of travel literature, focusing on renowned authors like Herman Melville, Margaret Fuller, Mark Twain, Nellie Bly, John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac, and Elizabeth Gilbert. Traverse the globe through their works, examining their dynamic interplay with European counterparts. Gain insight into the cultural exchange between America and Europe and its role in shaping transatlantic relationships. Immerse yourself in the world of travel literature, discovering its crucial role in shaping cultural perceptions. By the end of the course, you'll have deepened your understanding of how American authors portray their country and the world through travel writing, influencing our comprehension of transoceanic relationships.

### **Assessment:**

**A.) Regular attendance (no more than 2 absences!), active participation, and at least six (!) substantiated entries in the Moodle discussion forum (1/3)** (not including your own session);

**B.) Expert Session, Handout, and Revised Presentation** (to be held in class and then uploaded onto the Moodle course site in a revised, adapted, and extended form) **(1/3)**;

**C.) 2-page research proposal plus 12-15-page final paper** (around 5,000 words all in all, including bibliography, but excluding title page, table of contents). Please use templates on Moodle! **(1/3)**.

*Note: You need to pass each section to pass the whole course.*

### **A.) REGULAR ATTENDANCE, CLASS, PARTICIPATION, AND MOODLE DISCUSSION FORUM**

**Regular attendance** and **active participation** are crucial for success in this course. You're allowed a **maximum of two absences**, so notify us in advance if you'll be absent. Merely reading assigned material isn't enough; come ready to engage fully by asking questions, providing interpretations, and presenting your viewpoints. **Pop quizzes** may be given to assess your familiarity with the materials.

In the Moodle discussion forum, make at least **six substantial entries**. Anything less will lead to a 'Fail' in the class. Before addressing the three discussion questions, ensure you're **well-informed** by reading the required text and conducting **online research**. Reference any helpful materials found online, like video clips or articles, and, ideally, respond to your peers' entries.

### **B.) EXPERT SESSION, REVISED PRESENTATION, AND HANDOUT**

As an expert, prepare **three discussion questions** (focus on composition, background, and text impact) for the forum, to be uploaded six days prior to your session. **Share questions with the instructor a week before the session or via email.**

In the classroom, start with essential information using the **keywords**. Pose questions for lively discussion, incorporating relevant examples. Encourage **interactivity** with images, clips, games, or thought-provoking questions. Be flexible with the schedule to adapt to class dynamics.

After the session, **revise** and **expand** your presentation, addressing raised questions. Upload the revised presentation and a **3-page handout** on Moodle within one week.

### **C.) RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FINAL PAPER**

Submit your **2-page research proposal** outline by **May 31st, 2024**, using the form on Moodle. **Refer to secondary texts provided on the course website.**

The **final paper**, limited to **15 pages** (including bibliography), with a word count of 4,500 to 5,500, is due on **July 15th, 2024**. Upload it to the designated Moodle forum, including an **editable Google Docs or OneDrive version**. Insert the Google Docs link in the forum's **comment section, not (!)** within the document. Include your name, email, course title, instructor, submission date, and word count in the final paper. Cite sources according to Uni Graz guidelines. **No extensions will be granted.**

**Important: Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are allowed for the following activities:**

- Exploring and modifying ideas, perfecting research inquiries.
- Acquiring general information on the subject (ensure thorough verification of all sources and information).
- Creating an outline to structure thoughts.
- Reviewing grammar and style.

**The use of generative AI tools is strictly prohibited for the following:**

- Composing an entire draft of a writing assignment.
- Generating complete sentences, paragraphs, or papers to fulfill class assignments.
- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, like composing discussion forum entries or chat content.

*Note: Failure to comply with these regulations will result in disqualification from the class.* For more details, see <https://lehren-und-lernen-mit-ki.uni-graz.at/en/for-students/>

**Important: Thoroughly researching, reading, reviewing, and processing scholarly sources—specifically academic articles and books—is essential for any academic work and cannot be replaced by AI!**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **Week 1 (March 15): Embarkation: Opening the Pages of the World**

(recommended reading: Bendixen/Hamera; Hulme)

**Session Tasks:** Introduce course objectives and structure; explore the transoceanic imaginary; discuss the historical significance of American travel literature; establish a framework for analyzing cultural perceptions in travel writing.

**Keywords:** Exploration; Literary Journey; Transoceanic Imaginary; Travel Literature.

### **Week 2 (March 22): Academic Writing**

(recommended reading: Gardner 2013; Sword 2012)

**Session Tasks:** Introduce the fundamental principles of academic writing; explore key elements such as thesis statements, key argument, and citations; provide guidelines for structuring academic essays.

**Keywords:** Academic Writing; Argumentation; Essay Structure; Citation; Research Skills; Thesis Development.

**Week 3 (April 12):** **Voyages Beyond the Horizon – Christopher Columbus’s Reports (1492-1504)**  
(required reading: Letter by Columbus from 1493; his narrative from the 3<sup>rd</sup> report)

**Session Tasks:** Discussing Christopher Columbus’s journeys and their impact; examination of early colonial perspectives; analysis of the historical context of Columbus’s travel narratives.

**Keywords:** Colonization; Christopher Columbus; Cultural Exchange; Historical Narratives; Maritime History; Transatlantic Exploration.

**Week 4 (April 19):** **Navigating Polynesian Waters – Melville’s *Typee* (1846)**  
(required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Analyze cultural representation of the South Sea and cannibalism in Melville’s travel narrative; discuss the dynamics of 19th-century exploration; examine the complexity of cross-cultural encounters.

**Keywords:** Adventure; Cannibalism; Cultural Representation; Exoticism; Herman Melville; Polynesian Culture; 19th-Century Exploration.

**Week 5 (April 26):** **European Sojourns – Fuller’s Dispatches from Paris & Rome (1846-49)**  
(required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Explore Margaret Fuller’s writings on European society; assess American authors in European settings; analyze the interplay of American and European cultural landscapes; discuss the socio-political climate in Europe at Fuller’s time.

**Keywords:** American Authors in Europe; Cross-Cultural Encounters; European Landscapes; Italy in American culture; Margaret Fuller; Transatlantic Literary Dialogue.

**Week 6 (May 3):** **Satirical Seas – Mark Twain’s *The Innocents Abroad* (1869)** (required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Analysis of Mark Twain’s satirical approach to travel writing; discussion of Twain’s observations during his European travel; examination of the influence of humor in shaping cultural perceptions

**Keywords:** European Travels; Humor in Travel Writing; Mark Twain; Orientalism (Edward Said); Satirical Travel.

**Week 7 (May 17):** **Journalistic Accounts – Nellie Bly’s *Around the World in 72 Days* (1890)** (required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Analysis of Nellie Bly’s pioneering journey around the world; exploration of gender dynamics in travel literature; discussion of journalistic innovation in the late 19th century.

**Keywords:** Gender in Travel; Journalistic Innovation; Nellie Bly; Pioneering Women.

**Week 8 (May 24):** **Paris as Muse – Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast* (1964)** (required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Exploration of Hemingway’s experiences in 1920s Paris; analysis of the relationship between place and creativity in travel memoirs; discussion of the significance of Parisian settings in American literature.

**Keywords:** Literary Creativity; Lost Generation; Memoir; Modernity; Paris.

**Week 9 (May 31):**

**On the Road to Enlightenment – Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* (1957)** (required reading)

DUE DATE  
RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Session Tasks:** Analyzing the Beat Generation’s influence on travel literature; exploring countercultural elements in Kerouac’s *On the Road*; discussing the ‘road’ motif and its impact on American identity.

**Keywords:** Beat Generation; Counterculture; Mobility; Road Motif; Road Trip; Jack Kerouac; 1950s America.

**Week 10 (June 7):**

**Cross-Country Chronicles – Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley* (1962)** (required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Exploration of John Steinbeck’s cross-country journey in the 1960s; analysis of the representation of American identity and landscapes; discussion of the role of the travel memoir in shaping cultural perceptions.

**Keywords:** American Identity; Cross-Country Journey; 1960s America; Travel Memoir.

**Week 11 (June 14):**

**Global Odyssey – Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat Pray Love* (2007)** (required reading)

**Session Tasks:** Examination of Elizabeth Gilbert’s spiritual and cultural journey; exploration of the theme of self-discovery in modern travel literature; discussion of the influence of personal narratives on the transoceanic imaginary.

**Keywords:** Self-Discovery; Cultural Exploration; Spiritual Journeys; Modern Travel Writing.

**Week 12 (June 21):**

**Preparation of the Final Paper**

**Session Tasks:** Discussing research methodologies, including research questions and thesis design; preparing for the final paper by understanding requirements, selecting topics, and setting word count and deadline expectations.

**Keywords:** Academic Research; Paper Structure; Research Methodology; Thesis Design; Scholarly Writing; Topic Selection.

**Week 13 (June 28):**

**Final Paper Workshop and Feedback**

**Session Tasks:** Conducting small-group workshops for final paper projects, providing constructive feedback and identifying areas for improvement; discussing paper structure and content, emphasizing clear introductions, well-structured body paragraphs, and concise conclusions; feedback from peers and the instructor.

**Important! Bring a revised version of your research proposal to this session!**

DEADLINE FINAL PAPER: MONDAY, 15 JULY 2024