Travel Writing
SYLLABUS

Week 1

Lesson 1, Part 1: What is travel writing?
Lesson 1, Part 2: Types of travel writing
- Personal essay
- Narrative feature
- Specialty (family travel, cruise, adventure, etc.)
- Service/FOB
- Experiential travel

Lesson 1, Part 3: Travel journalism 101: the objectification trap. This is not about you (unless it is).

Assignment 1: Analyze a feature from AFAR, CNT, or Travel & Leisure (doesn’t have to be recent).
Answer the following questions: What did the writer do well? Where could the writer have done better? What did you learn about the destination? What holes were left after you read the story? How would you have done it differently?

Week 2

Lesson 2, Part 1: Before you travel/while you’re traveling
- Researching
- Finding sources and reporting/citing
- Best practices while on assignment

Lesson 2, Part 2: Finding a unique angle

Lesson 2, Part 3: Writing a narrative feature
- Pacing, scenes, and structure
- Anecdotes, characters, and detail
- Pitfalls: purple prose, travel-writing clichés, and how much of yourself to include
- The service stuff: sidebars

Assignment 2: Imagine an assignment based on a trip you’ve been on, or one you’re planning on taking. Write an outline for a narrative feature based on that place. What are the scenes? Who are your characters? What is the narrative arc?

Week 3

Lesson 3, Part 1: Pitching your stories
- Whom to pitch
- How to craft a pitch
- How to follow up
- Negotiating rates/rights
- On assignment or on spec?
Pitching digital vs. print
- Photography/slideshows
- Rates
- Video
- Length/differences in voice or content overall

Lesson 3, Part 2: Editing and revision

Assignment 3: Based on feedback from your outline, write an 800-word narrative feature.
Week 4
Lesson 4, Part 1: Travel writing ethics: press trips, expenses, and comps.
- working with tourism boards, PR people, and DMOs
Lesson 4, Part 2: The nitty-gritty
- Fact-checking/notes
- Translating/fixed
- Deadlines
- Magazine process
Assignment 4: Write a 500-word guide focusing on one week in one place. It should have a story/narrative to it, but focusing heavily on what to do, how to do it, where to stay.

Week 5
Lesson 5, Part 1: The personal essay
Lesson 5, Part 2: Character development
Lesson 5, Part 3: A travel writer’s responsibility to their subject
Assignment 5: Write a 1,000-word personal essay based on a transformative travel experience you had.

Week 6
Lesson 6, Part 1: Developing a presence
- social media
- Facebook groups
- Writing workshops/conferences/networking
- Reading opportunities
Lesson 6, Part 2: What’s your niche?
Lesson 6, Part 3: Resources
Assignment 6: Rewrites of all three pieces.