

UWC2101J: WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING—SITES OF TOURISM
UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS PROGRAMME, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
AY2016-17 SEMESTER 1

Group 1: Tue/Fri 12-2 pm in USP Seminar Room 2

Group 2: Tue/Fri 2-4 pm in USP Seminar Room 2

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INTRODUCTION

This module, like all others in the Writing and Critical Thinking domain, has the primary objective of helping you to become a better writer of academic essays. An “academic essay,” or what is sometimes also called an “argumentative essay,” may not be something that you have encountered before. For one thing, its chief purpose is not to summarize or paraphrase other people’s ideas. Instead, *an academic essay advances an original thesis, one that is clearly motivated and expressed, through the close reading and analysis of primary evidence*. Put another way, an academic essay convinces its readers (often through research) that there is an interesting problem to be solved, and then goes on to solve it by examining relevant evidence.

In order to write good academic essays that fit the above criteria, you must therefore learn to think critically about a delimited subject. After all, you will only have something original to say about a topic if you spend some time reading and thinking about what other writers, with whom you are essentially entering into a dialogue, have already said about it. That’s the way to figure out what are the intriguing problems in the field—by critically reading texts on the subject—and how to solve them. Furthermore, in this class, writing is not just a way to represent or communicate the solutions that you formulate in your head; writing is instead a way of helping you come up with those solutions and arguments. Writing will be a way of *thinking through the problems*.

In addition, this module will help you acquire some “technical” skills: not so much grammar, but the protocols of academic writing (citations, formatting, working with sources), as well as methods of conducting research. These are all important skills that should come in useful for the rest of your time at NUS, and perhaps beyond.

The “delimited subject” we will think, read, and write about in this module is tourism. Tourism is a relatively modern phenomenon, since it depends on the invention of easy and affordable modes of mass travel. It also implicitly depends on several other things: the perception, for example, that there are appreciable differences between places and nations (and the people of these places), and that such appreciation is somehow enriching, valuable, or at least pleasurable. To think about tourism is therefore to explore issues such as modernity, nationality, self and other, identity and culture.

Because tourism is a huge topic, we will further focus on tourism and the philosophical issue of authenticity—of tourist sites, of tourist cultures, and of the tourist self. What, to begin with, is tourism? We will start by looking at definitions, and the history of tourism; interestingly, these accounts are almost immediately suffused with a sense of loss and nostalgia, and with anxieties about authenticity. They will raise, or prompt us to raise, questions such as: Are tourist sights and attractions, as well as all their representations (such as souvenirs), fake? Does this in turn imply that the cultures that are on display in tourism—or more precisely, in heritage and cultural tourism—are inauthentic, or even that cultures *become* impure, diluted, and inauthentic as a result of such tourism? How does this possibility relate to the longstanding belief that we can become or be transformed into better and more authentic versions of ourselves when we travel?

UNIT 1 OBJECTIVES

- Asking critical questions about texts
- Understanding an essay’s motive, and learning to construct one
- Deciding what makes a good thesis

- Considering the relationship between claims and their evidence
- Doing a close reading
- Writing an introduction

UNIT 1 SCHEDULE

Week 1: Tue Aug 9

No class (National Day)

Week 1: Fri Aug 12

Opening excursions

Week 2: Tue Aug 16

Graburn, Nelson H. H.. Excerpt from "Tourism: The Sacred Journey." *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. 2nd ed. Ed. Valene L. Smith. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989. 28-31.

Boorstin, Daniel. "From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel." In *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Atheneum, 1987. 77-117.

Week 2: Fri Aug 19

Percy, Walker. "The Loss of the Creature." *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One Has to Do with the Other*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975. 46-63.

Week 3: Tue Aug 23

Continuing discussion of Boorstin and Percy

Week 3: Fri Aug 26

MacCannell, Dean. "Staged Authenticity." In *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Schocken Books, 1989. 91-107.

_____. "Why It Never Really Was About Authenticity." *Society* 45.4 (2008): 334-337.

Week 4: Tue Aug 30

Culler, Jonathan. "The Semiotics of Tourism." In *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988. 153-167.

Week 4: Fri Sep 2

No seminar—Paper 1 conferences

UNIT 2 OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the elements of an essay
- Working with complications in a text
- Working with primary sources: summarizing, contextualizing, interpreting
- Doing a comparative analysis
- Learning to cite and document sources
- Understanding plagiarism

UNIT 2 SCHEDULE

Week 5: Tue Sep 6

No seminar—Paper 1 conferences

Week 5: Fri Sep 9

"Elements of the Essay" workshop

Week 6: Tue Sep 13

Greenwood, Davydd J.. "Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization." *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. 2nd ed. Ed. Valene L. Smith. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989. 171-185.

Week 6: Fri Sep 16

Bruner, Edward M.. Excerpts from "Introduction: Travel Stories Told and Retold" and "The Balinese Borderzone." In *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 1-7, 195-210.

Mid-term Break: Tue Sep 20 and Fri Sep 23**Week 7: Tue Sep 27**

Working with sources workshop

Week 7: Fri Sep 30

Shepherd, Robert J.. "Commodification, Culture and Tourism." *Tourist Studies* 2.2 (2002): 183-201.

Week 8: Tue Oct 4 and Fri Oct 7

No seminars—Paper 2 conferences

UNIT 3 OBJECTIVES

- Defining a research topic, and doing research
- Distinguishing between primary and secondary sources
- Working with multiple sources
- Learning to theorize; or, moving from detail to abstraction
- Writing a conclusion

UNIT 3 SCHEDULE**Week 9: Tue Oct 11**

Ning Wang. "Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience." *Annals of Tourism Research* 26.2 (1999): 349-70.

Week 9: Fri Oct 14

Cohen, Scott A.. "Chasing a Myth? Searching for 'Self' Through Lifestyle Travel." *Tourist Studies* 10.2 (2010): 117-133.

Week 10: Tue Oct 18

Jamal, Tazim and Steve Hill. Excerpt from "The Home and the World: (Post)touristic Spaces of Inauthenticity?" *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*. Ed. Graham M.S. Dann. Wallingford and New York: CABI, 2002. 77-78, 91-107.

Week 10: Fri Oct 21

Research workshop

Week 11: Tue Oct 25

Happy Together. Dir Wong Kar-Wai. Kino International, 1997. DVD.

Week 11: Fri Oct 28

Lahiri, Jhumpa. "Interpreter of Maladies." In *Interpreter of Maladies: Stories*. London: Flamingo, 2000. 43-69.

Bruner, Edward M.. "Transformation of Self in Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 18.2 (1991): 238-250.

Week 12: Tue Nov 1

Class presentations

Week 12: Fri Nov 4

Class presentations

Week 13: Tue Nov 8 and Fri Nov 11

No seminars—Paper 3 conferences

REQUIREMENTS

There are no examinations in this module, which is instead graded on 100% continuous assessment. CA consists of five components:

1. Attendance, Class Participation and Presentations (10%)

Attendance of seminars is mandatory. If you have a good reason to miss a meeting—family emergencies, documented illnesses—please let know (in advance, if possible). Otherwise, your absences will be considered unexcused, and these will affect your grade.

Please come to the seminars having finished the assigned readings and writing exercises, and ready to be a **thoughtfully talkative participant**. Be active in your reading: instead of using a highlighter, it is better to use a pen or pencil to mark up, take notes on, or write comments about the texts we are reading (in the margins, or in a journal).

You will also be asked to do occasional **oral reports**, including a brief presentation about your final paper.

2. Written Work (15%)

There will be various **pre-writing exercises** during the semester, which are designed to help you with the three papers. These exercises are scored not with the more traditional letter grades, but with ticks (and pluses and minuses).

You will also be asked to write a **peer review** of a classmate's paper, in order to help him or her to revise an essay draft.

3. Paper 1: 3-4 page Close Reading of One Text (20%)

4. Paper 2: 5-6 page Comparative Analysis of Two Texts (25%)

5. Paper 3: 7-9 page Research Paper Analyzing Multiple Sources (30%)

Each paper requires a first draft. Each draft will be the basis of peer reviews, or individual conferences with me; although drafts are not graded, you cannot pass an assignment if you do not hand in a draft. Drafts and final papers are due on the dates noted, and no late submissions are accepted.

Each draft and paper, of course, must be typed, double-spaced, titled, and have page numbers. There is no need for a cover page; instead, at the top left hand corner of your first page, please type the following information:

Your name
Your matric number
UWC2101J: Sites of Tourism
A/P Lo Mun Hou
Assignment [e.g.: Paper 1 Draft]
Assignment due date

Every paper you submit must be proofread, not just run through the spellchecker. Also remember that plagiarism (using other people's words, ideas, or organizational structures without acknowledgment) and multiple submissions (handing in a paper originally or simultaneously written for another class) are serious offenses and almost always result in a failing grade—not just for the assignment, but for the entire course—as well as the possibility of dismissal from the programme and even the university.

RESOURCES

All the readings for the module are available as pdfs from our IVLE workbin. There is also a writer's guide for this class, Gordon Harvey's *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students*, of which you will get a complimentary copy.