

**NTW2010 THINKING WITH WRITING: SITES OF TOURISM
NUS COLLEGE
AY2022-23 SEMESTER 1**

Group 1: Tuesdays and Fridays 12-2 pm in Cinnamon West Learn Lobe Seminar Room 2
Group 2: Tuesdays and Fridays 4-6 pm in Cinnamon West Learn Lobe Seminar Room 2

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INTRODUCTION

This class aims to help you become a better writer of academic essays. An “academic essay,” which remains the chief mode by which ideas are exchanged in the university and in academia at large, may not be something you have written or even encountered (for one thing, it differs from a General Paper, though we will have to figure out how), and there are also variations within the genre. Our focus is on the argumentative essay that puts forth evidence-based claims. Though it will of course be the purpose of the module to help you understand the following definition, we can for now say that *an argumentative essay justifies the need for, and then advances, an original thesis, doing so via the primary analysis of evidence*. Put another way, an argumentative essay first convinces its readers (whether rhetorically, or more empirically through a literature review) that there is an interesting problem to be solved, and then goes on to solve it by examining relevant evidence.

The above definition has many implications. For a start, it suggests that the chief purpose of an argumentative essay is *not* to summarize or paraphrase other people’s ideas (its thesis is “original”). Nor is an argumentative essay that requires “primary analysis of evidence” going to make its claims by only or even mainly using other people’s views as “supporting evidence” (i.e., “I think X because persons A and B have said X”). This, however, does not mean that we can ignore what other scholars have argued. Quite the opposite: 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. Indeed, the writing of a good essay must be prefaced by critically reading texts on the subject; this helps us figure out what are the intriguing and remaining problems in the field, before we try to solve them.

Furthermore, this class does not consider writing as merely a way to represent or communicate the ideas that you formulate in your head. Writing is instead what enables you to come up with (as well as sharpen, refine, modify, etc.) those solutions and arguments. As the overarching module title suggests, we will treat *writing* as a mode of *thinking*. In addition, this module will help you acquire some “technical” skills: not so much grammar, but the protocols of academic writing (e.g., 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 ideally beyond.

Writing and thinking is most effective when it is specific. Accordingly, we will read, think, and write about a specific topic: tourism. Even this is a huge subject; to make things manageable, we will further limit our focus. This module will therefore be concerned with the relationship between tourism and notions of authenticity. When tourists visit sites and attractions, or buy souvenirs, they frequently seem perturbed by how “real” these sites and mementos are. This kind of worry also operates at a broader level: tourists may wonder about whether the food they are eating (whether during their travels, or more generally) are “truly representative” of a culture, or whether the culture and heritage they experience are in pure, untainted forms. Even the act of defining “tourism” is often riddled with such anxieties. Why does tourism bring out such anxieties about authenticity? Indeed, why are we generally so concerned with the real and the authentic—not just in tourism, but as an ideal for the self? What, in fact, is the nature of the “authentic”?

SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The module is divided into three units, respectively spanning five, three, and five weeks. As described below, each unit will approach our topic, tourism and authenticity, a little differently. Each also has a set of learning outcomes that relate, contribute, and build to our overall objective of learning to write academic essays. To this end, each unit also has a tangible end product: one of three papers required by the module (but as the unequal number of weeks of each unit implies, the first and third papers are more substantial, with the second paper needing to be less argumentative).

UNIT 1

Our most immediate and important objective in Unit 1 will be to understand what an argument or thesis is. What are its features and characteristics? How and where in an essay should it be expressed? What kinds of critical questions can we ask about our text or object of analysis in order to help us formulate an argument about it? Just as importantly, we will think about it means to justify and set up an argument, and thus position it vis-à-vis other views—what we will call a “motive.” Finally, we will start to consider the relationships between claims, which make up an argument, and evidence.

Typically, in Unit 1 we will analyze some examples of anxieties about authenticity in tourism discourse: not just the worry about whether tourism puts us into contact with the authentic, but even the suspicion that tourism *causes* inauthenticity, and that it is *by definition* inauthentic.

Tue Aug 9

No class (National Day)

Fri Aug 12

Seminar 1.2

Reading:

Graburn, Nelson H. H.. Excerpt from “Tourism: The Sacred Journey.” *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. 2nd ed., edited by Valene L. Smith. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989, pp. 28-31.

Tue Aug 16

Seminar 2.1

Reading:

Boorstin, Daniel. “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel.” *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. 1961. 25th anniversary edition, Vintage, 1987, pp. 77-117.

Fri Aug 19

Seminar 2.2

Discussion of Boorstin continues, and of tourism-related texts

Tue Aug 23

Seminar 3.1

Reading:

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*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975, pp. 46-63.

Fri Aug 26

Seminar 3.2

Reading:

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

Tue Aug 30

Seminar 4.1

Discussion of Boorstin, Percy, and Greenwood continues

Thu Sep 1

Draft of Paper 1 due

Fri Sep 2

Seminar 4.2

Workshop on the elements of an essay

Tue Sep 6 and Fri Sep 9

No seminar meetings; Paper 1 conferences on Mon-Thu

UNIT 2

In Unit 2, we will inflect and develop the skills we gained in Unit 1 by learning how to work with academic sources. We can understand “source,” commonsensically, to mean the origin of an idea, though the term can also refer to the idea itself. Academic writing is in part characterized by how it works rigorously with specific ideas, and acknowledges their origins. Learning to work with sources thus means, at the most technical level, that we will discuss the protocols of citation, quotation, documentation, which record from where ideas come. But at a broader level, we will consider how to summarize, contextualize, and most importantly, to analyze and close read ideas and the texts that contain them—and to work with more than one text at a time, thus comparing or relating them. In academic writing, there can be many reasons to work with texts this way; we will do so in order to derive or locate a question or issue.

Typically, Unit 2 considers some replies—both explicit and implicit—to the anxieties about the relationship between tourism and authenticity that we saw in the previous unit. These replies offer ways of rethinking culture, authenticity, and commodification, as well as broader sociological and philosophical arguments about the nature of authenticity.

Tue Sep 13

Seminar 6.1

Reading:

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

Fri Sep 16

Seminar 6.2

Readings:

MacCannell, Dean. “Staged Authenticity.” *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. 1976. 1989 edition, Schocken Books, 1989, pp. 91-107.

_____. “Why It Never Really Was About Authenticity.” *Society* vol. 45., no. 4, 2008, pp. 334-337.

Mid-term Break

Tue Sep 27

Seminar 7.1

Reading:

Culler, Jonathan. “The Semiotics of Tourism.” *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1988, pp. 153-167.

Fri Sep 30

Seminar 7.2

Workshop on working with sources

Mon Oct 3

Draft of Paper 2 due

Tue Oct 4
Seminar 8.1
In-class peer review #1

Fri Oct 7
Seminar 8.2
In-class peer review #2

UNIT 3

In our final unit, we will continue to sharpen the writing skills we acquired in preceding units—and to, more consciously, synthesize them. But we will also introduce a new skill, that of research. What is its nature, and what are some ways research can function in academic writing? To help us ponder this question, we will discuss the distinctions between primary and secondary sources, and consider how to work with multiple sources and forms of evidence. Finally, we will learn to theorize, or to move from detail to abstraction (or between them).

Once again building on our previous discussions, Unit 3 considers how the notion of authenticity can be refined—and if so, how each sharper sense of authenticity can be researched and analyzed. If “authenticity” can refer to multiple things, then how can each sense be studied? And if we understand authenticity in new ways, then might we need to shift our concern from authenticity to authentication—to how authenticity is produced and constructed, in tourism and elsewhere? The essays in this unit will provide examples of how scholars have pursued these new lines of inquiry.

Tue Oct 11
Seminar 9.1
Reading:
Wang, Ning. “Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience.” *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1999, pp. 349-370.

Fri Oct 14
Seminar 9.2
Readings:
Varga, Somogy and Charles Guignon. “Authenticity.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2020 edition, edited by Edward N. Zalta.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/authenticity>

Swer, Gregory Morgan. Excerpt from “*Homo Touristicus*, or the Jargon of Authenticity 2.0.” *South African Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2019, pp. 211-217.

Tue Oct 18
Seminar 10.1
Research workshop

Fri Oct 21
Seminar 10.2
Reading:
van Nuenen, Tom. “Here I Am: Authenticity and Self-Branding on Travel Blogs.” *Tourist Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2015, pp. 192-212.

Tue Oct 25
Seminar 11.1
Readings:
The Wikipedia synopsis of Jia Zhangke’s film: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_(film))

Gaetano, Arianne. “Rural Women and Modernity in Globalizing China: Seeing Jia Zhangke’s *The World*.” *Visual Anthropology Review*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2009, pp. 25-39.

Fri Oct 28

Seminar 11.2

Reading:

Martin, Michael S.. "Authenticity, Tourism, and Cajun Cuisine in Lafayette, Louisiana." *The Paradox of Authenticity in a Globalized World*, edited by Russell Cobb. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 13-22.

Tue Nov 1

Seminar 12.1

Paper 3 presentations; draft of Paper 3 due three days after (TBC)

Fri Nov 4

Seminar 12.2

Paper 3 presentations; draft of Paper 3 due three days after (TBC)

Tue Nov 8 and Fri Nov 11

No seminars; Paper 3 conferences

ASSESSMENTS

There are no examinations in this module, which is instead graded on 100% continuous assessment. CA consists of five components, with the majority (75%) of your module grade coming from three papers. These three papers are major components of your learning (each $\geq 20\%$ of your grade), so you must complete all papers in order to pass the module.

1. Attendance, Class Engagement, and Presentation (15%)

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 **engaged**, which is best accomplished by being 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 **presentations**, including a brief one about your final paper.

2. Written Work (10%)

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 or conduct a **peer review** of a classmate's paper, in order to help him or her to revise an essay draft.

3. Paper 1: Analysis/Close Reading of a Text (20%)

Your first paper (1000-1500 words) should make an argument about a tourism-related text of your own choosing.

4. Paper 2: Literature Review; or, Comparison of At Least Two Texts (20%)

Your second paper (1500-2000 words) will put at least two of our topical readings into conversation, in order to identify (without necessarily solving) a problem or issue.

5. Paper 3: Research Essay Anchored by a Primary Analysis (35%)

Your third paper (3000-3500 words), like a longer version of your first, will make an argument about a text or phenomenon, but also position this argument within a larger academic conversation.

Some Notes on the Three Papers:

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 specified dates, and no late submissions are accepted.

Each draft and paper, of course, must be typed, double-spaced, appropriately titled (we will discuss how to do this), 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
NTW2010 Thinking with Writing: Sites of Tourism
A/P Lo Mun Hou
Assignment [e.g., First Draft of Paper 1]
Assignment due date

Every paper you submit must be proofread, not just run through the spellchecker. Also remember that plagiarism (a concept we will discuss, though we can for now understand it as “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. They almost always result in a failing grade—not just for the assignment, but for the entire module—as well as the possibility of dismissal from NUS College, and even the university.

RESOURCES

By this point in the document, it should hopefully be clear that the module will pursue, in parallel, a set of writing objectives (learning how to write academic essays) and a set of topical objectives (thinking about tourism and authenticity). Accordingly, there are two kinds of readings for the module.

As already indicated in the syllabus, we will be discussing a number of (mostly academic) essays. All of them are available as pdfs from the “Files” section of our class site on Canvas. These essays will serve multiple functions. First, each of them is about the topics that concern us: tourism and authenticity. Thus, they will sometimes “teach” us, directly or indirectly, about our topic. Second, they will also be objects of our analysis, and the subjects of some of the papers we will be writing. This means that we will need to understand not just what they say, but also figure out what we can say about them. Finally, these essays can also help us understand the craft of essay writing—in other words, these topical readings will also help us with our writing objectives.

To further help us with our writing objectives is a book, Gordon Harvey’s *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students*, 3rd edition. I recommend that you purchase a copy (the subsidized cost is approx. S\$10), which you will be able to do via the NUS College office/me. However, there are also copies available in the Reading Room in Cinnamon West Learn Lobe if you prefer to use those. In addition, there will be a series of handouts and readings about writing; these will be distributed in class.