



CWIT 296 Writing About Place in Perugia

Course Syllabus

Spring 2027

Instructor: Teresa Cutler-Broyles, MA

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Course Type: Standard Course

Class meeting days/times: TBA

Office Hours: By appointment

Lab Fee: USD\$125

Course Description

This course is designed to give students an Honors-level experience in translating their everyday experiences in an unfamiliar cultural landscape into lucid, well-written essays. As part of this course, students will discover the city of Perugia and their place in it; contemplate the intertwined etymologies of the words “travel” and “travail” while reflecting on how traveling’s challenges create personal growth; and push beyond the accepted wisdom of Italian food’s basis in long-standing history to evaluate whether food needs to be “traditional” to be good, and how food is linked to personal identity.

The writing done in the course begins with more straightforward reflection and follows a trajectory towards more professional and polished material, augmented by personal experiences and observations, and the examination of scholarly literature. In short, the course calls for hands-on, primary-research focused experience in the city and surrounding areas, while translating that field-based work through writing and comparing your experiences to the written experiences of local and international authors and relevant academic works. Students will engage in research, writing exercises, and debate that will be built from first-hand experience of the city, culture, and peoples in Perugia and Italy.

The course also offers numerous opportunities for sharing of writing as well as a final, collective reading to the Umbra community.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) *Explain* the difference between different textual typologies and writing styles;
- 2) *Learn* and *use* key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts;
- 3) *Understand* and *use* a variety of writing styles to address a range of audiences;
- 4) *Learn* how to identify and structure an essay, using research tools and skills;
- 5) *Implement* strategies to compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources;
- 6) *Deliver* professional presentations to public audiences in a confident and effective way.

Readings

The course’s Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Major texts we will be using:

- *The Soul of Place: A Creative Writing Workbook: Ideas and Exercises for Conjuring the Genius Loci*. Linda Lappin. Travelers’ Tales. 2015.
- *The Best American Food and Travel Writing 2024*. Eds. Padma Lakshmi and Jaya Saxena. Mariner Books. 2024.

Other texts from which we will be reading:

- <https://tetw.org/Cities>
- Ascione, Elisa, and Christopher Fink. "Italian *sagre*: Preserving and Re-Inventing Cultural Heritage and Community through Food Festivals in Umbria, Italy." *Food, Culture & Society*, vol. 24, no. 2, Mar. 2021
- Capatti, Alberto, and Massimo Montanari. *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*. Translated by Aine O'Healy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. Read "Introduction: Identity as Exchange," pp. xiv-xx.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2005. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: (Blackwell Pub)
- Giusti, Marianna. "Everything I, an Italian, Thought I Knew about Italian Food Is Wrong." *Financial Times*, March 23, 2023
- Grohmann, Alberto, editor. *Omaggio a Perugia*. Translated by Erika Pauli (Firenze: Alinari, 2005)
- Horace, *A JOURNEY TO BRUNDISIUM*. (36 BCE) (Journey from Rome to Brindisi)
- Iyer, Pico. "Why We Travel." Salon online. (March 18, 2000)
- Johnstone, Mary A. *Perugia and Her People* (Perugia: Grafica, 1950)
- Kostof, Spiro. 1991. *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*. (Canada: Bulfinch Press)
- Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest: And Other Stories about Food and Culture*. (Columbia University Press; Reprint edition, December 4, 2012)
- Parasecoli, Fabio. "Gastronativism: Food, Identity, Politics." *FabioParasecoli.Com* (blog), Sept, 2022
- Parasecoli, Fabio. "The Invention of Authentic Italian Food." *Fabio Parasecoli.Com* (blog), July 22, 2019
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*. Reaktion Books (May 15, 2014)
- Pack, Sasha D. "Tourism and the History of Travel." *Journal of Tourism History* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2022)
- Shelley, Mary. *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840*, Volume 1
- Symonds, Margaret and Gordon, Lina Duff. *The Story of Perugia*. 1901
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46732/46732-h/46732-h.htm>
- Wong, Aliza. "Authenticity all'italiana: Food discourses, diasporas, and the limits of cuisine in contemporary Italy."
- Zappelli, Maria Rita. 2013. *Home Street Home: Perugia's History Told Through Its Streets*. Edited by Zachary Nowak. Translated by Deborah Rim Moiso and Alan Whykes (Perugia: Morlacchi Editore)

Each student must choose one of these books for a semester-long reading project:

1. ***Pagan Holiday: On the Trail of Ancient Roman Tourists***. Tony Perrottet. Random House. 2002.
 2. ***Without Reservations: The Travels of an Independent Woman***. Alice Steinbach. Random House. 2002.
 3. ***The Hills of Tuscany***. Ferenc Mate. Albatross (November 17, 1998)
 4. ***A Valley in Italy***, Lisa St. Aubin de Teran (1994)
 5. ***La Bella Figura***, Beppe Severgnini (2007)
 6. ***Nomadic Journey and the Spirit of Places***, Marina Abromov (2023)
 7. ***Italian Neighbors***. Tim Parks. Grove Press; Reprint edition (October 7, 2003)
 8. ***The Story of Perugia***. Margaret Symonds. Forgotten Books 2012) {Original publication 1901}
- Note: These following two textbooks are available for consultation in the Umbra library for those who wish to explore additional resources. We will be reading some bits from these as well.
 1. *Everything's an Argument* by Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz and Keith Walters, edited by Bedford/St. Martin's (2018, 8th edition)
 2. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 12th edition, by Joseph Williams and Joseph Bizup (Pearson, 2016)

Additional readings are listed in the final list of references - link at the end of the syllabus.

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Office Hours	5%
Travel Blog	20%
Essay #1 Perugia	15%
Essay #2 Travel	20%
Essay #3 Food	25%
Writing Presentation	5%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A A-	93% - 100% 90% - 92%	Exceptional Excellent
B+ B B-	87% - 89% 83% - 86% 80% - 82%	Superior
C+ C C-	77% - 79% 73% - 76% 70% - 72%	Satisfactory
D+ D D-	67% - 69% 63% - 66% 60% - 62%	Low Pass
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the midterm and final exams, a final project, written homework assignments, an individual presentation, and participation.

Attendance (10%)— Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

One-on-One Prof Meetings (5%)— Getting to know your professor is a great way to be more comfortable with them, and helps create an environment in which you are more likely to ask questions about various assignments, discuss paper ideas, or get help in general. You will fulfill this requirement by coming to see me twice during the semester. You'll receive 2.5% for meeting before Week 6, and another 2.5% for a second meeting before Week 10. See Moodle for a full description of what we can talk about during office hours.

Travel Blog (20%)—You will keep an online travel blog, one entry/week, in which you'll be exploring Perugia through your developing writing skills. You will incorporate techniques we'll be analyzing and learning through the semester. These blogs will be where you can showcase your knowledge of the city and your new ways of approaching travel, writing, and the combination of the two.

Essays (60%)— One of the central exercises in this class is to blend personal observations and analysis with theory and ideas from other writers to create compelling prose. During the course, the students will be required to write three distinct essays that build upon the skills developed throughout the classes. More specifically: Essay 1 (15%) will be a 1250-word essay, focused on constructing a cohesive descriptive text on students' first impression of Perugia and Umbria; Essay 2 (20%) will be a 1500-word essay based on expository writing, using food as a lens to investigate identity; Essay 3 (25%) will be a 1750-word essay that will draw on existing models of travel writing and use scholarly sources as part of the whole. See the full prompts in Moodle.

Writing Presentation (5%)— You will present your final paper to the class, and then read excerpts from it at an end-of-semester event. Details will be provided.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed **2 unexcused absences**, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (6 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source, or **use of an AI bot**) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom & Laptop Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones **must be set on silent mode** before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices (e.g., ear buds) **cannot be used during class lectures and discussions**, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have a vision or other accommodation; 2) if you are using a tablet to take notes, one which is not connected to the internet; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools; or 4) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

Expectations

Professional behavior is expected of all students. This includes preparation for classes, on-time attendance at classes, attendance at all group sessions and appropriate participation in the form of attentiveness and

contributions to the course. Respect for the academic process is the major guiding principle for professional behavior and extends to all communications, including email.

Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted as per instruction, by the stated deadline. Deadlines for online submissions are hard deadlines; no extensions will be allowed. Failure to submit the requisite final assignments for a course will result in a grade of F for that course. For mitigating/ extenuating circumstances to be considered, you must contact the Arcadia Academic Office prior to the work deadline. End of semester assessments must be submitted on time and before departing the country.

Students Requiring Academic Accommodations

Students with documented disabilities requiring accommodations to meet the expectations of this course should disclose this information while enrolling into the program, and before leaving the United States so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please direct any support queries regarding disability or learning differences to your Program Advisor.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Perugia & Space

Day 1:

Course Introduction including requirements:

- Students will keep a travel blog online/2 posts per week/24 total by end of semester
- Students will complete the readings **before class each day and come to class prepared to discuss the ideas and concepts.**
- **Hand out semester books** Students will read one book from the approved list on page 2 of the syllabus and present it to the class. (Criteria to be handed out and posted on Moodle.)
- Discuss strategic reading strategies/go over “How to Read...”

Discuss concepts:

space/place
travel/travail
power of place
creative non-fiction

In class exercise from Lappin, Linda, *The Soul of Place*. pp. xv-xvi

Readings: (to be done before class)

- Everyone - Cresswell, Tim. 2005. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Read section on “Defining Place”, pp. 1-18 (pay close attention to pp. 6-18)
- Everyone - Lappin, Linda, *The Soul of Place*. pp. 1-19

Day 2:

Piazza IV Novembre & Space/Place

Discuss concepts:

Space/place
Discuss Johnstone reading
‘Field Trip’ to Piazza
In-class assignment (in Piazza if warm enough):
Write about the Piazza

Readings (to be done before class) - Everyone

- Johnstone, Mary A. *Perugia and Her People*. pp. 228-232.
- Williams, Joseph M. *Style*. pp. 3, 11, 25-26, 31, 51, 109, 153, 201, 225

Weekend Reading – Everyone:

- Lappin, Linda, *The Soul of Place*, pp. 96-101
- Lakshmi, Padma and Saxena, Jaya. *The Best American Food and Travel Writing*.
 - Look over TOC, note which interest you and why - the title, subject, author? This book will be a semester-long project.

Week 2

Perugia & Space

Day 1: Nooks & Crannies Tour of Perugia (part 1) - TBC

15-30 mins. in-class discussion of concepts:

sacred/profane

Which chapters in *The Best American Food and Travel Writing* are you interested in, and why?

Remainder of class: Nooks and Crannies Tour, part 1

Readings (to be done before class):

- A - Kostof, Spiro. 1991. *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*. pp 29-41.
- B - Zappelli, Maria Rita. 2013. *Home Street Home: Perugia's History Told Through Its Streets*. pp. 8-35.

Day 2: Nooks & Crannies Tour of Perugia (part 2) - TBC

15-30 minutes in-class discussion of concepts:
organic cities especially
how places tell stories

Remainder of class - Tour

Readings (to be done before class):

- A - Zappelli, Maria Rita. 2013. *Home Street Home: Perugia's History Told Through Its Streets*. pp. 8-35.
- B - Kostof, Spiro. 1991. *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*. pp 43-56.
- Everyone – (mostly photos with tiny bit of text) Grohmann, Alberto, editor. *Omaggio a Perugia*. pp. 14-15, 22-23. 44-45. 52-53. 84-85.

Week 3

Perugia & Space

Day 1: Bringing place alive

Discuss concepts:

pilgrimage/pilgrim/traveler
Flaneur

Discuss chapter read from *The Best American Food and Travel Writing 2024* (Padma & Saxena/discuss style, techniques, etc.

Field trip: Exercise from Lappin - stroll streets or haunt square w/writing

Readings (to be done before class) – Everyone

- Lappin, Linda. *The Soul of Place*. pp. 54--77
- Lakshmi, Padma and Saxena, Jaya. *The Best American Food and Travel Writing*. One chapter.

Day 2: Bringing place alive

Discuss Lappin concepts

flaneur
markets

Field trip: Wednesday Market with Lappin reading about markets in mind

Readings (to be done before class): Everyone

- Everyone - Lappin, Linda, *The Soul of Place*. 78-92
- Zappelli, *Home Street Home*, read Piazza Grande (pp. 77-86), Via Alunni (34-35), and Borgo Sant'Angelo (132-133), and Via della Viola (149-150)

Week 4

Perugia & Space – Identity and Place

Day 1: Discuss concepts related to these first weeks

Place as Identity
Identity as Self

Readings (to be done before class):

- Kostof, Spiro. *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*. pp. 290-296, 305-310 (top)
- Goldberger, Paul. Why Architecture Matters. "Introduction (pp. iv-xvii), pp. 1, 107, 139-140, 172

Day 2:

Essay #1 draft - Bring **three copies** of a piece of writing to class. This can be a refined version of the writing you did in the city on Day 1 this week, or something new from **Lappin pages 54-69**. Check also her prompts on pp. **155-156**. **Essay #1 due**.

- In class critique of each other's written work.
- In-class writing – defining self in relation to PG as new space, as home

Weekend reading:

- Chapter/essay in *Best Food and Travel Writing*
- Check this page for examples of good writing. Find one or two you like: <https://tetw.org/Cities>

Week 5

Food, Place & Identity

Day 1: Using a Cultural Artefact to Analyze a Culture

Discuss concepts:

How identity is expressed in other ways than architecture, space.

How does **food** express identity

Readings (to be done before class):

- A - Capatti, Alberto, and Massimo Montanari. *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*. Translated by Aine O'Healy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. Read "Introduction: Identity as Exchange," pp. xiv-xx.
- B - Giusti, Marianna. "Everything I, an Italian, Thought I Knew about Italian Food Is Wrong." *Financial Times*, March 23, 2023, sec. FT Magazine.
<https://www.ft.com/content/6ac009d5-dbfd-4a86-839e-28bb44b2b64c>.

Day 2: Urban Anthropology through Food

Discuss readings

In-class writing

Readings (to be done before class):

- A - Parasecoli, Fabio. "Gastronativism: Food, Identity, Politics."
<https://fabioparasecoli.com/gastronativism-food-identity-politics/>.
- B - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest*. Chapter 1

Week 6

Food, Place & Identity

Day 1: Food as Identity: What does that even mean?

Discuss concepts:

The Globalization of food

Foodways

Readings(to be done before class):

- Everyone – Nowak, Zachary. *Torta al Testo*
- A - Parasecoli, Fabio. "The Invention of Authentic Italian Food."
<https://fabioparasecoli.com/the-invention-of-authentic-italian-food/>.
- B - Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente*. Chapter 7, pgs 223-232.
- Optional - Aliza Wong, "Authenticity all'italiana: Food discourses, diasporas, and the limits of cuisine in contemporary Italy." in *Representing Italy Through Food*. pp. 34-45 (read the endnotes as well).

Day 2: You and Food/Food and Identity

Discuss concepts:

subject position

identity

In-class work on each student's particular subject position, their connection to food and food traditions.

In-class writing assignment from Lappin.

Readings (to be done before class) – Everyone:

- Food vocabulary words (handout)
- Lappin, *The Soul of Place*. pp. 168-180.

[SPRING BREAK]

Spring Break Assignments:

Read one chapter from *Best Food and Travel Writing*.

Work on your essays (**first draft due in class Wed, March 11, final draft due March 15**)

Week 7

Food, Place & Identity

Day 1: What are food traditions / How we identify our selves with food

Discuss concepts

tradition

history

identity

representation

food as self

other ways to connect with culture

how we lose ourselves, or learn more about ourselves, through travel

how we connect with ourselves through writing

how we can write about food and ourselves/food and history/food and identity

Readings (to be done before class):

- A - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest*. Chapter 10
- B - Ascione, Elisa, and Christopher Fink. "Italian *sagre*: Preserving and Re-Inventing Cultural Heritage and Community through Food Festivals in Umbria, Italy." pp. 291–308.
- Everyone - Lappin, Linda. *The Soul of Place*. Pp. 158-162, 181-197.

Day 2: Discuss concepts:

Bring two copies of draft Essay 2 In-class critique of each other's work.

Discuss a chapter from *Best Food and Travel Writing*, what they found compelling about it and why, where it fell short and why, what will they take to use in their own writing (style, etc.).

If we have time:

- In-class writing exercise in particular style
- In-class writing exercise from Lappin

Essay #2 due via Moodle

Field Trip: Saturday, Mar 14 - to Bomarzo.

In Bomarzo's Sacro Bosco we will have a 1-hour walking tour, then you will have time to wander/be a flaneur/write

Read before our field trip:

- Everyone - Godwin, Joscelyn. *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance*, Chapter 8, pp. 153-180 (narrow this down)
- Remind yourselves of what it means to be a **flaneur**.



Week 8

Travel & Travail I

Day 1: Bomarzo And Viterbo recap

Bring the writing you did in Bomarzo and/or Viterbo

Lecture on travel and travail

Readings (to be done before class):

- Everyone - Pack, Sasha D. "Tourism and the History of Travel." *Journal of Tourism History*. pp 103–17.

Day 2: The Idea of Travel: From the Romans to the Romantics, and Beyond

Discuss concepts:

travel / travail

where students have seen this dichotomy/connection play out in the readings this week, other pieces they've read, their semester book reading

where and how students have experienced this connection in the last eight weeks, and did they write about it in their blog

Readings (to be done before class) – Everyone:

- Shelley, Mary. *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840*, Volume 1
 - Required: pp 101-104, 64-70 (esp descriptions 67-70)
 - Optional: "Preface"
- Horace - *Journey to Brindisi*

Week 9

Travel & Travail II

Day 1: Approaches to Travel Writing

Discussion

Which chapter did you read/what techniques worked for you and which didn't?

How will you incorporate the ones that worked into your own writing?

What will you be doing differently?

In-class writing

Readings (to be done before class) – Everyone:

- At least one essay from *Best American Food and Travel Writing*
- Lunsford, A.A. and Ruskiewicz, J.J.. *Everything's an Argument*. pp. 312-315, 318-331.
 - Find one tidbit of info that you believe is important about writing, to share with class.

Day 2: Why we travel & why we write about it

Reading(to be done before class):

- Everyone - Iyer, Pico. "Why we Travel." Salon online.

Week 10

Travel & Travail II

Day 1: Presenting your semester book

Day 2: Presenting your semester book

Each person will discuss the book they read (out of the six choices listed above) and note passages they felt were powerful, examples of written phrases or use of language, grammar choices, etc. that worked for helping effectively tell the story.

Guidelines for other issues/concepts to cover are in Moodle.

Weekend/ Before Next Class Reading:

- Everyone – Deloria & Olson – "Ideas and Arguments"

Week 11

Putting It All Together I/Work on Final Projects

Day 1: No class

Day 2: Putting It All Together

For 2027: Ideas, Projects, and Writing for the future

Brainstorm final project

Guidelines for final project will be discussed

Week 12

Work on Final Project

Day 1: Bring outline/first draft/notes of Final Essay- anything you have for your final project. You should also have a list of sources you will be using

We will discuss these efforts.

We will also discuss the last required reading of the *Best Travel and Food Writing...* book

Reading (to be done before class):

- Everyone - One chapter of *Best American...*
 - As always, think about what works, what doesn't, what you want to incorporate, what not to do, etc.

Day 2: Bring close to final draft of Essay #3

In-class discussion of issues, fears, problems, successes, ways you have been surprised by the writing process, what you want help with, what you want to share of your writing, etc.

Week 13

Day 1: Presentation of your final paper to class

Final drafts should be nearly finalized

Essay #3 due by midnight Thursday, 23 April via Moodle

Additional Relevant Works

See [the annotated bibliography](#) of other works in English that talk about Perugia and/or Umbria, as well as the books themselves in the Umbra Library.