

CMST 4150-1: Tourism as Communication & Performance

Fall 2016 MWF 1:30 – 2:30

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. David Terry

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OFFICE HOURS: MW 2:30 - 3:30 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES

This course explores contemporary tourism in a broad context of communication and performance studies. Tourism is a popular leisure pursuit, of course, as well as a booming multinational industry. But tourism is also a complex medium of transnational communication and performance that is transforming daily life and the experience of being human (culture).

Most people and nations around the world are affected by tourism in one way or another, either as “hosts” or “guests,” and over the next 10-15 years the number of people traveling annually as tourists is expected to double. From the tourist’s point of view, such travel is (usually) good. Tourism’s impact on the “host” society, however, is hotly debated. Many poorer societies view tourism as synonymous with “development,” seeing it as the path toward an improved quality of life for their citizens. Others see it as a new form of colonialism or imperialism, destructive of both the local environment and the local culture. Still other critics point to a paradox at the heart of tourism, one that is similar to the classic paradox of communication: that the effect of greater ease and economy of travel is to distance people from themselves, each other, and the world (alienation), rather than bring them closer together.

Yet, while tourism undoubtedly has created new problems, it also provides new means for thought and creativity. Working with the principle that “it takes one to know one,” we’ll test the feasibility of using tourism against itself, as it were, as a means by which tourists in general, and each of us in particular, might play a more active and productive role in creating the “imagined community” of our nation, region, etc. Many of the examples and cases we’ll read about and discuss will be drawn from international tourism, but one of the things we’ll attempt to do is to bring these lessons home by investigating how “Louisiana” is defined, represented, and experienced in tourism, with the aim of understanding (and perhaps intervening in) how the touristic (re)invention of Louisiana shapes attitudes toward its people, places, and events and sets the agenda for public/political policies that affect us as citizens of Louisiana.

REQUIRED TEXTS

TO PURCHASE OR RENT: De Botton, *The Art of Travel* https://www.amazon.com/Art-Travel-Alain-Botton/dp/0375725342/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1471032018&sr=8-1&keywords=the+art+of+travel (\$10 on Amazon) We will not use this till later in the semester, so plenty of time to order it online— but don’t wait too long!

PDFs On MOODLE:

Bowman, Michael S. "Looking for Stonewall's Arm: Tourist Performance as Research Method." *Opening Acts: Performance in/as Communication and Cultural Studies*. Ed. Judith Hamera. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006. 102-133. Print.

Bowman, Michael S. "Performing Southern History for the Tourist Gaze: Antebellum Home Tour Guide Performances." *Exceptional Spaces: Essays in Performance & History*. Ed. Della Pollock. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. 142-157. Print.

Crouch, David. "Surrounded by Place: Embodied Encounters." *Tourism: Between Place and Performance*. Ed. Simon Coleman and Mike Crang. New York: Berghahn, 2002. 207-236. Print.

Gmelch, Sharon Bohn. "Why Tourism Matters." *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*. Ed. Sharon Bohn Gmelch. Long Grove: Waveland, 2004. 3-21. Print.

Graburn, Nelson H.H. "Secular Ritual: A General Theory of Tourism." *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*. Ed. Sharon Bohn Gmelch. Long Grove: Waveland, 2004. 23-34. Print.

Greenwood, Davydd J. "Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization." *Tourists and Tourism: A Reader*. Ed. Sharon Bohn Gmelch. Long Grove: Waveland, 2004. 157-169. Print.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Introduction" and "Objects of Ethnography." *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 1-28. Print.

Madison, D. Soyini and Judith Hamera. "Performance Studies at the Intersections." *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*. Ed. D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006. xi-xxv. Print.

ASSIGNMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES¹

¹ If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a staff member in the Office of Disability Services (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be considered. Students that receive accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

Evaluation will be based on attendance and participation in class (50 points), three (3) group projects (50 points each), and a midterm and final examination (50 points each).

Attendance & Participation – 50 points

Your enrollment in any course entails certain social responsibilities, such as attendance, preparedness, and involvement in group discussions. This is especially so in smaller courses such as this and in Communication Studies courses generally. What that means is that you come to class, “keep up” with all the readings assigned to you each week, that you prepare some kind of response to the reading before you come to class, and that you dive into the discussion by sharing your thoughts with others, offering feedback to others’ ideas, and making some effort to ask and answer questions.

All of us in this class have been tourists, seen tourists in action, and no doubt hold some strong opinions about tourism and tourists. Because we’ve all been touched by tourism, our collective experiences and perceptions on the subject should make for some interesting discussions. But the course also requires intellectual curiosity, a willingness to try on different ways of thinking about a subject with which many of you may already have considerable experience, and a willingness to work with others.

Certainly, different individuals will make different sorts of contributions to our work in here, and my evaluation of your week-by-week contributions will inevitably be somewhat subjective. However, in order to objectify the matter of “participation” a bit, here are some specific things I’ll expect from you so you’ll know how better to meet the “good citizenship” standards outlined above.

Attend class. Most class sessions will be run in a lecture/discussion format. While I like to hear myself talk as much as the next person, and while lectures are sometimes an efficient means of disseminating information, I find it is often more productive to engage a subject through dialogue rather than monologue. Hence, while I may begin many classes with some lecture material, I’ll plan to open the class up to group discussion early and often. In addition, significant class time will be devoted to small group work (see below). Obviously, you cannot participate in any of this if you don’t come to class. Those who miss 3 or fewer classes will automatically receive 25 of the 50 points possible for Attendance & Participation. Each absence after the 3rd will cost you 1 point, however. NOTE: I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, so plan your “sick days” accordingly: if you spend your 3 “sick days” when you are not ill, for instance, and then you come down with a real illness or emergency later in the semester and miss another week of class, you’ll still lose the points.

Read the assigned material—and be prepared to discuss it. Each week, you'll be assigned 50-75 pp. of reading to do from the required texts and supplementary materials I'll make available to you on Moodle. You'll also need to do some additional reading on your own, of course, in order to complete the various group projects. I'll expect you to keep up with the assigned reading as we go, rather than trying to cram it all in before the exams, and I'll provide you with some questions to help focus your reading and give you specific topics or issues to think about and talk about in class. The remaining 25 points of your A&P grade will be determined on the basis of your contributions to the success of these discussions. If no one seems to have anything to say, I reserve the option of using pop quizzes to determine what you know or think about the subjects. *Graduate students taking the course will be expected to lead one of our class sessions during the semester, devoting part of the class to supplementary lecture and part of it to class discussion.*

Group Projects – 3 @ 50 points ea.

Each of you will be assigned to/join a study/research group—which we may as well call a “tour group.” That term is a metaphor to suggest the nature of group collaboration: your study group benefits (and suffers?) from the mix of interests, experiences, points of view, energy levels, and prejudices, just as a tour group does. The purpose of the tour group is to gain some experience in collaborative problem-solving, which is, of course, the way you'll often work professionally when you leave school—and the way you'll have to work if you ever travel with anyone. Tour groups are expected to meet outside of class to plan their group projects and presentations, to develop travel itineraries, to take trips together, to learn the course material, and to engage in routine problem-solving discussions of one sort or another. The tour group metaphor hopefully may suggest other things to you: about how you might collectively interrelate, about the scenes of your interactions, about the balancing of task and maintenance functions, about the interdependence of group members, for instance.

Each tour group is expected to undertake the following three (3) projects (further details regarding each project will be given as we proceed):

Louisiana tourist site visit. Each tour group should plan and make at least one trip together. The purpose of the trip is to visit some more-or-less local site that is associated with and/or promoted as a site/destination for tourists who visit Louisiana. Where you go and what you do I'll leave to you to decide as a group. During the year, as some of you no doubt know, Louisiana has festival-like events going on nearly every week that draw visitors from around the state, the region, the nation, and the world. There are lots of things to see and visit—as our state tourist office and various chambers of commerce can tell you—that may be right around the corner, as it were, but which you haven't yet seen. Many of these visits can easily be made in a day or an afternoon or evening, and you don't have to spend much money to see them. Your aim in visiting the site as a group is two-fold: (a.) to try to experience it as a tourist, to see it as a tourist might see it; and (b.)

to analyze it as a student of the rhetorical and performative aspects of tourist sites. After making the trip and debriefing yourselves about that, you'll prepare and present a 20 minute formal group presentation to the class.

Tourism's "Louisiana". "Louisiana" is an idea—an idea with a history. There was a time before "Louisiana," and there may come a time after and without "Louisiana"—as we all know from having lived through hurricanes and oil spills the last few years. Meanwhile, the idea of "Louisiana" has undergone some revisions in the last 25 - 30 years as a result of efforts to promote and market Louisiana as a tourist destination during the '80s and '90s, and now again in the wake of the various disasters that have befallen us in the last decade. As I mentioned above, one of the things we want to consider in this course is how Louisiana is defined, represented, experienced, or understood in contemporary tourism. Consequently, I'll ask each tour group to focus on a particular medium, set of artifacts, or collection of texts—anything from Hollywood films to TV commercials to guide books and promotional literature to souvenirs—which seek to shape "the tourist imagination." We all know that "the real Louisiana" is very different from the Louisiana that the tourists think they know, right? Well, this project asks you to look at some of the ways the tourism industry, the State of Louisiana itself, and various other interests seek to shape tourists' ideas of Louisiana. The project will culminate in a group presentation to the class, where you'll share your findings with us.

Experimenting with tourism. Tourism's negative effects on people, environments, and cultures have led a number of groups and individuals to begin to rethink and revise how tourism is done. As a result, such things as "ecotourism," "volunteer" tourism, "responsible" tourism, and "experimental" tourism are being invented and practiced in various locales. For the final project in the course, I'll expect each tour group to design and execute an alternative tour of some kind, based on one of the models we'll cover in the course, and then prepare and present a 20 minute group presentation in which the group shares their ideas with us and makes a case to convince us of the benefits or advantages of their tour idea in relation to "normal" tourist practices.

Midterm and Final Exams – 50 points each

Two examinations will be used to test your mastery of the materials presented in the course, one during the midterm period and one during the final exam period. Most of the questions on these exams will be taken from or based on the study/discussion questions I'll give you each week, so there shouldn't be any real surprises for you come exam times if you keep up with the class.

Graduate students will be expected to write an additional essay at the end of the semester as part of their final examination requirement.

Grading Scale

A += 295 – 300 points

A = 276 – 294 points
A - = 270 – 275 points
B+ = 265 – 269 points
B = 246– 264 points
B - = 240 – 245 points
C + = 235– 239 points
C = 216 – 234 points
C - = 210 – 215 points
D + = 205 – 209 points
D = 186– 204 points
D - = 180 – 185 points
F = 179 points or ↓

Course Schedule will be posted on Moodle