

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES STUDY ABROAD:  
Places and Popular Culture: Travel Writing, Social Media, and the Wild Canadian West**

Summer 2020  
June 27 – July 8, 2020

Campus Class Meetings—2 meetings prior to departure, 1 meeting after returning (times and dates TBD)

**Instructor:** Dr. Melanie McNaughton  
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**Course Description:**

Canada is often thought of as a nation of bland polite people, moored to a frozen wilderness populated by polar bears and beavers. Although Canadians may be distinguished by their civility (sorry), Canada is a vast country made up of very diverse cultural aspects. This course will explore western Canada in particular, focusing on 3 subject areas: dinosaurs, cowboy culture, and WWII internment camps (Canadians may be polite, but they have also perpetrated significant social wrongs).

The course will link these diverse areas through the practice of travel writing. Students will be introduced to the genre, and will develop a series of travel pieces. This writing will be shared on student-produced travel blogs, and will also incorporate social media strategies. At the conclusion of the course, student will have developed a set of portfolio materials and products they can use to illustrate their skills to acquire future internships or professional career positions.

As a Communication Studies course, the class will count towards credit in the Communication Studies major and minor. In consultation with the instructor and appropriate area studies coordinator, students may apply this course as an elective in Canadian Studies. This course may fulfill the following CORE requirements: Global Culture, Multiculturalism, Writing Intensive.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completing the course, students will have:

- developed knowledge of the unique characteristics that make up western Canada, as well as a deeper understanding of one the three course areas (Canadian cowboy culture, dinosaurs and paleo-history, Japanese Canadian internment)
- developed an understanding of the elements of effective travel writing
- developed an understanding of the elements of effective social media strategies
- produced a writing portfolio / travel blog
- situated their writing in a larger intellectual conversation through research and writing
- developed an ability to critique other's writing constructively and to use peer feedback
- learned to use technology to develop a visual voice to accompany their writing

**Possible Texts:**

The reading list may change a bit, but these are the potential texts for the course.

There will be a small collection of readings students will read before departing to western Canada. These readings will include ideas and strategies about travel writing and effective social media engagement, as well as topic-focused readings.

The course has three topic areas – students will choose 1 to specialize in. Students will choose 1 of the 3 key topic areas of the course (WWII Japanese internment camps, cowboy culture / the Calgary Stampede, or dinosaurs) – readings will offer students a starting point for research on their chosen area of focus. Additionally, the readings will offer background and history on the places we will explore. A preliminary list of possible readings includes:

*Travel writing & social media:*

Ferguson, Marjorie. "Invisible Divides: Communication and Identity in Canada and the U.S." *Journal of Communication* 43.2 (1993): 42-57.

George, Don. The Lonely Planet's Guide to Travel Writing. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Lonely Planet, 2013. ISBN: 9781743216880

Hennessy, Brittany. Influencer: Building Your Personal Brand in the age of Social Media. Citadel, 2018.

Shapiro, Michael. A Sense of Place: Great Travel Writers Talk About Their Craft, Lives, and Inspiration. Traveler's Tales, 2004.

*Dinosaurs:*

Brusatte, Steve. The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A new History of a Lost World. William Morrow, 2018.

Switek, Brian. My Beloved Brontosaurus: On the Road with Old Bones, New Science, and Our Favorite Dinosaurs. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Reprint edition, 2014.

*Canadian Cowboy culture:*

Foran, Max, ed. Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede. AU Press, 2008.

Seiler, Robert M., and Tamara Seiler. "The Social Construction of the Canadian Cowboy: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Posters, 1952-1972." *The Journal of Canadian Studies* 33.3 (1998), 51-82.

*Japanese internment:*

Hickman, Pamela, and Masako Fukawa. Righting Canada's Wrongs: Japanese Canadian Internment in the Second World War. Lorimer, 2012.

Otsuka, Julie. When the Emperor was Divine. Anchor, 2003.

## **Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

### **Guidelines and Policies:**

All students must:

- Attend all class sessions at Bridgewater State University and in Taiwan;
- Interact in a professional and interested manner as a representative of Bridgewater State University;

- Be prepared for the content and nature of class sessions;
- Write and present pre-trip research;
- Complete all course assignments

**Assignment Overview:**

Each student will complete the assignments listed below for a total of 1000 points. Detailed assignment instructions and grading rubrics will be provided for each assignment.

Attendance and Participation	250
Reflective Writing	100
Social Media Analysis/Application	150
Travel Writing Blog/Portfolio	250
Research Paper on Selected Topic Area	250

**Tentative Itinerary:**

- Departure from Boston to Calgary: June 27, 2020
- Dinosaurs, paleohistory, paleontology: June 28-30, 2020
  - Royal Tyrell museum
  - Dinosaur Provincial Park
  - Badlands
- Cowboy culture, Calgary Stampede: July 1-3, 2020
  - Calgary Stampede
  - Calgary Heritage Park
  - Banff
- Travel from Alberta to British Columbia: July 4, 2020
- Japanese Internment camp tour, wilderness experiences: July 5-7, 2020
  - Sunshine Valley Tashme Museum
  - Japanese Canadian National Museum / Nikkei National Museum and cultural center
  - Jasper wilderness hike
- Departure from Vancouver to Boston: July 8, 2020

**Grading Scale:**

		B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		
A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%	F	below 60%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%		