

JOU020C110J Travel Journalism

Academic discipline: Arts and Digital Industries

Module Convenor: Dr Juan Pérez González

Credits: 20

Module information

Caravanning in Bognor Regis, visiting the pyramids in Egypt, a weekend shopping in New York? Paragliding over Rio's Copacabana beach? Scuba diving in the Maldives? Where are you going next? Tourism has grown to be the world's largest industry, employing more people than any other. Travel journalism has mirrored this growth and we now encounter many forms of it: newspaper and magazine articles, television programmes and documentaries, and the countless stories of amateur travel enthusiasts in Instagram. This module aims to introduce students to some of the key issues and debates in this field. It will consider how travel journalism represents 'other' people and 'other' places and how the media influence how we experience, manage, and remember our trips around the world, to the most inaccessible spots on the planet or to a quiet, small market town just two hours from home. Class exercises will take place off campus, with the aim of developing students' key reporting skills. Through the sessions of the module, students will also produce different forms of travel journalism: listicles, features, picture galleries, social media stories. Working together as an editorial team, students will create a website promoting a city or country.

Teaching and learning methods

This module will be taught through a combination of the following methods:

- eight in-class sessions on the Roehampton campus
- two journalistic field exercises in Richmond and Westminster
- five asynchronous e-tivities (each available for 24 hours) that will encourage you to reflect on the module's in-person content and develop tools to apply to your assessment

While attendance is not factored into the grade for this module, students who wish to perform well in their assessment should aim to attend all sessions and complete all tasks to achieve the best possible academic outcome. If you are unable to attend a session, please notify the module convenor and follow any instructions to catch up on content you have missed.

In-person teaching schedule

Session 1	Introduction to Travel Journalism. From Herodotus to Attenborough: travellers, adventurers, storytellers.
Session 2	Where are you going next? The tourism industry and the search for authenticity.
Session 3	My selfie with the Gioconda: the tourist gaze.
Session 4	Class Exercise off campus: Richmond.
Session 5	Stunning, dangerous, incomprehensible: representations of the world in travel publications.
Session 6	"I have not told half of what I saw": how to write a travel feature.
Session 7	Travel Photography.
Session 8	Class Exercise off campus: Westminster.
Session 9	Travel documentaries.
Session 10	Thank you for your review: travel journalism and social media. Presentation of the Team Projects

Assessment

Component (assessment) Type/Title	Coursework Volume or Length/Type of Exam	%
The Bucket List	800 words	25
Feature and Picture Gallery	1200 words and five pictures	50
Team Project	Website	25

The Bucket List (800 words, 25% of overall grade)

You will write an 800-word list of places (it could be cities, natural landscapes, human-made monuments, museums, restaurants, attractions) or travel-related activities under a unifying theme (for instance, "The Seven Greek Islands Tourists Have Not Discovered" or "The Ten Best Modern Art Museums in Korea", or "The 12 Most Beautiful Towns in South America", or "The Five Best Meals in Central Europe and Where to Eat Them", or "Five Natural Parks in East Asia to see wildlife" or "The Five Best Beaches for Surfing in 2024", or "10 Best Mountains for a Beginner Alpinist") for a travel magazine or the travel section of a national broadsheet. The purpose of your piece is to offer the reader a range of possible choices he or she might want to consider when planning future trips.

You are more likely to receive a higher grade if you:

1. have correctly identified an original, intriguing, interesting, theme for your list;
2. have conducted adequate research and provided interesting, relevant information about each place or activity in your list;
3. have provided rich, original, intriguing descriptions of the places or activities in your list, whenever appropriate or justified;
4. have written your list as if intended for the adult, educated traveller who reads a national or international travel magazine or the travel section of a national broadsheet;
5. have included quotations from at least two different relevant sources;
6. have included relevant pictures accompanying the list;
7. have presented your list in grammatically correct English and a appealing, interesting, elegant style.

Feature and Picture Gallery (1200 words and 5 pictures, 50% of overall grade)

Write a 1200-word travel journalism feature on a topic of your choice. The feature should be based on your own, real, experience of travel. By no means it needs to be based on a trip to an exotic or remote destination: we don't expect you to buy a ticket to go to Tanzania to see the lions, or to Florence to see the glorious Uffizi gallery, or taste the equally glorious gelati, or to the Iguazu Falls or to San Francisco (and sadly, we can't pay for your ticket to those wonderful places either). But, for example, you could write a travel feature on the very beautiful Richmond Park (just behind the Whitelands campus) or on a particular location in central London. Or you can take the train to Brighton or Hastings on a Saturday morning and write a piece about those famous towns.

You will write this feature for a London-based travel magazine of your choice, or alternatively, a newspaper with a travel section. Remember to make clear which, at the top of your submission, and make sure you follow the style, tone and general approach to travel of that magazine or newspaper.

You should include in your submission a gallery of your own photographs. You can take photographs with a camera or smart phone and copy-paste them into your document, which you can then save as a Word document or a PDF. You will not be marked down if your photographs don't meet high professional standards, but do your best, and consider how they would complement, expand, illustrate, make better your article. You need to include at least five pictures in your text.

You are more likely to receive a higher grade if you:

1. have identified a subject appropriate for a travel feature based on your own, real experience;
2. have written an original, interesting, intriguing, creative, thought-provoking narrative piece that shows an intellectually and emotionally rich appreciation of a particular place or people;

3. have made use of different narrative resources, such as scenes, characters, dialogue, description, and a clear, strong, compelling narrative voice;
4. have provided, when appropriate or necessary, contextual information (history, politics, culture) to support your story and inform the reader about aspects of a place or people that he or she might not know;
5. have written a piece in grammatically-correct English;
6. have submitted, as requested in the assessment's guidelines, at least five pictures that would hypothetically accompany your piece in a newspaper or magazine.

Team Project (Website, 25% of overall grade)

A site dedicated to show visitors London as they never imagined it.

The group will create a website (using any free platform) dedicated to provide information to visitors to London interested in discovering a side of the city seldom seen in films and TV series and not included in typical tourist routes.

While some factual information would be the same as in any guide, you need to put it in your own words. The group would get higher marks if you find really interesting aspects of the city's life, history, or culture that might not appear in the most popular guides.

The most important aspect of this project is that it aims to provide well-researched, sophisticated advice for a traveller, not a "tourist".

You will get a higher grade if you are able to add to the site all sort of information and resources (videos, articles, picture galleries -remember to respect copyright!- music and tips) that would help a traveller who visits London have as an "authentic" experience as possible: at least, not the "touristy" experience that most ordinary tourists would get. Your tutor will indicate a resource or section to add to the site every day, but you can and should be proactive finding new resources to make a site that does not look like your classmates' and actually resembles the city to which it has been dedicated.

The team projects will be discussed and assessed in the final session of the module.