



Arts & Letters Hall Room 206  
16 Sept -18 Nov June 2012

Tuesdays 6:00-9:15 PM  
Finals due in dropbox 25 Nov

~INSTRUCTOR: **Barrie Jean Borich**      Arts & Letter Hall 213-03 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor annex/ in the corner)  
Fall 2014 OFFICE HOURS:      Thursdays 2:00-6:00 p.m. *and by appointment.*

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO COME IN TO DISCUSS YOUR WORK. The best time is after your draft is workshopped (in small group or by the full class), but any time is fine. It's best to make an appointment to make sure I'm in and not busy with another student.

EMAIL: [bborich@depaul.edu](mailto:bborich@depaul.edu). Office: 773-325-8109.

I'm happy to hear from you and **email is quickest**. (I check my office voice mail infrequently so don't rely on messages left at that number.) I usually respond to email within 48 hours during the week, but occasionally get behind. Please send me a follow-up email if I don't respond within a couple of days.

**I WILL USE EMAIL FREQUENTLY TO CONTACT ALL CLASS MEMBERS** so please make sure Campus Connect has your current email address, and remember to check mail regularly.

Feel free to friend me at my public FACEBOOK site—*Barrie Borich Nonfiction-Universe*—developed for conversation within my teaching/writing communities. I try to add new links regularly. I also tweet mostly on the topics of cities, bicycles and the future of the book. Follow me @BOOKofBJB.

#### ~COURSE TEXTS

ANTHROPOLOGIES By ALVARADO

MATTER OF RATS By KUMAR

IN THE CITY: RANDOM ACTS OF AWARENESS By BROOKS

THE HORIZONTAL WORLD By MARQUART

VOLCANO By HONGO

AND a variety of articles, essays and short memoirs posted on our class Desire2Learn site at: [d2l.depaul.edu](http://d2l.depaul.edu)

## **~COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The most compelling nonfiction subjects are located somewhere, beholden to places and spaces it takes all our senses to describe. How do personal and lyric essayists, memoirists and literary reporters use location to: ponder the relationships between memory, landscape, politics and identity; explore issues of immigration and exile; scrutinize loyalty to home and places of origin; embrace or reject some ground they can't forget? In this workshop we write, critique and revise new writing as we consider the work of a few creative nonfiction writers whose stories, immersions and inquiries are bound to public and private landscapes and whose works attempt to describe, explore, question and honor the hard-to-pin-down aspects of place and space.

## **~COURSE GOALS**

*At the end of this course students will be able to:*

- Speak and write knowledgeably on the multiple uses and meanings of place in nonfiction literary writing;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the strategies authors use to render a sense of place and explore issues related to place in their works;
- Apply craft and thematic understandings to drafts and revisions of their own new or ongoing creative nonfiction writing projects.

## **~COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **READING**

We read an array of short and long form memoirs, selected to demonstrate uses and treatments of place in literary memoirs and personal essays; we also read about geographical concepts, in order to stretch and challenge the attention to place in our writings; and we read and critique drafts of work-in-progress, in both small group and full-class workshops.

### **BLOGGING**

We write six substantive blog posts in response to some aspect of assigned reading, around 500 words each. These can be creative, reflective or some combination. I post questions and writing prompts on the instructor blog to help get you started, but you should feel free to go your own way, as long as your weekly submission relates in some way to the week's reading. CHECK YOUR EMAIL for the Edublog invite to your blog (which only our class can see without the password). *Due weekly online by 5:59PM on class meeting nights.* You will receive class additional participation points, as well as extremely good karma, if you comment on classmate blogs.

### **RESEARCH**

Please plan to conduct some manner of place-based research and integrate this exploration into your final draft. This can be conventional web and/ or library research, or can be an interview or conversation with anyone from a professional to a family member, or it can be "archive of the feet" style research where you return to a place to take note of sensory details, or anything at all you come up with that moves you beyond memory into some form of information gathering.

### **GENERATING/REVISING/WORKSHOPPING**

Plan to settle on your project focus by the conclusion of Week 4 and continue to work on this project throughout the term, responding to course readings on your blog with this project in mind. You workshop early drafts in small group the third and fourth week of the course and workshop a longer draft of the piece you will revise for your final on a randomly assigned date in weeks 5-9.

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**PREPARING FOR WORKSHOP:** You are responsible for distributing your full-class workshop draft via D2L by the deadlines, for attentive written response to your classmates' works. I will hand out a worksheet to help you organize your workshop responses. You submit copies of your full-class workshop written critiques for a grade.

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In all cases, appropriate workshop and peer review etiquette is your primary concern. In class discussion of your drafts we will always start with description and strengths, respond to artist's questions before offering revision opinion and, in an effort to remember we are critiquing the author's art, not the author's life, we will take care to address the character speaking from the page as THE NARRATOR, rather than as YOU. *Please do not forget that we are a community working together to enrich the craft and process of all the work on the table. Any lack of civility, in small group or full class workshops, or on written critiques, will have a negative impact on your grade.*

### The DRAFT and REVISION assignments are as follows:

- On **THREE** occasions you bring copies and read aloud to your small group, twice early in the term (these are early 500-750 word drafts/ 2 -3 double-spaced pages—you will pick one of these to turn into the instructor, via the dropbox, for light notes) and once at the end (this is a revision excerpt, for your small group only).
- On **ONE** occasion you submit a **draft of 1500—2500 words (6-10 double-spaced pages) for distribution to the full class** for an in-depth critique discussion focused on revision. You will be assigned your workshop randomly at the first class session and distribute by posting your draft in the appropriate D2L workshop forums (for distribution purposes only. The discussion will occur in our face-to-face class). Your classmates will have the option to comment on your work on paper or digitally, but everyone must come to class with printed comments to return to the workshop authors.
- You complete a **major substantive revision of 3000- 5000 words (12-20 double-spaced pages)** due via D2L Dropbox by the final exam date. **Please integrate some form of place-based research into your final draft.** This revision might be part of a larger work, but aim for a stand-alone short form version of your material.

## ~COURSE CALENDAR

*Subject to Change. Complete readings for the date listed. Find essays and articles on D2L*

### WEEK 1 16 September

Introductions. “Reasons Why I Do Not Wish To Leave Chicago” by Alexander Hemon and “Mississippi Montage” by Colleen McElroy.

### WEEK 2 23 September

**READING**— ESSAYS: “Shadow Cities” by Andre Aciman; “Orphans in a Terrorist World” by Rigoberto Gonzalez; “The Subjunctive Mood” by Michele Morano; “City Map” by Daniel Stolar; “Detroit Arcadia” by Rebecca Solnit.

ARTICLES: “The Power of Place and Space” by Robert Stack; “What is a Sense of Place” by Jennifer Cross.

**WRITING**—Please plan to read aloud up to 300 words of new draft work in response to your choice from the Place Prompts or to anything you’ve read this week, to introduce your writing voice to the class. [No formal blog due yet this week, but please attempt to post this first writing to the blog before class tonight, as practice.]

### WEEK 3 30 September

**READING**— *IN THE CITY: RANDOM ACTS OF AWARENESS* by COLETTE BROOKS. ARTICLE: excerpt from *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard

**SMALL GROUP WORKSHOPS** —Please bring four copies of this week’s writing exercise to read to your small group, for early stage critique. **DUE:** Blog #1, by class time.

### WEEK 4 7 October—Small Group Meetings

**The instructor will not be present this week**, but small groups make their own arrangements to meet during class time at any mutually agreeable location, to chat about readings and gently workshop more new work. Please elect one member of the group to mail the instructor with a recap (I will particularly want to hear responses to readings) and list students present. Reading and blog assignments are still due, but note the flexible deadline below. **READING**—“Ruin” by Adrienne Kalfopoulou; “A Little While” by Edwidge Dandicat; “The Butterfly Effect” by Jennifer Lunden. [This week’s readings have migration themes—from human migration to butterfly migration. This connects to special events on campus and in Chicago this week. See below for optional activities, and if you go feel free to use any of these events as blog subjects.]

**WORKSHOPS**— **Workshop 1 manuscripts** must be posted as attachments in the D2L workshop forum by 11:59PM Wed. 8 Oct. **DUE:** Blog #2, by 11:59 p.m. FRIDAY 10 Oct (this week only—in light of related events.)

#### RELATED CAMPUS and OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS:

- **Artists Uprising Series: Migration is Beautiful:** Tuesday October 7, 2014 Student Center 314B 9:10AM-11:40AM Artist activist Favianna Rodriguez talks about her art practice creating powerful and unapologetic art pieces and shares snippets of Migration is Beautiful, the recent documentary highlighting her work. She will also discuss how artists around the country are organizing around migrant rights and shifting public sentiment. <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/cip/artistuprising.html>
- **Adrienne Kalfopoulou** reads from her new book *Ruin: Essays in Exilic Living*, at Women and Children First Bookstore in Andersonville on Friday 10 Oct, 7:30 p.m.

**WEEK 5** 14 October

**READING**— VOLCANO by GARRETT HONGO (Part 1: DRAGON) [And we will briefly discuss last week’s reading.]

**WORKSHOPS**—Come prepared tonight for **WORKSHOP 1**. Please download the critique worksheet on D2L. Workshop 2 manuscripts must be posted as attachments in the D2L workshop forum by 11:59PM Wed 15 Oct. **No Blog due this week**

**WEEK 6** 21 October

**READING**— VOLCANO by GARRETT HONGO (Part 2: THE UNREAL DWELLING)

**WORKSHOPS**—Come prepared tonight for **WORKSHOP 2**. Workshop 3 manuscripts must be posted as attachments in the D2L workshop forum by 11:59PM Wed 22 Oct. **DUE:** Blog #3, by class time.

**WEEK 7** 28 October

**READING**— ANTHROPOLOGIES by BETH ALVARADO. ARTICLE: “Autogeographies” by Barrie Jean Borich

**WORKSHOPS**—Come prepared tonight for **WORKSHOP 3**. Workshop 4 manuscripts must be posted as attachments in the D2L workshop forum by 11:59PM Wed 29 Oct. **DUE:** Blog #4, by class time.

**WEEK 8** 4 November

**READING**— A MATTER OF RATS by AMITAVA KUMAR (You might also want to start the Marquart book.)

**WORKSHOPS**—Come prepared tonight for **WORKSHOP 4**. Workshop 5 manuscripts must be posted as attachments in the D2L workshop forum by 11:59PM Wed 5 Nov. **DUE:** Blog #5, by class time.

**WEEK 9** 11 November

**READING**— THE HORIZONTAL WORLD by DEBRA MARQUART

**Come prepared tonight for WORKSHOP 5. DUE:** Blog #6, by class time.

**WEEK 10** 18 November

Come to class prepared to PRESENT on your research and revision. This should include a reading of a short excerpt (500 words or less) of revised material. You have five-seven minutes to both read and talk, so please time yourself in advance. Your small groups will also meet for one SHORT final session to check in on your revision work.

**FINAL REVISION DUE 25 November by 11:59PM**

*PLEASE INCLUDE a one-two page letter reflecting on and evaluating your work in this class. (Note: this letter is NOT your course evaluation. Rather, I am looking for your rumination on what you feel you’ve accomplished this semester, and what you see as the work ahead of you as you continue to develop as a writer.) I will respond to your final in brief, and leave comments in your D2L gradebook, so please be sure you submit ALL materials to the Dropbox.*

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<b>GRADE BREAKDOWN:</b>	15%	(150 points)	Written Critiques (15 at 10 points each)
	15%	(150 points)	Class Participation (15 points per class)
	30%	(300 points)	Blog (6 at 50 points each)
	10%	(100 points)	Workshop Draft
	30%	(300 points)	Substantive Revision
	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000 points</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**FINAL GRADE POINT SCALE**

A=950–1000	A–=910–949	B+=880–909	B=850–879	B–=810–849		
C+=770–809	C=730–769	C–=690–729	D+=650–689	D=630–649	D–=610–629	F=less than 600

*You start this course at zero and earn a grade through accumulating points, earned by the work you do. If you show up, are an engaged attentive citizen, and turn in all your work, you’ll do fine. Absences beyond the minimum, consistent lateness, and leaving a class in session show up as subtractions from your final points. If you don’t turn in any of the required major drafts or don’t show up for your workshop without making prior arrangements, you will fail. Finally, at the end of the term, much of your grade will be based on the quality, depth, nerve, craft-based skill, and ambition of your revision. Please plan to knock me out!*

### ~ I EXPECT YOU TO:

- *Show up and speak to each other.* This class is a collaborative learning community; everyone must engage and participate. If you are quiet you must find ways to speak up more often, and if you are a talker you must find ways to help open discussion space for others.
- *Be the community member you'd like your classmates to be.* Listen closely to comments before responding; don't interrupt each other; don't overshare; don't lead discussion into side topics; remember to critique the ideas, NOT the speaker. Come to me with concerns.
- *Say to yourself "I am willing to be persuaded."* Learning is a process with many stages and changes of mind. If we could do it alone we'd just stay home, but as long as we're all here let's learn from each other.
- *Read ALL assigned texts, and read beyond your preferences,* considering the purpose of the assignment, in the context of the class, before engaging with your own likes and dislikes.
- *Check your email* and take responsibility for being aware of what I post and mail to you, assuming I wouldn't spend my time emailing you unless the information I want you to see is important.
- *Come to me ahead of time if you need some special consideration.* You don't have to divulge private details, but I can't make accommodations if I don't know there's a need.
- *Ask questions,* but not until AFTER you've read the syllabus carefully.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:** *committed attention to your individual voice and talents; a strong push in areas where I believe you can do better; my own long and tenacious experience as a working artist and teacher, the lessons of which I am happy to share; an abiding belief that if you work and stay open and accept critique, you will learn and develop as a thinker, writer and citizen; a fair and direct communication style; a willingness to engage in creative problem-solving; a deep love and respect for the material of this class, which I'm eager to share.* —I look forward to all the ways you will amaze me this term. Unleash yourself and bring me your best work!

### ~OFFICIAL COURSE POLICIES

**LAPTOPS and PHONES:** I DO allow electronic devices in the classroom. I believe in the power of technology as a writing tool, support the use of e-books (and think of my own laptop as a shiny beloved puppy) and encourage you to do so as well (the first two parts of this sentence at least.) THAT SAID—we're all aware of the problems and temptations. Please know that while I allow devices for writing, note-taking, and research purposes, I DO NOT allow use in class unrelated to our work. Please be courteous. DO NOT: answer cell phones, send text messages, check e-mail or social media, shop, check the game score, register for the coming term, or do anything at all on your device unrelated to our immediate classroom activities. I reserve the right to look at your device screen to make sure you are doing class work. I don't wish to police you, but all actions in the classroom impact every single member of the group. Please abide by these guidelines and don't put either of us in the awkward position of stopping class to intervene on electronics-related distractions.

**ABSENCES:** We have only ten meetings, so it matters whether or not you are present. I expect you to attend every class. You are allowed ONE absence, for any reason, serious or frivolous. It's not my business to prove or disprove why you are here, so the same rule applies to everyone. If you miss more than one class you will lose significant grade points every missed session and may have a problem passing the course. Do not schedule family events, medical appointments, social or professional meetings during class time. If you face a life emergency of some kind please talk to me before you miss class, or as soon as possible after. The worst thing you can do is just disappear.

**PREPARATION:** Just showing up is not enough. Lack of preparation will impact your grade. You are responsible for knowing what is due and when, and I expect you read all assigned texts and to note and meet every deadline. If you have questions about deadlines, please ask. If you are having life problems preventing you from completing your work please tell me the truth about what's going on and we will proceed as fairly as possible.

**CONDITION OF WORK:** Please make sure all work submitted (digital or paper) is professionally presented—i.e. carefully edited, paginated, word-processed with 12-point type and double-spaced, and if printed, using black ink on white paper (one-or-two sided, but no scratch paper), stapled, **with your full name on the front page AND in the electronic document title.** [Remember that once your work is on my hard drive I have difficulty identifying the author of *ASSIGNMENT1.doc*. Do us both a favor and label your submissions.]

**INCOMPLETES:** An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family or a serious illness, and must be documented. Requests for incompletes must be made at least two weeks before finals.

**HONESTY:** All students should be familiar with DePaul's academic integrity policy and resources before beginning course assignments. Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment that has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials, be sure to consult the instructor. **SHORT VERSION of my PLAGIARISM POLICY: Don't do it; I will fail you.**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately, as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class) to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. Also make sure that you have contacted the: PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or the Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

**WRITING CENTER:** Correct grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling are required, and I will grade down any work that comes to me with mechanical problems. If you have any concerns about writing mechanics, please contact The Writing Center, a wonderful resource open to undergrads and graduate students. To schedule a Face-to-Face Meeting, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing).

## PROMPTS for WRITING ABOUT PLACE

- Write a descriptive report of a place or space or landscape.
- Revise your description in an attempt to get at “the layered, rich, echo-ey” aspects of space.
- Write a scene in which a place is not the subject, but in which that place appears as a character.
- Compare and contrast the concrete details of two very different places.
- Describe what is particular about your place. Why is your place not some other place?
- Describe your sense of attachment to a place.
- Describe how your place is related to your human being-ness.
- Describe place of sanctuary or intimate rest (for you or for someone else).
- Describe a spiritual or sacred place (for you or for someone else).
- Describe a place of drudgery or entrapment (for you or for someone else).
- Describe a place that is contested territory.
- Describe a scene in which the history of that place is present, even if unspoken.
- Write about a fake place.
- Write about a place that is a site of change.
- Describe a place that is site of constructed identity? What’s genuine in this place, and what is a performance or stereotype, or even a gesture of longing?
- Describe how some particular place was “made.”
- Describe how a place “made” you or your people.
- How does what’s natural or land-based about your place impact the meaning it holds for you?
- Describe leaving a place.
- Describe a place you’ve left.
- Describe arriving at a place.
- Describe a place you’ve chosen.
- Describe missing a place.
- Describe returning to a place you once missed.
- Describe a place you remember but have not, for many years, returned to.
- Describe a place others remember differently than you do.
- Describe another’s deep attachment to a place you are not attached to.
- Describe moving through your place, on foot or in some kind of vehicle.
- Describe a place nostalgically, and then comment on your nostalgia, or nostalgia in general, good and/or or bad.
- Describe a place that represents your identity, whether or not you live there.
- Describe the repetition of everyday activities—yours or another’s— in some particular place.
- Describe your full habitation of a place.
- Describe the memories a place holds, beyond your own.
- Describe your disconnection from a place.
- Describe being rooted in a place.
- Describe something we don’t usually consider “a place” as a kind of place.
- Describe placeless-ness (as a good or bad thing).
- Describe the place where you want your loved ones to scatter your remains, and why.
- Describe what you believe makes a place “livable” (and use concrete examples).
- Respond descriptively to the question “do places still matter?”