



## SEVI\_ENG 383: The Foreign versus the Familiar

Professor: John Julius Reel ([johnjulius@aol.com](mailto:johnjulius@aol.com))

### Course Description:

This is a course in cultural journalism and travel writing, designed to introduce students to the intelligence, imagination and rigor required for observing, describing and analyzing aspects of a foreign culture, specifically the culture of Southern Spain, in an attempt to better understand one's own culture. The students will be asked to keep a written chronicle (of at least eight chapters), about various aspects of Sevillian culture that shed light on similar or contrasting aspects of American culture, or vice versa, with the focus always on the familiar versus the foreign, and how, when and where these apparently polar opposite concepts blur, merge into each other and even swap places in the course of an international experience.

Various aspects of or influences on culture (ways and manners, home life, street life, daily habits, folklore, holidays, gastronomy, religion, spectacle, language, history, sexual politics, prejudices, civic pride, etcetera) will be dealt with in the class readings, class discussions and ultimately with the students own work, which will be commented on and critiqued in a workshop setting, as the students go about writing their cultural chronicles.

Depending on whether the course is part of the Language, Society and Cultural Studies (LSCS) or Spanish Advanced Studies (SAS) programs, or a combination of both, it will be given in mostly English, mostly Spanish or a mixture of both, with one language taking precedence over the other, but with Spanish always being used with more frequency as the semester progresses. Depending on the amount of Spanish incorporated in the course, LSCS students will be able to acquire Language Across the Curriculum credit.

### Course Objectives:

- 1) To teach students to write and report rigorously on what they observe, sense, read and study, as they go about narrating their journey and experiences in a foreign land.
- 2) To teach students to communicate, as accurately and aesthetically as possible, the line, if one exists, between the foreign and familiar, and to find the drama, humor, wisdom and knowledge in their attempt to clarify and distinguish that line.
- 3) To teach students to constructively critique each other's work, and to improve it, in a workshop setting, with the goal of ultimately applying a more refined editorial eye to their own work.
- 4) To inculcate students in various narrative techniques of long-form journalism, such as scene setting, dialogue, characterization, conflict, humor, exposition, etc.

### Read-and-Seek-Out Travel Experience of the Week:

To emphasize how the essence of a place is often embodied in its lesser-known (or less touristy) icons and monuments, *La historia de Sevilla en 80 objetos*, by Sevillian art historian, teacher and writer, Manuel Jesús Roldán, will be used to help guide students in their search for the significant nooks and crannies of Seville. Each week a single student, or pair or group of them will be assigned to "collect" a new Sevillian experience, by seeking out one of the objects described and explained in the book, and to report on the experience to the class, couching it in the personal and cultural (foreign versus familiar)

context. Assignments will be given throughout the course of the semester.

### Course Grading Policy:

The grades will be given according to the Spanish system:

Sobresaliente	9.00 - 10.00
Notable	7.00 - 8.99
Aprobado	5.00 - 6.99
Suspenso	0.00 - 4.99

Students must receive at least a 5 to get credit for the course.

Grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

Six culture/travel chronicles of various lengths (see below): 40%

\*Every one of the six chronicles *must* be handed in, or 40% of your grade will be 0.

Class participation, student critiques and presentations: 20%

Midterm Exam (a rewrite and extension of one of the first three chronicles): 15%

Final Exam (a rewrite and extension of one of the second three chronicles): 25%

### Other Factors Affecting Final Grade:

- 1) Absences – if over three classes are missed, then one point on the final grade is lost for each additional class missed. **Excused absences are only granted in the most extreme cases**; the three permitted absences are to be used when it's impossible, for whatever reason, to make class.
- 2) **Chronic lateness adds up to absences.**

### Possible Site Visits:

*Canal Sur Radio y Televisión*, Andalusia's primary public radio and television station.

*El Paseo Editorial*, one of Spain's foremost and ambitious independent publishing houses.

*Diario de Sevilla*, Seville's daily newspaper of reference

### Course Etiquette:

Respect the environment of the classroom. No food or drink, except water. No cell phones. Don't come late or leave the classroom during the assigned period, except in an emergency.

### Cheating/ Plagiarism Policy:

If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, he or she will fail and be reported to the university authorities.

### Course Texts:

\*The first two books should be bought in the States, before arriving to Spain; the second two can be bought in Seville.

- 1) *The Best American Travel Writing (BATW) 2016*, editors Jason Wilson and Bill Bryson, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, ISBN 978-0-544-81209-3
- 2) *The Best American Travel Writing (BATW) 2015*, editors Jason Wilson and Andrew McCarthy, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016, ISBN 978-0-544-56964-5
- 3) *¿Qué pinto yo aquí? Un neoyorquino en la ciudad de nunca jamás*, John Julius Reel, Editorial Confluencias, 2014

- 4) *La historia de Sevilla en 80 objetos*, Manuel Jesús Roldán, El Paseo Editorial, 2016
- 5) "Ticket to the Fair," David Foster Wallace, *Harper's*, July, 1994  
<http://harpers.org/wp-content/uploads/HarpersMagazine-1994-07-0001729.pdf>
- 6) "Shipping Out," David Foster Wallace, *Harper's*, January, 1996  
<https://harpers.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/HarpersMagazine-1996-01-0007859.pdf>
- 7) "Consider the Lobster," David Foster Wallace, *Gourmet*, August, 2004  
[http://www.gourmet.com/magazine/2000s/2004/08/consider\\_the\\_lobster18ff.html?currentPage=1](http://www.gourmet.com/magazine/2000s/2004/08/consider_the_lobster18ff.html?currentPage=1)
- 8) Classmates' chronicles

**Course Structure, Outline and Class Dates (with corresponding readings):**

\*Certain readings will be singled out for discussion before each class, so be attentive!

Part One: Introduction and Overriding Themes

WEEK ONE (Class Meetings 1 & 2)

Observer vs. Participant/ Foreignness as Perspective

- "Hiding from Animals," *The BATW 2016*, p. 119
- "Behind Closed Doors at Hotels," *The BATW 2015*, p. 281
- "Climb Every Mountain," *The BATW 2016*, p. 77
- "Out of Eden Walk," *The BATW 2015*, p. 252
- "¿Qué te cuento yo que pinto poco?," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 15

WEEK TWO (Class Meetings 3 & 4) (first chronicle due, 500-1000 words)

Foreignness as Conflict

- Introduction, *The BATW 2015*, p. xiii
- "The Foreign Spell," *The BATW 2016*, p. 86
- "Baked Alaska," *The BATW 2015*, p. 287
- "Today Is Better Than Tomorrow," *The BATW 2015*, p. 69
- "Aniquilado," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 166

WEEK THREE (Class Meetings 4 & 5)

What is Cultural Authenticity?

- Introduction, *The BATW*, p. xiii
- "The Happiness Metric," *The BATW 2016*, p. 95
- "Peak Havana," *The BATW 2016*, p. 221
- "Olfato," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 83

WEEK FOUR (Class Meetings 6 & 7) (second chronicle due, 500-1000 words)

Eyes of Surprise

- Forward, *The BATW 2016*, p. ix
- "Ashes to Ashes," *The BATW 2015*, p. 106
- "Darwin's Forgotten World," *The BATW 2016*, p. 190
- "Abrirme otra vez los ojos," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 79
- "La historia detrás de la historia," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 251
- "Lo que el viento (casi) se llevó," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 75

Part Two: Cultural Manifestations (worthy of chronicle)

WEEK FIVE (Class Meetings 8 & 9)

Language

- "Babel," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 24
- "No ni ná," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 28
- "Organización nacional de guiris de España," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 31
- "¿De qué Chicago estoy escribiendo?" *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 34
- "Gajes del oficio," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 170
- "Land of the Lost," *The BATW 2015*, p. 57
- "Swiss Dream," *The BATW 2016*, p. 207

WEEKS SIX AND SEVEN (Class Meetings 10-13) (third chronicle due, 1000-1500 words )

History, Traditions and Religion

- "Growing Old with the Inuit," *The BATW 2016*, p. 169
- "Lawrence's Arabia," *The BATW 2015*, p. 9
- "A Cave with a View," *The BATW 2016*, p. 135
- "A Doubter in the Holy Land," *The BATW 2015*, p. 173
- "Mr. Nhem's Genocide Camera," *The BATW 2015*, p. 222
- "El tacto," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 185
- "Yo soy la iglesia," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 200
- "Contra viento y marea," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 211

Class Meeting 14- MIDTERM EXAM - rewrite and extension of one of the first three chronicles, 1000-1500 words)

CLASS MEETING 15

Street Life

- "The Green Heaven," *The BATW 2016*, p. 181
- "Camino Real," *The BATW 2015*, p. 237
- "Vista," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 51
- "El oído," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 21

CLASS MEETING 16

Folklore

- "Fyodor's Guide," *The BATW 2016*, p. 229
- "Hail Dayton," *The BATW 2015*, p. 146
- "Return of the Mockingbird," *The BATW 2016*, p. 232
- "La última sevillana," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 215

CLASS MEETING 17

Food

- "Consider the Lobster," David Foster Wallace, *Gourmet*, August, 2004 (see online link above)
- "Made in China," *The BATW 2015*, p. 211
- "¡Que te aproveche! Bajo tu cuenta y riesgo," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 68
- "El gusto," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, pp. 125-127

CLASS MEETING 18 (fourth chronicle due, 1000-1500 words)

## Daily Habits

- "White Guy in a Djellaba," *The BATW 2016*, p. 1
- "Puertas abiertas," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 114
- "Spanish Yoga," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 196
- "¿Alguien quiere jugar al tenis conmigo?" *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 38
- "Niños en una burbuja," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 102

## CLASS MEETING 19

### Holidays

- "Ticket to the Fair," David Foster Wallace, *Harper's*, July, 1994 (see online link above)
- "¿A dónde voy? A la Feria, no," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 65
- "Un converso al cristianismo sevillano" *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 118

## CLASS MEETING 20

### Spectacle

- "Off Diamond Head," *The BATW 2016*, p. 55
- "La bulla esplendida," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 57
- "Todos para toros," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 93
- "¡Yes!" *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 111

## CLASS MEETING 21

### Sexual Politics

- "About Face," *The BATW 2016*, p. 123
- "Born to Travel," *The BATW 2016*, p. 150
- "Daughters of the Spring," *The BATW 2015*, p. 115
- "Ship of Wonks," *The BATW 2015*, p. 284
- "Paz y tranquilidad en la playa," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 71
- "No soy la niñera," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 145
- "Sexo en Sevilla," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 174
- "No puede pedir sin ti," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 179

## CLASS MEETING 22 (fifth chronicle due, 1000-1500 words)

### Prejudices, Stereotypes and Biases

- "My Timbuktu," *The BATW 2015*, p. 176
- "La vista desde la luna," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 61
- "Bonfire of the Humanities," *The BATW 2015*, p. 297
- "Little Things That Kill You," *The BATW 2016*, p. 201
- "In Another Country," *The BATW 2016*, p. 267
- "La ciudad de nunca jamás," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 42
- "Una ciudad kid-friendly." *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 149

## CLASS MEETING 23

### Bureaucracy and Business

- "How Can We Find More People Like You?" *The BATW 2016*, p. 6
- "The Marlboro Men of Chernivsti," *The BATW 2016*, p. 95
- "21<sup>st</sup> Century Limited," *The BATW 2015*, p. 28
- "Tales of the Trash," *The BATW 2015*, p. 128

- "La cara y la cruz," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 130
- "Derechos inalienables," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 138
- "Matrimonio de dos cañones," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 142

#### CLASS MEETING 24

##### Satisfaction and Success

- "Shipping Out," David Foster Wallace, *Harper's*, January, 1996 (See link above)
- "A Tale of a Tub," *The BATW 2015*, p. 153
- "The Sound of Silence," *The BATW 2015*, p. 1
- "What's Left Behind," *The BATW 2016*, p. 108
- "The Reddest Carpet," *The BATW 2016*, p. 158
- "¡Salud y suerte!" *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 122
- "El cursi frente al cutre," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 134
- "Encaprichado con la modernidad," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 152
- "Los hombres tienen que aguantá," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 156
- "Miss España en la Moncloa," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 160

#### CLASS MEETING 25

##### Protest

- "Rotten Ice," *The BATW 2016*, p. 36
- "Invisible and Insidious," *The BATW 2016*, p. 247
- "The Great Pleasure Project," *The BATW 2015*, p. 165
- "La naturaleza de la bestia," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 205
- "Perdóname por mi pecado," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 220

#### CLASS MEETING 26 (sixth chronicle due, 1000 to 1500 words)

##### Family

- "The Actual Hollister," *The BATW 2016*, p. 20
- "Berlin Nights," *The BATW 2015*, p. 191
- "The Soul of the South," *The BATW 2016*, p. 312
- "El sevillano," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 45
- "Cómo duerme mi andaluza," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 238
- "A prueba de fuego," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 192
- "Adiós al reverendo," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 224
- "Hablar en oro," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 232
- "Más que un mundo," *¿Qué pinto yo aquí?*, p. 242

#### CLASS MEETING 27 (Wednesday May 2)

##### Consultations for final exam

**FINAL EXAM – rewrite and extension of one of the last three chronicles, 1500 to 2000 words)**