Gazing at the photographs in Sharon Harper’s series *Flight/Flug*, a traveler is reminded of the vertiginous view from the window of a high speed train, the landscape blurred by velocity such that the train’s movement is projected onto the rolling landscape. “Travel dislodges thoughts,” explains Harper, and indeed her photographs reproduce the sensation of movement, of staring out a window and letting one’s mind drift. Writing and representing travel and mobility are crucial mechanisms by which we situate ourselves within the world. Such ideas become tightly bound not only with public models of collective expression, such as nationality and class, but also with more private conceptions of identity and family.

This course will reference a wide range of forms—the essay, the journal, the sketchbook, the map, the photograph, the human voice—through which an author represents the thoughts and sensations of mobility. We will also explore many different authorial subject positions such as: cartographer, pilgrim, explorer, fugitive, and tourist.

In our study of these forms we will focus on two primary impulses: observation and creation. We will trace how traveling subjects observed and recorded the world as expressions of artistic representation, scientific discovery and comparative sociocultural analysis AND we will focus on the strategies and techniques, in particular the interchange between word and image, employed by authors and artists as we translate these familiar approaches into new digital forms. Italy, and in particular Florence, will serve as the most immediate conceptual and physical context for investigation. We will thus be able to link the textual and visual material studied in the classroom with the world beyond the boundaries of the La Pietra campus.

**Learning Objectives**
At the completion of the course, each student will be able to:

- Understand significant historical and conceptual elements that characterize travel writing and narrative mobility.
- Recognize various subject positions which writers have adopted to document and represent the experience of travel.
- Demonstrate a capacity to represent travel experience in work that combines writing with visual media.
- Articulate the process of developing a concept and strategy for a creative digital storytelling project.
Course Materials

Required Materials
Online Course Resources via NYU Classes and Google Drive

Please ensure that all assigned readings are available for consultation in class in either paper or electronic format—we will refer to them frequently. We will use laptops and mobile devices regularly in this class. These devices may be used in the classroom exclusively for academic purposes. Failure to respect this rule will adversely affect the Participation and Attendance grade.

Additional Resources (available in the Ulli library or Online)
Abdelouahab & Lamazou Journeys and Journals: Five Centuries of Travel Writing
Bartram & El Bizri Recto Verso: Redefining the Sketchbook
Clifford The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art
Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research
Urry & Larsen The Tourist Gaze 3.0

Assessment Components

Active engagement in class discussions and participation in online tools (such as group research and the class photo pool) are mandatory. Reading assignments should be completed for the day indicated for that particular class session (i.e. if a reading assignment is scheduled for 4/10, read it before 4/10). Assigned readings form the basis for class discussion, so it is essential that you have read each week’s assigned texts and come to class prepared to discuss them. Likewise, films listed in the course schedule should be viewed before class. Each student is expected to contribute two original photographs every other week to the group photo pool. Participation is worth 10% of the final course grade.

Works-in-Progress Workshops
During the two scheduled works-in-progress workshops, all students will share the current state of their final projects and will receive structured feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each. Successful participation in these workshops is worth 10% of the final course grade.

Digital Sketchbook (WP/Omeka/Scalar)
A series of multimedia assignments will be proposed over the course of the semester, each of which explores a different approach to the Digital Sketchbook (audio recording, collage, descriptive writing, etc.). Each student must complete three of these assignments. Analyses are due no later than 10 PM on the evening before the date that they appear on the schedule, unless indicated otherwise. These analyses are worth 30% of the course grade.

Final Project
This will consist of a creative multimedia project (audio/video/image, etc.) that explores one of the particular themes or subjects covered in this course. The emphasis should be on storytelling and analysis rather than technical excellence. One conference with the instructor is required for this project. Between weeks four and six of the semester, each student will schedule a 30 minute meeting during my regularly scheduled office hours to identify potential areas of investigation for the final project and to discuss possible formats. The final project will be introduced to the class in a 10 minute presentation at the end of the semester. Additionally, a reflective essay of no less than 1000 words, describing the process of producing the project and/or analyzing the concepts presented within it is required. This assignment is worth 50% of the final grade.
Tentative Course Schedule

Session 1: Defining Travel: Canvas, Map, Journal, Archive
Michel Butor “Travel and Writing” (18p)
Joan Didion “On Keeping A Notebook” (6p)
Italo Calvino “Tamara” (1p)
Sam Cooke “Far Away Places”
Set up group photo pool
**Assignment:** 1 page account of first impressions.

Session 2: Observation & Documentation Strategies
De Certeau “Spatial Stories” (19p)
Percy “Loss of the Creature”
Batista & Lesky “Sidewalk stories: Janet Cardiff’s audio-visual excursions” (10p)
Georges Perec “Species of Spaces”

Session 3: Digital Storytelling
Review of platforms (Omeka, Scalar, Wordpress) and approaches
“Augie’s Project” (Smoke, 1995)
Principles of photography, Sontag

Session 4: The Flâneuse
Charles Baudelaire “The Painter of Modern Life” (10p)
Clark “The Daguerreotype” (2p)
Virginia Woolf “Street Haunting” (15p)
Lauren Elkin “Flâneuse-ing” (18p)
Ruth Orkin “Jinx Allen in Florence”
**Assignment:** Digital Sketchbook - Observing the City

Session 5: The Explorer
Ibn Battutah Excerpt from the Travels of Ibn Battutah (11p)
Christopher Columbus Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella (7p)
Dante “Canto XXVI” Inferno (2p)
Bob Dylan “Bob Dylan’s 115th Dream” (Lyrics)
**Assignment:** Complete Introductory Project Conference with Instructor by x/x

Sessions 6-7: The Pilgrim
**Field Trip to Monastery of La Verna/Vallombrosa/Camaldoli (overnight)**
Petrarch “Ascent of Mount Ventoux” (3p)
Frances Trollope Excerpt from A Visit to Italy (Vallombrosa)
Locatelli “Mecca Goes Mega” VR 360
Roberto Rossellini Final section of Flowers of St. Francis (1950)
**Assignment:** Digital Sketchbook - Pilgrim’s Diary
Session 8: First Works-in-Progress Workshop
Assignment: Preliminary Project Outline (500 words) due for group evaluation

Sessions 9-10: The Grand Tourist
Field Trip to Rome or Naples (overnight)
Could be substituted with a visit to VLP to view travel books from the historical collection.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Excerpts from Italian Journey
Hajj Sayyah Excerpts from An Iranian in Nineteenth Century Europe, The Travel Diaries of Hāj Sayyāh 1859-1877
Clara Whitcomb Journal of Travels Through Egypt (15p)
Kirsten Jensen “Traveler’s Tales”
‡ Curtis Mayfield & The Impressions “Man oh Man” (Lyrics)
Assignment: Digital Sketchbook - The Spirit of Place

Session 11: The Stranger
Ian Chambers “An Impossible Homecoming” (8p)
James Baldwin “A Stranger in the Village” (8p)
Teju Cole “Black Body” (10p)
J.B. Jackson “The Stranger’s Path” (11p)
‡ The Kinks “Strangers”

Session 12: Second Works-in-Progress Workshop

Session 13: The Fugitive & the Exile
Hebrew Bible “Book of Exodus”
Yazbek “The Second Crossing”
Syrian Cultural Caravan
‡ Bob Marley “Exodus”
Harriet Jacobs “Loophole of Retreat”
Ellen Driscoll “Loophole of Retreat”
Image: “Fugitive Slave Notice”

Session 14: Individual Project Meetings with Instructor

Session 15: Sketchbook Presentations
Assignment: Final Projects Due