Instructor Information

- Name: Dr. Soledad Gálvez
- Office hours: Mondays 11:00am – 12:00pm, Room 306D, and by appointment
- Email address:

Course Description

Travel is a form of knowledge. "The traveler," wrote the British travel writer Robert Byron, "can know the world, in fact, only when he sees, hears, and smells it." This course offers students a unique opportunity to further expand and deepen the knowledge they will gain from their semester in Madrid, by making them venture beyond the campus and engage with the everyday people and proceedings of the city. From their observations, reporting, interviews and research about what they have encountered, students will compose a feature-length narrative in the form of a classic “Letter From….” piece in The New Yorker magazine.

Taught in English. Writing assignments can be completed in English or in Spanish (level of Advanced Spanish).

- 2 credits
- Co-requisite or prerequisite: N/A
- Class meeting days and times: Mondays 9:30-10:50am, Room 107

Desired Outcomes

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- In this course, students will be learning how to both see and listen. You may go into a given situation armed with an expectation or a preconception, and then be totally disarmed by what you see and hear. That experience is what you give back to readers in the form of story. Narrative. This course will help students hone the art of composing the narratives of which great travel writing, indeed, all great writing, is comprised.
- Read like a writer, analyzing the “Letter From …” format with an eye towards form, structure, point of view, and voice;
● Acquire and develop the basic skill of on-the-ground reporting, interviewing, note-taking, and research, all the elements required for the writing of a feature-length travel story;
● Engage with local communities as part of your research process;
● Learn how to critique, and receive feedback, constructively.

Methodologies

As we will see and be discussing in our selected readings over the course of the semester, the travel stories you will be writing are not general, impressionistic overviews. Not collections of random observations. You will certainly be encouraged to compile as many of those as you can over the course of your stay abroad for possible use in the pieces you do write. But the key to such pieces—those, for example, of Elif Batuman, Jane Kramer, Katherine Boo, Jon Lee Anderson, and many more—is that they focus on one particular storyline stemming from the place you are in: a story about an immigrant business owner in Cuatro Caminos, the profile of a Madrileña housing activist fighting home evictions in Lavapiés, a story about skate in Madrid, the challenges of an emerging artisan bakery in Malasaña. Specific stories that in all their particulars reveal to us the larger realities of Madrid, the place you have travelled to. You will find your subject hopefully within the first four weeks of the semester and then commence reporting and researching and writing over the rest of the semester.

Assessment Components

Class Participation
You are expected to prepare assigned readings and participate actively in every session: class discussions, presentations, and workshops.

Presentation: Analysis of One Assigned Reading
Working in pairs, you will analyze the composition of one “Letter from....” Guidelines will be discussed and handed out in class.

Please send an outline of your presentation as an attachment to my email the day before class: Sunday, by 3:00 pm

Story Hunt Assignments: Finding a Subject for Your Story
Three short assignments designed to help you find the story for your “Letter from Madrid.” Guidelines will be handed out and discussed in class. You can also find them in the Assignments and Rubrics Folder in the Resources section of NYU Classes.

All assignments should be in Word .doc/.docx format, in double space, using Times New Roman 12-font. Please include your name, class name, date, and the title of the piece. Please number your pages.

Assignments will be graded in accordance with the Story Hunts Assignments Rubrics included at the end of the Assignment Guidelines
Please send your story hunt assignments as attachments to my email by Sunday, February 2nd, by 6:00 pm; Sunday, Feb. 9th, by 3:00 pm; and Sunday, Feb. 16th, by 3:00 pm. Assignment due dates are also indicated in the Course Schedule below.

**Process Journals**
You will submit a total of five weekly short Process Journals. These Journals are part of, and support, the process of gathering the materials needed for your writing. Guidelines will be handed out and discussed in class.

All assignments should be in Word .doc/.docx format, in double space, using Times New Roman 12-font. Please include your name, class name, date, and the title of the piece. Please number your pages.

Please send your Journals as attachments to my email by Sunday, Feb. 23rd, March 1st, March 8th, March 15th, and March 22nd, by 3:00 pm. Journal due dates are also indicated in the Course Schedule below.

**Completed “Letter from Madrid”**
The completed “Letter from Madrid” is the product of a process: reporting for story, storytelling elements, writing, revisions and final draft. Your completed “Letter from Madrid” should be 4000 words, using Times New Roman 12 font. Guidelines will be handed out and discussed in class.

**Grading of Assignments**
The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story hunt assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation: analysis of assigned reading</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Process Journals</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed “Letter from Madrid” (process: reporting for story, elements of storytelling, writing, revisions and final draft)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Letter Grades**
Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100 – 93</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>92 – 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>89 – 87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>86 – 83</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>82 – 80</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>79 – 77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>76 – 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>72 – 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>69 – 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>66 – 60</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>59 – 0</td>
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**Course Schedule**

**Topics and Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1, January 31st</td>
<td>Introduction to the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>Discussion of essential aspects of the “Letter from…” format as travel writing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Possible ways of seizing upon the subject you will be writing about.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion of early ideas for stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2, February 3rd</td>
<td>Discussion of assigned reading and of individual progress in respective story hunts.</td>
<td>“1.Standing Still Sketch” due on Sunday, Feb. 2nd, by 6:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3, February 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Discussion of readings, story hunt progress and nailing down your choice of subject.</td>
<td>&quot;2. Nailing Down Your Choice of Subject&quot; due on Sunday, Feb. 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, by 3:00 pm</td>
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<td>Fan, Jiayang and Yueqi Yang “How to Write a Long-Form Narrative for The New Yorker.” UpstartCity, 23 Nov. 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 4, February 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Discussion of reading and finalizing your choice of subject</td>
<td>&quot;3. Finalizing Your Choice of Subject: Proposal&quot; due on Sunday, Feb. 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, by 3:00 pm</td>
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<td>Session 5, February 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Discussion of reading and of early progress (successes and challenges) with story reporting and research.</td>
<td>Process Journal #1, due on Sunday, Feb. 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;, by 3:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 6, March 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Discussion of reading and the terrors of beginnings and how to overcome them.</td>
<td>Process Journal #2, due on Sunday, March 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, by 3:00pm</td>
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</tbody>
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| Session 7, March 9<sup>th</sup> | Discussion of reading, early story development, and early drafts of your story openings.  
Presentation: “Letter from Istanbul” | Process Journal #3, due on Sunday, Mar. 8th, by 3:00pm  
Early drafts of your story openings due.  
| Session 8, March 16<sup>th</sup> | Discussion of reading and of your story openings.  
Presentation: “Letter from Stockholm” | Revised drafts of your story openings due  
Process Journal #4, due on Sunday, March 15, by 3:00 pm  
| Session 9, March 23<sup>rd</sup> | Discussion of reading and the mapping of a piece’s general narrative arc. | Process Journal #5, due on Sunday, Mar 22nd, by 3:00 pm  
Fan, Jiayang. “Letter from Shanghai: ‘The Emperor’s New Museum.’”  
*The New Yorker*, 7 Nov. 2016 |
| Session 10, March 30<sup>th</sup> | Discussion of reading and workshop of first drafts. | First Drafts Due  
| Spring Break | Spring Break | Spring Break |
| Session 11, April 13<sup>th</sup> | Discussion of readings and continued workshop and revision of story drafts.  
(Revisions due next class) | Boo, Katherine. “Letter from South Texas: ‘The Churn.’”  
*The New Yorker*, 29 March, 2004 |
### Required Co-curricular Activities

Your stories will be linked to several current debates in Spain. The lectures below will help you enter these debates, see related themes, and build a critical vocabulary to approach them.

1) **Wednesday, February 5th, 2:30-3:30 pm**  
**Professor James D. Fernández. When the Spaniards Were the Immigrants: The Invisible Spanish Diaspora to the Americas (in English).**  
For most of its history, Spain has been a net exporter of population, a nation much more of emigrants, than immigrants. Attention to the Spanish conquest and colonization of the Americas has often eclipsed the fact that many more Spaniards (roughly 6 million poor peasants and industrial workers) crossed the Atlantic AFTER the independence of the Latin American Republics than during the entire colonial period. Taking advantage of the exhibition I co-curated, titled “*Emigrantes Invisibles:* Spaniards in the United States” (Centro Cultural Conde Duque, 23 January – 12 April), in this talk I will discuss this invisible history and its resonance (or lack thereof) in contemporary Spain.

2) **Wednesday, February 26th, 2:30-3:30 pm**  
**Professor Isabel Cadenas Cañón. Feminist Mobilizations in Contemporary Spain (in English).**  
On March 8, 2018, several foreign newspapers, from *The Washington Post* to *Le Monde* to *The Guardian*, devoted several articles to analyzing what had happened in Spain that day: for the first time in the history of the country, women had gone on strike. Often thought to be living in quite a *machista* country, Spanish women managed to turn their struggle into "the epicenter of feminism," as *El País* titled their op-ed the following day. What led to that strike?

3) **Wednesday, March 11th, 2:30-3:30 pm**  
**Professor Jason Xidias. Spain’s Mid-Life Democratic Crisis: Catalonia, the 2019 Elections, and the Rise of the Far-Right (in English)**  
Spain recently celebrated its 41st year of democracy. Yet it is currently engulfed in a mid-life crisis—there is great tension between the Spanish state and Catalonia, there have been four elections in the past four years, and the far-right continues to surge. Why is Catalonia so important? What key factors have shaped the current conflict? How do the main political

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| Session 12, April 20<sup>th</sup> | Discussion and workshop of story revisions. |
| Session 13, April 27<sup>th</sup> | Discussion and workshop of story revisions. |
| Session 14, May 4<sup>th</sup> | Reading of story endings  
Reflections on immersion and writing process |
| | Finished “Letters from Madrid” due |
parties position themselves on Catalonia? What is the current state of Spanish politics following the November 2019 election? And, what explains the recent growth of the far-right?

**Recommended Co-curricular Activities**

**Miércoles 4 de marzo, 2:00-3:00 pm**
Professor Aída Bueno. Las formas del prejuicio, el racismo y la xenofobia: la cultura española como contexto (en español / in Spanish)

La charla intentará explicar por qué en España la sociedad se ha sentido durante tanto tiempo ajena a la cuestión del prejuicio racial y la xenofobia. La llegada de los inmigrantes a comienzos de los años 90 obligará a las instituciones a reconocer esta realidad, y a crear políticas para abordar la realidad multicultural de la sociedad española actual.

The talk will try to explain why society in Spain has felt for so long that issues of racial prejudice and xenophobia were external to it. The arrival of immigrants in the early 1990s forced institutions to recognize this reality and create policies to address the multicultural reality of contemporary Spanish society.

**Course Materials**

**Required Materials in NYU Classes**


**Recommended Readings on Reserve at NYU Madrid Library (or NYU Classes)**


**Some Suggested Research Materials in Bobst and in NYU Madrid Library**


Hooper, Kate. “Spain’s Labour Migration Policies in the Aftermath of Economic Crisis.” Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2019.


**Selected Digital Newspapers**

[El País](elpais.com/)
[El País, English Edition](elpais.com/elpais/inenglish.html)
[eldiario.es](eldiario.es/)
[elsalto](elsaltodiario.com/)
[lamarea.com](lamarea.com)

ProQuest Recent Newspapers, via Bobst Library
ProQuest Global Newsstream, via Bobst Library
ProQuest Historical Newspapers, via Bobst Library

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week’s worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.

Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: In classes meeting once a week, a 2% deduction from the student’s final course grade occurs on the occasion of each unexcused absence.

Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.

**Illness:** For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor’s note, at the discretion of the Assistant Directors of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor’s note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor’s note.

**Religious Observance:** Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Assistant Directors, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

**Please note:** if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly and notify them.
Late Submission of Work
You are required to submit all assignments on the due date. Any assignment submitted after the due date will incur in the loss of a point per day. For example, if an assignment submitted one day after the deadline earned a 9/10, the final grade for that assignment would be 8/10.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

Plagiarism: presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one's own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
- the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one's own
- submitting evaluations of group members' work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
- altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.
- using language translation software.

For further information, students are encouraged to check NYU Policies and Guidelines on Academic Integrity (about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html)

Disability Disclosure Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. For more information, see Study Away and Disability (nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities/study-away.html)