English 165TR: The Art of Travel

Instructor: Kyle Bucy
Summer Session B 2013: MTWR 2:00-3:05

What does it mean to “travel for travel’s sake”? How (and why) does one live life “on the road”? Why is it better to travel than to arrive? How do our own travel experiences change when we shift our focus to the journey rather than the destination? And what difference does it make if we hop a train, drive the scenic route, or take a redeye flight?

Through traditional travel narratives, novels, films, and contemporary travel blogs, this course will investigate Judith Adler’s claim that travel is “performed art.” From Henry David Thoreau’s holy saunterings, to Jack Kerouac’s cross-country road trips, to Paul Theroux’s “railway bazaars,” to Pico Iyer’s musings on air travel and jet lag, the travelers we will encounter are adept at treating movement as an art form, rather than a means to an end. In this course we will examine why different travelers choose different modes of travel – and why it matters. Through our examination of road stories in print and on film we will attempt to uncover a sometimes forgotten art of travel (as well as the art of travel writing).

Major texts will include Jack Kerouac, On the Road; Paul Theroux, Old Patagonian Express; John Steinbeck, Travels With Charley; Pico Iyer, The Global Soul; Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust; Alain de Botton, The Art of Travel

“I travel for travel’s sake. The great affair is to move.” (R.L. Stevenson)