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Summer 2025  
**STUDY ABROAD FICTION SEMINAR:**  
**Literature for Creative Writers: Readings from Spain and Studies in Form**  
CRWR 399/414

Instructor: Casey Walker  
Language of Instruction: English  
Site City and Country: Oviedo, Spain  
UO Credits: 4

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a young English gentleman—yes, almost always a man—of sufficient means might embark on a ‘Grand Tour’ of the European continent. The goal of the ‘tour’ was to view Europe’s masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture, to visit the ruins of classical empires, and sometimes to engage in feats of physical strength and endurance, such as climbing the Alps, all with the aim of gaining a moral, physical, and even spiritual ‘education.’ By the 19th century the custom of the ‘Grand Tour’ had spread to wealthy Americans, too. Mark Twain, Henry James, Edith Wharton--and, later, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and others--all wrote about Americans abroad encountering ‘old Europe’ and receiving more education than they were expecting.

We are following in that long line of ‘Grand Tour’ travelers. Ideally, we are more democratic, less naïve, and while the experience is still a privilege, it is no longer confined solely to aristocratic men. We can discard the exclusionary aspects of the ‘Grand Tour’ while retaining its best impulses: taking an opportunity to leave our homes and journey through the art, history, and culture of a different place, and to discover what emerges in ourselves, and in our work, during the encounter.

The aim of this course is to place you in Spain, as deeply as possible, as a writer, reader, traveler, and thinker. This will be a searching month of generative writing, close reading, and artistic soul-searching. We will evenly divide our time together between classroom seminars and site visits, to the Fine Arts Museum, the Archaeological Museum, and other places in and out of Oviedo.

Our class is composed of three parts:

- 1) *Readings from Spain*: assigned readings of literature from, or about, Spain;
- 2) *Readings in Form*: works intended to introduce you to experimental storytelling strategies;
- 3) *Generative writing*: in-class exercises, linked to our readings and site visits, intended to be places to stretch, question, and explore the kind of writer you do, and do not, want to be.

Students will leave this course with a rich introduction to writing from and about Spain, an expanded sense of formal storytelling possibilities, and a portfolio of writing full of explorations, improvisations, and curiosity.

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

A literature seminar for creative writers, comprised of short lectures, discussions, and generative writing exercises in which students will regularly share their critical and creative work.

## COURSE READINGS

All other readings will be provided via a course reader.

Whether you choose to print out the readings, or have everything on a device, students *must have the reading with them each class*. We will be looking closely at this work for our discussions.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Proficiency in close reading.
- Development of vocabularies for assessing literature, with an emphasis on craft.
- Application of the formal elements of craft in fiction.
- Familiarity with fundamental concepts, forms, modes, and traditions in literary fiction.

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

This is an experiential class, built around in-class discussions, generative writing exercises, and site visits. Attendance for all classes and excursions is mandatory. There is no way to ‘make up’ a class at a later date.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- 1) **Class Participation-70%**  
participation includes active, prepared contribution to class discussions; demonstrated familiarity with the assigned readings; and completion of generative class writing exercises
- 2) **Final Portfolio-30%**  
at the end of the course, each student will turn in a portfolio of work completed in this class (see handout for instructions)

## Original Work

All work done for this class must be created by you and for this class alone.

## Grading Scale

97-100%:	A+	87-89%:	B+	77-79%:	C+	67-69%:	D+	50-59%:	F
94-96%:	A	84-86%:	B	74-76%:	C	64-66%:	D		
90-93%:	A-	80-83%:	B-	70-73%:	C-	60-63%:	D-		

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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**Accessible Education Statement** (see <https://aec.uoregon.edu/best-practices-faculty> for more information): The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

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### Course Schedule

<b>Tuesday, July 1st</b> Location: Classroom Time: 10-12pm	Reading: <i>Asturias</i>  ‘Asturias,’ from <i>Grape, Olive, Pig</i> , Matt Goulding ‘Duet for Two Coughs,’ Leopoldo Clarin
<b>Thursday, July 3rd</b> Location: Oviedo Fine Arts Museum Time: 10:30-1:30 pm	Reading: <i>'a profound experience of art'</i>  <i>Leaving the Atocha Station</i> , Ben Lerner (excerpt) Poems by Federico García Lorca
<b>Monday, July 7th</b> Location: Classroom Time: 10-1pm	Reading: <i>The Spanish Civil War</i>  <i>Homage to Catalonia</i> , George Orwell (excerpt) Poems by Langston Hughes 'Forever Red,' Tina Valles
<b>Wednesday, July 9th</b> Excursion to Tito Bustillo, Covadonga and Cangas de Onís	Reading: <i>Exhaustion of Form/Re-invention of Form</i>  'The Depletion Prompts,' David Means <i>Meander, Spiral, Explode</i> , Jane Allison (excerpt)
<b>Thursday, July 10th</b> Location: Archeological Museum Time: 10-1 pm	Reading: <i>Fragments of Memory</i>  'Remembrances,' Antónia Vicens 'The Accursed Items,' by J. Robert Lennon
<b>Monday, July 14th</b> Location: Classroom Time: 10-1pm	Reading: <i>Foreground and Background</i>  'Sensini,' Roberto Bolaño 'There's Still Oxygen,' Carlota Gurt 'The Window,' Imma Monsó
<b>Weds, July 16th</b> Location: Excursion Gijón ethnographic museum and Roman Baths	Reading: <i>Gijón</i>  <i>Helena or The Sea in Summer</i> , Julián Ayesta (excerpt)
<b>Thursday, July 17th</b> Location: TBD: A square or cafe in Oviedo	Reading: <i>Slow Time</i>  'Traffic Jam,' Soledad Puértolas <i>An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris</i> , George Perec

Time: 10-1 pm

**Monday, July 21st**

Location: Classroom

Time: 10-1 pm

**Weds, July 23rd**

Reading: *Narrative Compression*

‘Hills Like White Elephants’ and ‘A Clean Well-Lighted Place,’ Ernest Hemingway  
*Novels in Three Lines* Felix Feneon (excerpt)

Reading: *Asking Questions*

'A Sense of Camaraderie,' Javier Marias  
*On the Edge*, Rafael Chirbes (excerpt)  
*The Interrogative Mood*, Padgett Powell (excerpt)