

Syllabus, Sicily 2008

Faculty:

Rick Newton, program director and photography instructor. Blaisdell House, 545-2516

Karen Skolfield, writing instructor. 256-3410

Karen and I will communicate with the group primarily through email. **You must check your email frequently.** (Even if you use Hotmail, Yahoo or some other service for your regular email, you will need your OIT computer account in order to use the computers in the public computer labs around campus.)

Goals for the First Half of the Semester

1. **Make sure that everyone has a valid passport** and that Durgan Travel Service and UMass are paid in full immediately.
- 2A. Become familiar with the vocabulary of digital photography, understand the operation of your camera, and complete some initial photography assignments to gain confidence and check equipment.
- 2B. Learn (by reading and writing) what constitutes good travel writing and how to create and maintain your reporter's notebook.
3. Learn about the island of Sicily and its history, culture, and people.
4. Become aware of current world events and how they might affect our experience overseas.
5. Discuss an array of health and safety issues that will contribute to the success of our adventure.
6. Study the fine art of packing a suitcase and dealing successfully with heightened airport security.
7. Get to know each other better before we go to Sicily.

By now you should have purchased the following books:

All:

Insight Guides Sicily (Insight Guides).

Publisher: Insight Guides; Book&Map edition (May 15, 2006).

ISBN-10: 9812584064; ISBN-13: 978-9812584069

Best American Travel Writing 2000 (BE SURE to get the 2000 edition!).

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin (October 26, 2000).

ISBN-10: 0618074678; ISBN-13: 978-0618074679

Photographers Only:

National Geographic: The Ultimate Guide to Photography.

Publisher: National Geographic (November 21, 2006).

ISBN-10: 0792262093; ISBN-13: 978-0792262091

Optional for writers: **SF Writer** (2nd or 3rd edition- this is mandatory if grammar, punctuation, etc. are problematic for you), and other years in the **Best American Travel Writing** series

Equipment (Photographers): You will need a modern 35mm single lens reflex camera for this course – film or (preferably) digital (> 8 megapixels, optical viewfinder, full manual control, etc.). “Point and shoot” cameras don’t offer enough user control to really learn photography.

Attendance is mandatory! We have too much to cover for anyone to miss class except in cases of family emergency or illness. Journalism 391R is an official UMass class listed on SPIRE to meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6PM to 8PM. No “scheduling conflicts” with other meetings or sporting events will be tolerated. Karen and I are not paid to teach classes twice. Poor attendance **will** affect your final grade.

Grading. The grading breakdown is as follows:

Fifty percent: your final portfolio or your two travel writing articles, your reporter’s notebook and edited vignettes, your contribution to the “Day in the Life of Cefalu”, your scores from periodic quizzes on the reading assignments and other small assignments, and

Fifty percent: your class participation, particularly, **your participation while with the group in Sicily**. You are expected to be alert and engaged during our travels. Students whose behavior jeopardizes the health, safety, or educational experience of others on the trip will, at a minimum, experience a serious negative impact on their final grade - no matter how good their writing and photography might be. If your behavior is judged to be so detrimental to the success of the course for the other students or for the future of the program, **you will be sent home immediately at your own expense** (the cost of your travel will be added to your semester bill and must be paid before you can register for new courses or graduate).

Course Web Site: <http://www.umass.edu/journal/sicilyprogram>

Office Hours: I am on the full-time professional staff of the University. It is difficult for me to designate certain hours when I can always meet with you. However, because I am here all day, please call or email me with your questions. Inquiries that are important to all will be posted in a FAQ section of the web site and/or answered by email to the group. (There are already some in the web site from prior years.) **We encourage you to contact us with any of your concerns.** This is a complex course that involves traveling in a complex world. Don’t become anxious about anything that a simple question will resolve. An un-asked question is the hardest to answer.

We expect that all email correspondence is read!

Goals for the Second Half of the Semester

Photography

1. Develop your film and get 4x6 prints of everything.
2. Digital: Sort and transfer your photographs to DVDs.
3. Review your photography with Rick and choose 20 images for your portfolio.
4. Start learning Photoshop and, if necessary, Negative Scanning techniques.
5. Correct and enhance in Photoshop as needed.
6. Select your images for our “Day in the Life of Cefalu” project.
7. Print your work for the project and your portfolio using the class photo printers.
8. Compile your, by now, awesome portfolio and design a cover.
9. Edit your vignettes – thoughtful passages and other sensory blurbs from your reporter’s notebook. These will be integrated into your portfolio and are an important contribution to your overall grade of your final portfolio.

Writing

1. **COME TO CLASS.** The last half of the semester is run as a writer’s workshop and depends on your attendance and participation.
2. Complete your research using the Internet, the library, and possibly interviews with each other, as appropriate.
3. Write two drafts (minimum) of your assigned food topic. The final draft should be 750 words – about three or four typed, double-spaced pages.
4. Write two drafts (minimum) of your self-chosen, non-food topic. The final draft should be 1,750 words – about six or seven typed, double-spaced pages.
5. Write drafts of your “Day in the Life of Cefalu” article and Sicily vignettes.
6. Provide thoughtful, focused feedback on your peers’ vignettes and articles.
7. Use the feedback provided by your peers and by me as you work on drafts.
8. Turn in the final drafts to me in both hard copy and electronic format.
9. **Don’t throw away your reporter’s notebook** – I will be checking during and after Sicily. A weak notebook will affect your final grade.