

**NCLC 308**  
***Roads & Rivers:***  
***The American Landscape in Fiction, Film & History***  
**Fall 2003**

TR 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.  
Robinson B102

**Kelly Dunne**  
*kdunne@gmu.edu*  
(703) 993-1454

**Andrew Wingfield**  
*awingfie@gmu.edu*  
(703) 993-4307

*Office Hours by appointment*

Waterways and roadways have always had both practical and spiritual significance for Americans. We have used them to explore our continent and to discover ourselves. This course will look at American literary works and films – both classic and contemporary – in historical context to better understand the roles roads and rivers have played and continue to play in shaping the physical and cultural landscape of the United States. Students will explore course themes outside the classroom as well, through day trips to local historical sites and by conducting a longer, self-directed road trip as one of their main learning events.

**Course Themes:**

- Explore how America as physical place has shaped the possibilities and limitations of the United States as a nation.
- Consider how the people of this nation have shaped the continent as a physical landscape.
- Analyze how the physical transformation of the landscape through time reflects the values of American society throughout history?

This course contains two credits of experiential learning. **The experiential learning component must be successfully completed in order to pass this course.**

**Required Texts**

- George Rippey Stewart, *Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party*
- Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*
- Vladimir Nabakov, *Lolita*
- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*
  
- Course Reader (available in the GMU Bookstore)

## Course Assessment:

- Participation 10%
- Short Papers 25%
- Group Work 10%
- Experiential Learning 35%
- Final Portfolio 20%

Participation = 10%. Each student will be an active learner, coming fully prepared to engage in that enterprise by raising questions and suggesting answers or tracks to follow in search of answers. Students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts. Note-taking is very important, and students are expected to take effective notes. Instructors will evaluate students for individual contributions to our collective enterprise.

Short Papers = 25%. Weekly writings in various genres and formats (reading responses, in-class writings, reflection) to explore course materials from many angles.

Group Work = 10%. Group work means collaborative work in which all members of a group are equally evaluated and each received the same grade. Everyone has something to contribute to group activities, group learning, and group assignments. Students will form groups of 4 – 6 members and do a 20 – 30 minute presentation on an assigned topic. These group presentations will occur throughout the semester, and will be related to the topic of discussion for that day. Topics may include: famous westward trails (Oregon, Chisholm, Santa Fe), the Underground Railroad, the role of canals, and the WPA and TVA.

Experiential Learning = 35%. A detailed description of requirements is attached. There will be two required weekend day events as well as a self-directed road trip. The road trip will incorporate a research component, including a substantial written component and a presentation. The submission of a reflective essay will accompany the weekend events.

Final Portfolio = 20%. The final portfolio will demonstrate integrative learning and should include analysis of your learning in the course using textual evidence. A detailed description of requirements will be given out.

### Format for Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class as noted in the daily schedule and must be typed using 12 point font and one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled. You must correctly and consistently use a recognized citation style, such as MLA, APA, Chicago Manual, etc. For a summary of the styles, visit <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/researchguide.htm>. In all classes, you should keep a copy of all work submitted for possible use in your graduation portfolio.

➔ **Late Work.** Papers and other assignments are to be turned in to the instructors at the beginning of class (4:30 pm) on the day due. **Late work will be reduced one grade per day.** No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family. Please do not plan to turn work in to your instructor's mailbox unless you have specific permission to do so. Unless specifically stipulated, work should be submitted in class in hard copy format; emailed and faxed material is not acceptable.

**On-Line Writing Guide.** <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/>

**A note on the Honor Code.** When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, see an instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This is all sources, including the Internet. Use an approved citation method, such as MLA, APA, etc.

**A note on forms of participation.** Not everyone is equally comfortable participating in classroom discussions. Still, we encourage you to do it. Whether in small groups or large groups, it enhances the learning experience and engages you in the material. Everyone has something in his or her own personal experience, in his or her own reading and learning and thinking, which can help us better understand the material with which we are working. You have a responsibility to share that with the group. By the same token, we are also responsible for creating an atmosphere in which we all feel safe openly expressing opinions, questions, and doubts.

The following is a list of ways you can contribute to the group learning process. This is not an excuse to forego classroom discussion altogether. Nor should you consider this a requirement if you do participate in group discussions. However, if you are concerned with your level of participation (and how it might affect your grade) you might consider contributing in ways you find more comfortable such as:

1. Bring in and share clippings from newspapers, magazines, etc., which are relevant to the day's topic.
2. Put together your own summaries or critiques of readings to share with others.
3. Bring a list of questions about readings or about the day's topic to use in discussion.
4. Be creative about your contribution: suggest a relevant topic for discussion which your instructor may not have considered, or talk to your instructor about other ideas you might have.

**A note on reading texts.** We learn to read at the very beginning of our education, and reading forms the foundation for almost all subsequent learning. For this process to be successful it is crucial to develop a range of skills, tools and questions to read different types of texts. Below is a quick checklist you can use to guide your reading.

1. Read *actively* not passively. Take notes, and formulate questions to guide your reading. Knowledge of the author, her social context, the time and place something was written--all are crucial parts of reading and understanding.
2. Who wrote the piece you are reading? Why? For whom? Where did it appear originally?
3. What are the main themes of the piece? How does it relate to the subject you are covering?
4. How would you describe the tone and style of the reading?
5. How convincing is the reading? What methods are used to convince the reader?
6. What kind of "evidence" is marshaled to convince you? Is this evidence appropriate, sufficient and effective?
7. What is your own reaction to the reading? Why do you react in a particular way?

**A note on “reading” films.** Watching a film is in many ways like reading a novel. A novel introduces us to a different reality, complete with new settings, unfamiliar characters, and unique messages. As we read the novel we look for clues to help us understand this new reality. We may find symbols which emphasize the theme of the novel, techniques like foreshadowing and flashback which give us a sense of time, and descriptions to help us get to know the characters. Each of these literary devices, as well as the specific words an author chooses, establishes the tone of the novel.

Films also utilize many of these techniques, but in a visual way. Just as the world of the novel is revealed to us through a selected set of words, the world of a film is created for us with a carefully crafted set of images.

**Some issues to think about while watching a film:**

- **Genre/Audience:** Within what genre does this film fall (drama, comedy, romance, suspense, classic, foreign, children’s, etc.)? Who is the intended audience for this film? How do the visual images reinforce this goal?
- **Plot/Theme:** What is the basic premise of the film? What drives the action? What is the overall theme of the film? Are certain images repeated or exaggerated to help convey the theme? Look for mythical elements in the film – heroes, villains, damsels in distress. Does the film follow any universal story patterns?
- **Structure:** How is the film structured in terms of time and space? Does it follow a logical sequence, or is there a manipulation going on? Remember that inherent in the film medium is an artificial construction of both time and space. Investigate how the film uses both of these elements to reinforce its theme(s).
- **Characterization:** Are we being introduced to a new group of people, or perhaps to people who we know a little bit about already? How does the film create these personalities? What visual techniques are employed to make the characters seem real?
- **Camera Work:** Watch what the director has chosen to focus on – he is directing your eye. Look at the speed of various shots, distance vs. close-up shots, various angles and points of view from which the action is seen. Think about the timing of the editing – when does the action shift to someone, something, or somewhere else? Be aware of framing devices – like a painting, a particular image may be framed by something else. How do these techniques serve to reinforce the plot, theme, and characters of the film? How do they elicit feelings from the viewer?
- **Sound:** Is there music in the film? If so, how does it contribute to the mood, the theme, the character development? Listen to other sounds as well – how does the director use various sounds to reinforce the plot, theme, and characters of the film?
- **Context:** Is there a larger context for the film? Is it based on a novel or an historical event? If so, how does it differ from the original source?

These questions should help you to both recognize the visual impact the director is trying to make and analyze the techniques which she uses to do so.

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT GRADING STANDARDS

<b>A+</b>	100 – 98	<b>B+</b>	89 – 87	<b>C+</b>	79 - 77	<b>D</b>	69 - 60	<b>F</b>	59 - 0
<b>A</b>	97 – 93	<b>B</b>	86 – 83	<b>C</b>	76 - 73				
<b>A-</b>	92 – 90	<b>B-</b>	82 – 80	<b>C-</b>	72 - 70				

### Score of A: Superior

- Addresses the topic fully and explores the issue thoughtfully.
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- Demonstrates clear, focused, coherent, and logical organization.
- Is fully developed and detailed. The point is clear and well stated.
- Good introduction with clear thesis statement, and an effective conclusion.
- Evidences superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition between paragraphs; only a few minor flaws.
- Integrates evidence from texts to support ideas and arguments.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### Score of B: Strong

- Clearly addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is effectively organized. Easy to follow and understand.
- Is well developed, with supporting detail. Logically coherent.
- Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition; may have a few minor mechanical flaws.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### Score of C: Competent

- Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity.
- Is organized. Can be followed with some difficulty.
- Is adequately developed, with some detail. Some logical fallacies or incoherent sentences/paragraphs.
- Demonstrates competent writing; shows some flaws in syntax and grammar.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### Score of D: Weak

- May distort or neglect parts of the topic.
- May be simplistic or stereotyped in thought.
- May demonstrate problems in organization.
- May have generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; may be undeveloped. Logically flawed; several incoherencies.
- May reveal patterns of flaws in language, syntax or mechanics.
- Improper citation method.

### Score of F: Inadequate

- Demonstrates serious inadequacy in addressing the topic.
- Fails in its attempts to discuss the topic. Illogical.
- May be deliberately off-topic. Extremely difficult to follow.
- Is so incompletely developed as to suggest or demonstrate incompetency.
- Is wholly incompetent mechanically.
- Improper citation method.

## NEW CENTURY COLLEGE COMPETENCIES

1. **Communication**—Speak, read, write effectively. Aspects include effective and appropriate use of language; coherent and forceful expression; recognition of the rhetorical context of audience and purpose; appropriate use of research and sources; careful editing and proof reading; revision of one’s work; clear and well organized presentation of material orally or visually; thoughtful, careful listening and note taking; use of computer and World Wide Web.
2. **Critical Thinking**—Think clearly and critically. Fuse experience, reason, and training into considered judgments. Aspects include differentiating facts from opinions and inferences; recognizing assumptions; identifying language problems such as ambiguity; finding relationships and dividing a complex problem into parts; analyzing and summarizing arguments; synthesizing ideas from multiple sources; finding connections between a range of ideas, facts and experiences.
3. **Problem Solving**—Determine what the problem is and what is causing it. With others or alone, form strategies that work in different situations. Act on these strategies, then evaluate effectiveness. Aspects include forming questions to clarify a problem or issue; identifying multiple perspectives and alternative methods; developing a framework or prioritizing order for solutions; collaborating to maximize individual strengths within a group.
4. **Valuing**—Recognize different value systems while developing one’s own values. Recognize the moral dimensions of decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions, including self knowledge and reflective practice. Aspects include understanding multiple perspectives; analyzing values underlying a particular perspective; articulating one’s own values; understanding how one’s actions are shaped by one’s values; demonstrating sensitivity toward others.
5. **Group Interaction**—Know how to get things done in group settings. Elicit the views of others to help reach consensus. Aspects include ability to initiate and sustain group activity; determine goals when working with partner or group; understand and negotiate roles within group; articulate differences and disagreements without conflict; understand how consensus is different from compromise; reflect perceptively on group actions/interactions; assess one’s role within a group.
6. **Global Perspective**—Demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the economic, social, and biological differences in global life. Aspects include seeing different perspectives and ways of knowing that are based in cultural and geographical difference; understanding connections between local and global issues; understanding the reality of global interconnectedness in areas such as economics and the environment; learning to raise questions about global aspects of a range of issues and knowledge.
7. **Effective Citizenship**—Demonstrate an informed awareness of community and community responsibilities. Indicate an informed awareness of contemporary issues and their historical contexts. Aspects include community involvement (for example, in leadership or service roles); development of leadership abilities; analysis of the nature of leadership and “followship”; placing issues within historical contexts; awareness of multiple perspectives in civic life; awareness of issues of justice.
8. **Aesthetic Response**—Appreciate various forms of art and the contexts from which they emerge. Make and defend judgements about the quality of artistic impressions. Aspects include developing criteria to judge the quality of artistic impression; awareness of process involved in creating a particular work; awareness of methods of analyzing a particular medium or work; understanding of component parts of a particular medium; appreciation for genre, period, cultural, and historical contexts.
9. **Information Technology**—Understand and use current information technology applications based on computers and networks. Able to master basic skills to acquire, organize and apply information using databases, spreadsheets, word and information processing, and presentation graphics; evaluate the effectiveness and reliability of various information sources for their appropriate use. Critical awareness of public policy issues relating to information technology.

Tues, Aug 26: **Introduction to the Course**

Expectations  
Form study groups  
In-class writing

Thurs, Aug 28: **Arrival**

Historical Context Lecture – Colonization of America  
“Discovery of the New World”, in Reader  
“Capt. John Smith: A Select Edition of His Writings”, in Reader  
“Of Plymouth Plantation”, in Reader

Tues, Sept 2: **Exploration**

Historical Context Lecture – 1640 to 1803  
“Across the Continent”, in Reader  
“Lewis & Clark: Journey of the Corps of Engineers”, video

Thurs, Sept 4: Lewis & Clark cont.

Tues, Sept 9: **Manifest Destiny & Migration**

“Our Manifest Destiny”, in Reader  
Visual Art as Propaganda  
Ordeal By Hunger, Parts 1 & 2

Thurs, Sept 11: Ordeal By Hunger, Part 3

Tues, Sept 16: “The Quaker & the Marine”, Separate Packet

“The Show on the Road”, Separate Packet  
Writing Workshop –*Draft of Road Trip Proposal due*

Thurs, Sept 18: Historical Context Lecture – 1803 to 1848

Hudson River School  
*Group Presentation – Famous Westward Trails*

Tues, Sept 23: **Life on the River**

Historical Context Lecture – 1848 to 1865  
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chapters I – XVI  
*Road Trip Proposal Due*

Thurs, Sept 25: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chapters XVII – XXXI

“Mark Twain”, video

*Group Presentation – The Underground Railroad*

Tues, Sept 30: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chapters XXXII – end

*Group Presentation – The Role of Canals in the Growth of America*

Thurs, Oct 2: **Railroads**

“Railroad to New Hampshire”, in Reader

“Railroad to the Pacific”, in Reader

“Birth & Growth of a Railroad Town”, in Reader

“The Iron Road”, video

Tues, Oct 7: **The Closing of the Frontier & the Opening of the Road**

Historical Context Lecture – 1865 to 1896

“The Significance of the Frontier in American History”, separate packet #1

*Group Presentation – Army Corp of Engineers*

Thurs, Oct 9: Historical Context Lecture – 1896 to 1932

“The Automobile & Family Life”, in Reader

Photographs of The Depression

Grapes of Wrath, Chapters 1 – 15

Tues, Oct 14: No Class (Monday classes meet instead, due to Fall Break)

Thurs, Oct 16: Grapes of Wrath, Chapters 15 – 30

*Group Presentation – The WPA, TVA & CCC*

Tues, Oct 21: “Paper Moon”, film

*First Experiential Learning Day Trip Essay due*

Thurs, Oct 23: Historical Context Lecture – 1932 to 1945

Lolita, Part 1

“Divided Highways”, Part 1, video

Tues, Oct 28: Lolita, Part 2

*Road Trip Follow-up Report Due*

Thurs, Oct 30: Historical Context Lecture – 1945 to 1960  
On the Road, Part 1 & 2

Tues, Nov 4: On the Road, Part 3, 4 & 5  
 “The Fifties: The Beat”, video

Thurs, Nov 6: Historical Context Lecture – 1960 to 1970  
 “Easy Rider”, film

Tues, Nov 11: Discuss “Easy Rider”  
 Discuss road song assignment  
 Historical Context Lecture – 1970 to 1990

Thurs, Nov 13: Writing Workshop – *Complete draft of written component of Road Trip due*

Tues, Nov 18: “Thelma & Louise”, film

Thurs, Nov 20: “El Norte”, film  
 Selected short stories from The Circuit (to be handed out in class)

Tues, Nov 25: **What Have We Wrought?**  
 Historical Context Lecture – 1990 to present  
Blue Highways, selections in Reader  
 “Route 66: Romancing the Road”, in Reader  
 “Divided Highways”, Part 2, video

Thurs, Nov 27: THANKSGIVING – No Class

Tues, Dec 2: “A River Damned”, in Reader  
 “Drowning New Orleans”, in Reader  
 “America’s River”, in Reader  
*Second Experiential Learning Day Trip Essay due*

Thurs, Dec 4: Final Class  
 Group/Individual Presentations on Road Trips  
 Evaluations & Course wrap-up  
*Written component of Road Trip due*

## Group Presentations

Students will form groups of 4 – 6 members and do a 20 minute presentation on an assigned topic. These group presentations will occur throughout the semester, and will be related to the topic of discussion for that day. The group is to solidly research the assigned topic and then present their findings to the entire class. The group is expected to present a thorough history of the issues surrounding the topic.

This is to be an exercise in peer-teaching, and the presentations should disseminate information to the class but also generate discussion. The group presenting will be responsible for leading such discussion and answering any questions that arise. The presentation should relate the topic to past and present themes covered in the course. Groups may use any methods they believe are effective in presenting their information: handouts, pamphlets they created, audio-visual materials, games, etc. (If a group chooses to use audio-visuals, they are responsible for obtaining the necessary equipment.)

On the day of the presentation, each group must turn in to each instructor a paper listing the main points found in their research/presented and a bibliography of sources used.

If you have questions or concerns while planning your presentations, do not hesitate to contact the instructors.

### TOPICS:

- Famous Westward Trails (Oregon, Chisholm, Mormon, Santa Fe, Trail of Tears) *September 18*
- Underground Railroad *September 25*
- Role of Canals in Growth of America *September 30*
- Army Corps of Engineers *October 7*
- WPA, TVA, & CCC *October 16*

## Experiential Learning – Day Experiences

Students are required to participate in at least two daylong experiences. Below is a list of approved events. If you would like to participate in an event other than those listed (that you have found on your own), you must first receive approval from the instructors. The submission of a reflective essay is required. This essay is to address your experiences on and what you learned during the event. A significant historical element is also required. The essay is to be 3 – 5 pages long, and is due the week after you complete your experience.

### APPROVED EVENTS

- **Trip on the C&O Canal** – Park rangers and volunteers dressed in period clothing operate replica canal boats as they interpret the history of the canal. Offered at 3:00 pm during the week and three times a day on Saturdays & Sundays (11:00 am, 1:30 pm, and 3:00 pm). Duration is 60 – 70 minutes. Cost is \$8.00 per person. Round trips leave from Georgetown, Washington DC and Great Falls, Potomac MD. See [http://www.nps.gov/choh/co\\_julin.htm](http://www.nps.gov/choh/co_julin.htm) for more information.
- **Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) ‘Kingfisher Canoe Trail’ Tours** – Tour a scenic five-mile stretch of the Anacostia River, sharing the space with great blue herons, ospreys, egrets, beavers, and turtles. The trip will include water quality monitoring, a marsh exploration, tree and emergent plant identification, discussion on watershed geology, and pollution prevention. For more information contact Josh Unger, Program Manager at 301/699-6204 or [josh@anacostiaws.org](mailto:josh@anacostiaws.org)
- **Other Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) Programs** – See <http://www.anacostiaws.org/index.html> for more information on programs such as tree planting and river cleanups.
- **River History Trips** – Small groups are led out on all-day excursions along remote, scenic stretches of the Potomac River. Focuses vary from “George Washington & Potomac Navigation”, “Indian Summer on the Potomac”, “Potomac Waterpower”, to “Ball’s Bluff, Revisited”. Costs range from \$63.00 to \$82.50 per person. For more information, contact John Phillips at 703/771-1770 or River & Trail Outfitters at 301/695-5177. Also see <http://www.rivertrail.com/history.html>
- **Trip to Cape May** – See Andrew Wingfield for more information. Trip scheduled for last weekend in September.
- **Great Falls Visitor Center and Sponsored Hike** – Contact (703) 285-2966 or <http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/grfa/> for more information.
- **Jamestown Settlement** – In Williamsburg, VA
- **Canoe Trips on Other Rivers** – Can be either self-directed or through a sponsored event. Students must still address historical learning experience in essay.
- **Blue Ridge Parkway drive** - Can be either self-directed or through a sponsored event. Students must still address historical learning experience in essay.
- **National Road drive** - Can be either self-directed or through a sponsored event. Students must still address historical learning experience in essay.

## **DAY EXPERIENCE ESSAY GUIDELINES**

Each student is required to submit a 3 – 5 page essay upon completion of each chosen experiential learning day experience. Therefore you will be turning in at least two such essays during this course. The first essay must be submitted by October 21, and the second essay by December 2. The main goal of the essay is to document your experience and what you learned during that experience. Your essay may contain personal thoughts and opinions as well as a required historical component. Below are specific guidelines:

- Include your name, and the title and date of the experience on the first page.
- Attach at least one visual reference obtained during the experience (brochure, ticket stub, picture, postcard, etc.) to help convey a non-narrative sense of the place you visited. Be sure to reference this item in your essay, thoroughly explaining why you chose to include it.
- Listen and be aware of the environment around you. Pay close attention to details such as sounds, smells, colors, flora and fauna, weather, other people, etc. Try to capture the essence of your experience with observations and comments so that your essay conveys a complete but brief word picture of the event. (If you interview or even speak with someone during your experience and want to include the conversation in your essay, be sure to ask the person's name so you can document it.)
- Be sure to give historical context to your experience. Even if much of this information is provided by tour guides if you are on a sponsored event, you still need to do additional research to fully address this component. If you are doing a self-directed trip, you will definitely need to do individual research. Brochures and road signs will not provide enough information. For example, if you chose to drive the National Road, your essay should address where the road is, when the road was first built, why it was built, who built it, later transformations of the road, the purpose of the road today, etc. If you chose to canoe the James River, your essay should give some geological information on the river (source and end, through what areas it flows, tributaries), address the role the river has played in American history (Native American, colonial, Civil War), the role it plays today, the ecological state of the river in the past and today, etc.
- Document the sources used to write this essay, using a standard format (MLA, APA). This includes not only information taken books and the internet but also from brochures, trail markers, videos, tour guides, road signs, and the like).

## **Experiential Learning – Road Trip**

This assignment gives you a chance to devise your own experiential research project and create a piece of writing that could end up on the course syllabus next year. This is one of the main learning events of the course, and you will work on it throughout the semester. The project is worth 25% of your semester grade; it has several parts, all described below. The road trip itself, and the oral presentation, can be done either individually or in a small group; the proposal, follow-up report, and formal written component of the assignment must be done individually.

### **Proposal** (10 pts, draft due 9/16; proposal due 9/23)

The 1 page word-processed proposal will:

- describe the trip--where you are going, your means of transportation (could be multiple), how long you expect the trip to take, and, if this is a group trip, who else is going;
- articulate a minimum of three learning objectives;
- discuss plans for research you will do before, during, and/or after the trip.

Note: Research can take many forms, one of which is experiencing the trip itself. You will need to do some background reading in the library and/or on the internet before you go. When you return, you will no doubt want to do follow-up research on things you encountered during the trip. Will you interview people on the road as part of your project? Do you want to look up old songs or photographs or written descriptions relating to important sites along your route? These are just a few ideas: the possibilities are limitless. We want to give you maximum flexibility to design a research plan that suits your project. At the same time, we want to be sure that the quality and the amount of research you do is appropriate for a college course. In responding to your proposal, we will let you know if you seem to be on the right track with your research and, if not, give you some suggestions about how to develop a more promising research plan.

### **Follow-up Report** (20 pts, due 10/28)

The word-processed follow-up report will come after you return from your trip. This should include:

- a 2-3 page narrative account of your trip, relating the main events (use your road journal for raw material);
- a 1-2 page evaluation of your learning that discusses whether or not you met your learning objectives, and why (feel free to be honest here, explaining what prevented you from meeting particular objectives and describing any learning you did that surprised you);
- an annotated bibliography of all your research sources, using a standard documentation format such as MLA or APA;
- a 1-2 page discussion of research you have done so far and research you plan to do in preparation for the written component of the assignment (this should explain how your research is appropriate to your project and meets or exceeds the intellectual standards of a college course);
- a 1-2 page proposal of the formal written work you will submit, covering the following matters: genre of the piece; thesis statement or summary of main ideas; clear explanation of how your road trip and related research will inform your piece of writing; clear explanation of how your piece of writing relates to specific themes and texts of the course.

**Formal Written Component (50 pts, complete first draft due 11/13, final draft due 12/4)**

A 7-10 page piece of research-based writing in one of the following genres: conventional research essay; personal essay/travelogue; short story; hypertext essay or short story; other (must be approved by faculty). This piece should grow directly out of your road trip, exploring a topic of historical and/or literary interest and using appropriate kinds of research. The piece will be judged in part based on the conventions of its genre, but basic elements of writing--i.e., organization and structure, clarity and focus, diction, use of adequate and appropriate evidence, correct citation, editing and proofreading--will weigh heavily in every case. Every piece, regardless of genre, must include an annotated bibliography in a standard documentation format, such as MLA or APA. Conventional research papers must correctly employ one of the standard documentation formats (using in-text citations and a list of references/works cited). Work submitted with inadequate documentation will be returned without credit.

**Presentation (20 pts, presentations delivered 12/2 & 12/4)**

Presentation day will be the culminating event for this learning community, when we celebrate our semester of learning. You may present individually or in groups. Each presenter will have ten minutes. Your job is to describe your trip, explain how it relates to themes and texts we have encountered in this course, and evaluate the specific learning you have done through your road trip project. As usual, you will want your presentation to be engaging and informative; there is room for humor and creativity here, though we will be looking at how seriously you address the three tasks mentioned above. You are strongly urged to use presentation aids such as maps, photographs and other visual aids, handouts, etc.