The History of Modern Travel: Syllabus

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While still sparse, the published history of tourism has grown substantially in the past few years. Tourism represents a nexus of social, political, economic, and cultural histories. Further, tourism is an important area of trans-national interaction, to say nothing of being the world’s largest industry.

Most historians acknowledge that people have traveled for a very long time, whether through trade, migration, military adventure, or exploration, and that these travels, as historian Stuart B. Schwartz notes, “caused readjustments and rethinking as each side was forced to reformulate its ideas of self and other in the face of unexpected actions and unimagined possibilities.” Even so, historians argue that the roots of modern tourist travel only sprout with the Grand Tour. This eighteenth-century coming-of-age ritual involved sending England’s young aristocrats to the European Continent in order to learn languages, meet important political figures, and develop the skills that would allow them to become England’s future statesmen. While the Grand Tour was at its height, a series of aesthetic changes gradually altered the popular attitude toward remote landscapes, beaches, and mountains. Where once the idea was to prepare for an aristocratic life, a new form of travel evolved in which the intent was to collect views. “Romantic tourism” made tourists into consumers of places, spaces, experiences, and souvenirs and before long more and more people wanted to take part. Finally, following the development of an efficient rail network, Thomas Cook, an Englishman, capitalized on the growing market for tourist experiences by launching a travel agency dedicated to providing affordable excursions and trips to exotic (and not-so-exotic) destinations. Mass tourism was born.

Just as tourism puts people from different social and ethnic backgrounds into contact with one another, so the study of tourism forces scholars to utilize a variety of approaches and methodologies. As a result, this class is highly interdisciplinary and will make use of literary, sociological, anthropological, and historical approaches in order to trace the history of mass tourism from the Grand Tour to the present; in so doing the class also explores changing attitudes toward aesthetics, the environment, technology, gender, and social class. Students are expected to make use of the various methodologies and ideas covered in the lectures and readings in order to arrive at their own critical perspectives of the history and impact of travel since the Grand Tour.

Course Requirements

The “Biggie”
Over the course of this semester, you will be engaged in work on an extended primary source research paper of 3,500-4,000 words exploring a tourism-related topic of your choice. Each student will meet with me early in the semester to discuss paper topics.
Short Papers

While working on “The Biggie,” you will be asked to complete a series of smaller assignments that should help you develop your research paper. These one-page essays will help guide your thinking and allow you to share what you are learning with your colleagues through discussion of each other’s work. We will meet in sections 3-4 times throughout the course of the semester in which you will break into assigned groups in order to offer one another constructive criticism and engage with the ideas presented in lectures and readings.

Short papers should be one page in length. Do not use a font smaller than 10-point Times. You may use as many words as can be fit onto one side of a sheet of 8.5 by 11 inch paper.

The assignments are as follows:

1) Brain storming exercise: Write a short paragraph summarizing the topic that you intend to cover in your research paper. (Due at the end of week 3.)

2) Book review: Write a book review of the most important source that you have found for your research paper. (Due end of week 5.)

3) Paper summary: Describe the argument you will make in your paper. You should explain how it will be structured and why, and what your major argument will be. (Due at the end of week 10.)

4) Short Outline/Introduction: Based on your week 10 essay, write a complete outline of your paper, including a complete written introduction. Page length is unimportant, but be sure that your introductory paragraphs lay-out the essential argument and major points of your paper and that your out-line clearly delineates how your paper will be structured. I will hand these back to you with comments as quickly as possible. (Due at the end of week 12.)

On the day that each paper is due, you should provide copies to the members of your reading group and to myself. Group members should have all papers from their group read before we meet in small group sessions.

Participation

You will be expected to participate actively in class, both when we meet in small writing groups and when we have group discussions during lectures. Each week I will set aside time during scheduled lectures to discuss relevant themes and to hear from you about your thoughts on the material covered in both readings and lectures.
Grades

Your course grade will be based on the following:
Term Paper — 40%
Short essays — 35%
Participation and attendance (including group work) — 25%

Readings

Readings should be completed by the Monday of each week. You should acquire the following:


• Course reader (available online).

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction, The Importance of Travel and "Tourism" Before the Grand Tour

This week we explore the various reasons why the history of tourism is growing as an area of scholarly study, and we briefly address the history of travel before the advent of the Grand Tour.

Reading:


Week 2: The Grand Tour

Most historians agree that the Grand Tour is the mother of modern tourism. This week we discuss the history of the Grand Tour and its role in shaping both national and class identities.

Reading:


Week 3: Inventing the Sublime and Beautiful

Prior to the latter half of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries, rugged and wild areas such as the Scottish Highlands, the mountains of Europe, and the seaside were considered frightening and ugly. Through a series of ideological changes, these areas were redefined as both healthful and beautiful.
This week, we discuss these changes by looking particularly at the re-imagining of both the seaside and the mountainous areas of Continental Europe.

Reading:

**First Paper Due**

**Week 4: Rising Tide: The Birth of the Seaside Resort**
Once the seaside was transformed into a healthful space, it soon began to attract people interested in “taking the waters” for health reasons, and then those more excited by the amusements found at proliferating pleasure centers such as at Brighton and Blackpool. This week we examine the changing face of seaside resorts, bathing rituals, seaside amusements and social class, and the impact of seaside resorts on the face of modern travel.

Reading:

**Week 5: Thomas Cook and the Birth of Mass Travel: Social Class and Tourism**
The formation of the Thomas Cook Travel Agency in the early 1840s ushered in modern mass tourism. This week we examine how a Baptist missionary’s effort to transport a large number of people to a temperance meeting in Loughborough sparked the creation of the world’s largest travel agency and completely redefined the way people traveled by spawning a proliferation of “package tour” companies and by making travel possible for women who were previously considered unsuited to serious adventure.

Reading:

**Second Paper Due**

**Week 6: Tartan Tours and the Invention of the Scottish Highlands**
Building on previous discussion of the re-imagining of Europe’s peripheral areas and the creation of the Thomas Cook Travel Agency, this week we examine the development of Scottish tourism beginning with Dr. Johnson’s famous trip in 1773 and concluding with a brief discussion of the kitsch now associated with
Scottish holidays. In addition, this week we begin to pay more attention to the experience of the tourists themselves, examining selections from the writings of several writers who toured Scotland at various points.

Reading:

Week 7: The Tourist Guidebook
Virtually every tourist carries along a guidebook, but what is the history of these vital travel companions? This week we trace the history of guidebooks and examine the role they play in showing tourists ‘what ought to be seen.’

Reading:

Week 8: Kraft Durch Freude and the Birth of Bord Fáilte
Until quite recently there has been little recognition of the important role played by the state in promoting and developing tourism. This week we examine two very different but equally important cases of state involvement. First, we will trace the rise of Bord Fáilte (Irish Tourist Board)—an organization responsible for managing one of Ireland’s largest industries. Second, we will discuss the role that tourism played in the rise of Nazism by following the history of the Nazi party’s Kraft durch Freude program.

Reading:
Week 9: Tourism and the Automobile
The automobile has had a profound impact on the face of modern tourism. This week we look at the role of the automobile in the development of American tourism and briefly compare the American experience with that of representative European examples.

Reading:
Shaffer, Margaret S. See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940 (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), Pages to be determined.

Week 10: Selling the Past: Heritage Tourism
Heritage tourism is big business but it is also hugely controversial. During the 1980s, for example, one British commentator complained that heritage threatened Britain’s future by locking the country irretrievably in the past. This week we trace the history of heritage tourism, consider the difference between history and heritage, and examine the role of tourism in shaping national memory.

Reading:

Third Paper Due

Week 11: Holocaust Tourism
The murder of millions of people by the Nazis during World War II has left a dark shadow over twentieth century history. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the places and spaces most intimately associated with mass death, the Nazi concentration camps, are now the site of a booming tourism business. This week we trace the history of Holocaust tourism, examine the national dimensions of Holocaust commemoration (including the design, construction, and controversy surrounding America’s national Holocaust museum), and return to the issues addressed last week to ask probing questions about the “authenticity” of the experience sought by Holocaust tourists.

Reading:
Kugelmass, Jack. “The Rites of the Tribe: American Jewish Tourism in Poland,” in
Week 12: Exploring the “Exotic”

Very shortly after Thomas Cook launched his travel agency, European tourists began taking excursions to “exotic” locations such as the Middle East and Africa. Tourists hoped to see “barbarians” and to experience places and spaces unlike anything found at home. This week we explore this pursuit of the exotic in historical context, beginning with Thomas Cook’s tours and concluding with the more recent development of eco-tourism.

Reading:


Löfgren, Orvar, On Holiday: A History of Vacationing (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1999), Pages to be determined.


Fourth Paper Due

Week 13: The Impact of Tourism

During the first week of this course we noted that cross-cultural encounters have been an important part of the human experience for many hundreds of years. What impact has tourism had on modern society? Does it adversely affect native cultures? How has the impact of travel changed with time? Do modern tourists exert a greater (more harmful?) pressure on society than was true before Thomas Cook?

Reading:


Week 14: Tourism as Colonizer

Given the pursuit of “otherness” that we discussed in Week 12, it is hardly surprising that many scholars are anxious to equate tourism with colonialism. Is this a fair comparison? This week we examine both the arguments made by post-colonial theorists and their scholarly challengers, looking to the historical record in order to determine whether tourism represents a form of colonialism or something quite different.
Week 15: Post-Tourism and the Disneyfication of the World

Many scholars claim that contemporary tourists take part in something called "post-tourism" in which the travelers "play tourist games," reveling in the act of touring rather than in the tourist site/sights themselves. This week we bring our study of tourism into the present, looking back over where we’ve been and asking where we’re going.

Reading:


The “Biggie” is Due