First Year Seminar—Venice: A History of Tourism

Karl Appuhn

Spring 2020
Time M 11:00-1:45
Location TBA

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Course Description: In 2018 an estimated 30 Million people visited Venice. While New York gets about twice as many annual visitors, Venice has a stable of population of only 55,000 inhabitants and occupies an area only slightly larger than Central Park. Venice is also, famously, a city built on water in the middle of a tidal lagoon. Its small size and unusual site render Venice exceptionally vulnerable to the more pernicious effects of modern mass tourism, including over-crowding, pollution, and an economy increasingly reliant on a single source of revenue. Indeed, for Venetians it has become commonplace to describe the situation as both a social and environmental crisis. Venice, locals often say, is drowning in tourists and under rising sea-levels. But in many ways this situation is not new. Venice has always been overrun with outsiders, whether medieval pilgrims, crusaders, and merchants; eighteenth and nineteenth-century cosmopolitan elites on the so-called Grand Tour; or twentieth and twenty-first century mass tourists arriving by train, plane, and cruise ship.

This seminar will explore the history of Venice as a travel destination through documents, literature, and film. In so doing we will consider the how Venice has been shaped by its history as a travel destination; how representations of the city affect people’s desire to visit it and their perceptions of the challenges it faces; and how the city’s current tourism-driven economy combined with rising sea levels threaten the city’s very existence.

Books for Purchase:
- James, The Aspern Papers
- McCarthy, Venice Observed
- Mann, Death in Venice
- Ruskin, The Stones of Venice

Films:
- Casanova (2005)
- Don’t Look Now (1973)
- Merchants of Venice (2019)
- The Wings of the Dove (1997)

Assessment:

Writing:
1. One Bibliographic Assignment (15 entries).
2. Three short (one page double spaced) response essays. Students must submit one response in February, one in March, and the third by the end of the semester.
3. One "source essay" (3-4 pages double spaced) aimed at your final project.
4. One final research assignment. This can take the form of a 2,400 word (8 page) research project or an “unessay project.” The requirements are found on the Wordpress Site.
All writing will be graded for both content (such as clarity and effectiveness of argument and effective use of sources) and for style and grammatical usage. Further information is on the Wordpress Site.

**Speaking and Attendance:** This course is a seminar. Therefore, meaningful participation is expected from **all** students at **every** class meeting. Absences, by definition, count against your participation grade. Each student is allowed one unexcused absence. Each additional absence will result in the reduction of the overall course grade by 10%.

Each student will also make one class presentation of 10 minutes in length. For this presentation, they will choose a piece of storytelling (a newspaper or magazine article, documentary, podcast, film, short story, etc.) related to the topic of the day’s class, summarize its narrative and evaluate that narrative’s effectiveness vis à vis the effectiveness of the week’s main reading. Students will be graded on the organization and clarity of the presentation and their ability to relate it to the broader course. Further guidelines and a grading rubric are on the Wordpress Site.

**Grading Rubric:**

- **Attendance and participation:** 10%
- Five In-Class quizzes: 5%
- **Class Presentation:** 10%
- Bibliographic Essay: 5%
- **Source Essay:** 15%
- Short Responses: 15%
- Rough Draft of Final Project: 15%
- **Final Project:** 25%

**Course Policies:**

**Reading:** All readings must be done in their entirety before the class session for which they are assigned.

**Electronic Device Policy:** Cellphones are not permitted. Laptops and tablets are permitted, but should be in Airplane Mode.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Any plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Second offenses will result in a failing grade for the course. I also refer all plagiarism to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

**Religious Holidays:**
NYU’s policy is to accommodate students’ observances of religious holidays. In order to receive accommodation, you must notify the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester of any planned absences related to religious observance.
Disability Disclosure Statement:
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Reading and Lecture Schedule.

Jan 27th – Plotting Our Course

Feb 3rd – Why is Venice Built on Water?
    Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant*, pages 1-45

Feb 10th – Travelers before Tourism
    Davis and Marvin, *Venice, The Tourist Maze*, 1-29
    Medieval Travelers Accounts 8 pages.

Feb 17th – No Class, President’s Day Holiday

Feb 24th – Venice in the Age of Casanova FIRST SHORT RESPONSE DUE
    Watch “Casanova”
    Davis and Marvin, *Venice, The Tourist Maze* pp. 30-54

Mar 2nd – Venice and the Grand Tour Part I
    Twain, *Innocents Abroad* (excerpt) 10 pages.

Mar 9th – Venice and the Grand Tour Part II SECOND SHORT RESPONSE DUE
    Watch “The Wings of the Dove”
    Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour*, 81-104.

Mar 16th – No Class, Spring Break

Mar 23rd – Venice After the Grand Tour I BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY DUE
    Mann, *Death in Venice*, (75 pages)

Mar 30th – Venice After the Grand Tour II
Apr 6th – **Venice: A City of Expatriates** SOURCES ESSAY DUE

- James, *The Aspern Papers*, (86 pages)
- Berendt, *City of Falling Angels*, 183-232

Apr 13th – **Venice's Most Potent Symbol: Gondolas**

- Davis and Marvin, *Venice, The Tourist Maze* pp. 133-59
- Radiolab Episode: *The Gondolier* (link on Wordpress Site)

Apr 20th – **Venice as a Living Museum of Craftsmanship: Glass**

- Berendt, *City of Falling Angels*, 127-142.
- Davis and Marvin, *Venice, The Tourist Maze*, 261-92

Apr 27th – **Venice as a Movie Set and Virtual Tourism** THIRD SHORT RESPONSE DUE

- Watch “Don’t Look Now”
- Watch movie clip compilation on Wordpress Site

May 4th – **Does Venice Have a Future Beyond Tourism?** ROUGH DRAFT DUE

- UNESCO Venice Charter (3 pages)
- Watch “The Merchants of Venice” (NYUStream Link on Wordpress Site)
- Kaul and Kim, “Go Global, Think Local: Ethical Issues in Student Travel.” (9 pages)

May 11th – **Conclusions and Discussion of Final Projects**

May 18th FINAL PROJECTS DUE BY 6PM