

# IP226-15 The Liquid Continent

**24/25**

**Department**

Liberal Arts

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

William Rupp

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

The Mediterranean Sea occupies a complex and critical place in the development of human culture, society, and psyche. Despite this, it is easy to look at the Mediterranean solely as an empty gap between Africa and Europe, 'east' and 'west'. For millennia, however, the Mediterranean has shown itself to be just the opposite. Rather than a blank space it is a complex and multifaceted environment that continues to influence a range of human experiences, from the fundamental to the frivolous.

Two key ways humans have reacted to and processed their experiences of the Mediterranean is through travel and writing. In this module, we combine these through the lens of travel writing, examining what people have said about their experiences in, on, under, and around the Mediterranean. Travel writing, which has been described as a 'mercurial category' of communication (Schaff 2020), can be hard to define. Not limiting ourselves to one genre, though, allows us to take a broad definition and a wider perspective to. Combined with the use of a range of sources – such as travel narratives, pilgrims' accounts, maps, poetry, videos, vlogs, government publications, and material culture – we will chart our own geography of what the Mediterranean was, is, and might yet be.

During the module, we explore topics such as archaeology, trade and commerce, conservation and sustainability, blue humanities, migration and refugees, tourism and influencers, religion and belief, and politics. We will also develop an awareness of how imperial and possessive travel and

writing about travel can be, and for the need to adopt intersectional and postcolonial perspectives to better understand and analyse such sources and topics. Students will be encouraged to make their own connections between ideas and identify their own areas of interest and focus.

Collaborative learning will be a key aspect of how the module is constructed and delivered. Using problem-based learning pedagogies, this module's seminars will be a balance of individual and collective activities, including offering a wider sharing of ideas and debates.

With this work and exploration this module seeks to empower students to contextualise the Mediterranean as Jean Cocteau envisaged it: as the liquid continent.

[Module web page](#)

## **Module aims**

This module provides unique epistemological perspectives on the Mediterranean using both the lens of travel writing and a problem-based, interdisciplinary, Liberal Arts approach. It will do so by looking at accounts of travel in, on, and around the Mediterranean (including literary writing, guidebooks, government reports, creative expressions, blogs/vlogs, video media, and other formats). This variety of perspectives are presented to allow students to focus on topics and elements that are meaningful to them. Travel writing encompasses historical and cultural works, religion and philosophy, geopolitics and sustainability issues, gender and identity, and many other areas, ensuring that there is a wide variety of engagement opportunities. This flexibility extends to the assessments, which are purposely designed to give students the space to respond authentically to the content prompts. Students will be able to readily transfer skills and ideas from this module to other modules and vice versa.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

As this module uses problem-based and active student learning pedagogies, content covered may change from year to year based on student specialisms and interests. The syllabus below is provided as an indicative guide, but is flexible and subject to change.

Indicative syllabus:

Unit 1 -- Voyages of the mind and body: Defining the liquid continent through travel, writing, and human consciousness.

Unit 2 -- Itinerary: Pilgrimages, plunder, power, and perspective; the Mediterranean and visions of the past.

Unit 3 -- Itinerary: Modes of engagement; present day travel through physical and metaphysical means.

Unit 4 -- Itinerary: Future, tense; the Mediterranean in an uncertain future.

Unit 5: Voyages of the mind made manifest (presentations/poster session).

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Describe key aspects of the Mediterranean world's history, geopolitics, culture, religion, and environment using the lens of travel writing.
- Demonstrate the application of problem-based learning skills.
- Describe key aspects of the Mediterranean world's history, geopolitics, culture, religion, and environment using the lens of travel writing..
- Critique theoretical positions drawn from a number of disciplines relating various aspects of the Mediterranean.
- Design and construct unique research-informed responses that articulate their own investigations in topics presented in or inspired by material included.

## Indicative reading list

As module content may change from year to year, readings may change as well. This list is indicative only.

Abram, S., Waldren, J., and Macleod, D.V.L. (1997). *Tourists and Tourism: identifying people with places.*

Adams, P. (1962). *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1600-1800.*

Blanton, C. (2002), *Casey Travel Writing: The Self and the World.*

Bohls, E., and Duncan, I. (2005). *Travel Writing, 1700-1830; An anthropology.*

Buzard, J. (1993). *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to "Culture", 1800-1918.*

Duncan, S.H. (1999). *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing.*

Gilbert, H. (2002). *In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire.*

Greenblatt, S. (1991). *Marvelous Possessions.*

Grewal, I. (1996) *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel.*

Hooper, G. (2004). *Perspectives on Travel Writing.*

Hulme, P., and Youngs, T. (2002) *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing.*

Korte, B. (2000). *English Travel Writing: From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations.*

Leask, N. (2002). *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel writing 1770-1840.*

Lisle, D. (2006). *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing.*

Mills, S. (1991). *Discourses of Difference: Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism.*

Pratt, M.L. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation.*

Roberson, S., ed. (2001). Defining Travel: Diverse Visions.

Said, E. (1978). Orientalism.

Zemon Davis, N. (2007) Trickster Travels.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## **Research element**

Students will conduct independent research for weekly seminars and activities (which will be based on problem-based learning approaches) and will produce original research outputs in their assessments.

## **Interdisciplinary**

This module draws upon a range of disciplinary methodologies and offers the participants the opportunity to identify specific areas of focus meaningful to them and their backgrounds. This module is open to students from any department, and the rich mix of backgrounds will enhance the overall range and experience of discussions and debates.

## **International**

This module is built around a multi-national approach to understanding the modern and historical Mediterranean world as well as its political, social, and environmental geographies.

## **Subject specific skills**

Ability to generate relevant multidisciplinary problems through individual and small group research.

Individual and group research skills through multidisciplinary examinations of specific case studies.

Oral and written communication.

Digital literacy.

Professional communication.

Working with others.

Problem solving.

Information technology.

Research across various disciplines and using a variety of methods.

Peer review.

## **Transferable skills**

Through this module, you will develop different skills that are sought by employers that will support your professional development. We have highlighted this to enable you to identify and reflect on the skills you have acquired and apply them throughout your professional journey including during the recruitment process whether this is in a CV/application form or at an interview.

Critical and independent thinking — developed through: Weekly tasks, readings, and homework; encounters with and employment of complex theories and Problem-Based Learning activities and in-class discussion.

Written communication – developed through: Research Essay; poster presentation; and weekly collaborative interactive map/travelogue; with ongoing weekly feedback for each student.

Oral communication – developed through: Poster presentation at the end of term where students create their own physical and/or metaphysical Mediterranean itinerary and explain why/how they created it in line with texts and theories seen in the module; and weekly seminar tasks and presentations.

Research and evaluation – developed through: Weekly problems and tasks that require the students to research and evaluate issues concerning the origin, function, purpose, and power of earthly paradise narratives; and the final research paper involves the formulation of their own research question and conducting their own in-depth reviews and analysis of theories, archival materials, case studies, or interpretations of expressive works (fiction, non-fiction, and many works that defy and question this binary).

Time and self-management — developed through: Weekly group work and problems; weekly map/travelogue entries; poster preparation; and writing of research paper.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Private study	60 hours (40%)
Assessment	70 hours (47%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

Reading, preparation for seminars, completion of weekly pre-session tasks estimated at an average of 6 hrs per week throughout ten week term.

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A1

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>	<b>Eligible for self-certification</b>
Personal Odyssey Research Project	50%	30 hours	Yes (extension)

The main written assessment for this module will be a written itinerary informed by independent research. Students will be asked to further and critically expand upon the topic selected for their poster presentation, demonstrating good written academic skills, clear engagement with sources, and the ability to craft a creative argument.

Personal Odyssey Academic Poster	35%	20 hours	No
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Students will be asked to produce a critical and visual representation of a theme or topic they have selected from the module. As a basic form, students will be asked to create an academic poster but they can choose to use any visual medium they feel is appropriate. This analysis will be offered in the form of an itinerary, asking the reader to move through space and time with them in a manner appropriate to the subject chosen. This could, for example, follow refugees from Syria trying to reach central Europe. Or, the itinerary could chart how a specific cultural influence or movement has crossed physical or intellectual space. Students will also be expected to give a 5 minute oral summary of their itinerary and answer questions about their work. The topic of this poster can form the basis of the Personal Odyssey Research Project.

Collaborative and interactive map/travelogue	15%	20 hours	No
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Weekly contributions made on seven of the eight weeks between weeks 2 and 9 to a collective and collaborative map. Students will be asked to put a digital 'pin' each week (can include imagery, video content, etc., as well as up to 250 words of reflective text) that relates to the topics under discussion that week and their independent reading/research. Contributions must be put on the map before the next seminar or they will be counted as non-submissions.

### Feedback on assessment

Students will receive regular, formative verbal feedback on their in-class work/weekly problems. They will receive written or verbal feedback on their collaborative/interactive map contributions. They will receive written and verbal summative feedback on their poster presentation that they can use to further develop their final written component. The final component will have written summative feedback.

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## Availability

### Anti-requisite modules

If you take this module, you cannot also take:

- IP326-15 The Liquid Continent

### Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
  - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
  - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
  - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
  - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
  - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
  - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
  - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
  - Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
  - Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
  - Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
  - Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 2 of UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts