Going Native
English 317.003

For most of us, most of the time, foreign travel implies a round-trip ticket. We head off for a distant shore, enjoy the sights, soak in the atmosphere, and—if we're of a literary bent—blog to our friends back home about the experience before returning home ourselves. But many journeys, both now and in the past, follow a one-way street, when travelers leave home never to return. In the case of immigrants, the travelers often follow a well-trodden path, and can count on finding communities of fellow countrymen at their destination. There have always been those, however, who have, whether by design (as in the case of deserters and missionaries) or by accident (captives, shipwreck survivors), found themselves entirely alone within an unfamiliar culture, and have, by necessity, attempted to adapt themselves to life in a very different world—in other words, to "go native." What is this experience like for those who experience it? What motivates them to seek it out, and how does it transform them? And most importantly, how can we explain the remarkable allure the fantasy of "going native" continues to exercise on our imagination? To answer these questions, we will consider written narratives and films by and about real and fictional travelers who have "gone native," alongside works by historians and anthropologists who have attempted to make sense of the phenomenon from other points of view.

FALL 2012
Mon & Wed 4:00-5:30pm

This course satisfies the Pre-1830 requirement for English Concentrators

Professor David Porter

www.lsa.umich.edu/english