This four-unit Maymester course is an exercise in “bookpacking”, an innovative form of literary travel in which novels serve as portals through which to explore regional history and culture.

The course takes us to New Orleans and Southern Louisiana, a unique and extraordinary destination formed of a fusion of cultural strands: French, Creole, Cajun, and African-American.

We'll spend four weeks traveling across this vibrant region. As we travel, we’ll read a range of classic and contemporary novels, including Interview With The Vampire, A Confederacy of Dunces, and Jesmyn Ward’s novel set during Hurricane Katrina, Salvage the Bones. We’ll use these novels almost as guidebooks, adopting a holistic approach to the humanities whereby literature, history, geography, politics and social studies combine into a unified course of study. It promises to be a rich and critically exciting cultural experience.

The course will be led by Andrew Chater, an award-winning BBC TV historian and presenter. Additional information about the course and the instructor is available at dornsife.usc.edu/engl/undergraduate-courses/ and www.andrewchater.com.

Course Dates: Maymester 2017
(May 15–June 14, 2017)