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Driving Lessons ***A Road Trip through American Travel Literature***

Christopher B. Strain

***Weaves the author's own four-month cross-country sojourn
in a VW van with thoughts on travel narratives across the
history of American literature***

In *Driving Lessons*, Christopher B. Strain sets out on a quintessential American road trip, exploring not just the roads and byways of the country but the road trip's place in American culture. Strain dives into the well of American travel writing, illuminating fascinating aspects of the road trip, such as how race, class, and gender shape the experiences of road trippers.

In the summer of 1998, amid a professional crisis of confidence, Strain settled on a plan to reconnect with both himself and the country he studies. He purchased a 1972 Volkswagen Westfalia van and set off on his own cross-country odyssey. In the weeks that followed, he ruminated on his own ongoing journey alongside great journeys from the past and how they reveal the heart of the traveler as well as the landscape of the nation.

Visiting archives and landmarks across the United States, Strain's journey became a parallel to the stories he studied—an opportunity to see and experience the cities, national parks, and monuments that define US history. *Driving Lessons* is a compelling blend of literary analysis and memoir, offering readers an insightful and heartfelt reflection on the enduring power of the American road trip.

Christopher B. Strain is professor of American Studies at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of four other books, including *The Long Sixties: America, 1955–1973*.



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