



MECO843

Writing the Real

S1 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Peter Doyle

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MCrMedia or PGCertCrMedia or MFJ

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the field of creative non-fiction, both as creative practice and as subject of critical enquiry. It combines critical analysis with the development of the students' own writing projects. It will consider a range of established and emerging modes including the non-fiction graphic novel, the magazine feature, the memoir, the essay and science/technology writing.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.

Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.

Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Weekly writing exercises</u>	10%	Continuing
<u>Seminar participation</u>	10%	Continuing
<u>major article part 1</u>	40%	23 May
<u>major article part 2</u>	40%	Friday 13 June

Weekly writing exercises

Due: **Continuing**

Weighting: **10%**

Each week students will bring multiple copies of that week's writing exercises for in-class workshopping. The exercises will comprise short pieces, ie less than 400 words, the purpose of which is to focus on particular writing craft skills.

A detailed exercise brief will be distributed in-class week 1.

At semester end, students will choose five of their semester's exercises to be submitted for assessment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.

Seminar participation

Due: **Continuing**

Weighting: **10%**

This component recognises students' *active* participation in weekly seminars.

Marks for this component are earned by:

*evidence of familiarity with each week's readings, demonstrated by students' ability to contribute to discussions and analysis in class

*active engagement in workshopping fellow students' exercises and major article drafts

*students' demonstrated abilities to develop and further explore ideas and themes which arise in class

*active contributions to in-class discussions

*students bringing completed exercises each week, suitably copied ready for in-class workshopping

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

major article part 1

Due: **23 May**

Weighting: **40%**

Task: Submit a research portfolio plus 600-word research report.

The background research and footwork is the core, the substance and the hidden bulk of any successful piece of non-fiction writing. (Insufficient research *always* shows -- usually as repetitive, waffly, “puffy” prose.) Solid and thoughtful research is the hidden 90% of the iceberg.

Research skills are vital, but each project presents its own unique challenges. This exercise is to help you become familiar with the broad contours and specifics of researching for non-fiction writing .

Portfolio

Portfolio must be approximately 10-15 x A4 pages in length and include at least 4 different sources of research, such as (but not limited to):

*Interview transcript/s

*Fieldwork notes

Archival research (eg photographs and other material about particular building/s and venues, maps, early drafts of playscripts, etc – ie material you have accessed at an archive)

Objects/artefacts (include written details of them)

Your own discussion of relevant films/documentaries

Photographs

Statistics (eg. from the Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Books/literature/journalism

Scholarly journal articles

Additional readings

NOTE: Please don't include photocopies of books/articles in your portfolio. Instead include a detailed bibliography. Please don't include your entire interview transcript; perhaps instead just

select particularly relevant sections.

*NOTE: Your portfolio must include at least one of the following research sources: *interview transcript/s*, and/or *fieldwork*.

Research Report

Submit a 600-word research report attached to the front of your portfolio. In 2 or 3 sentences, write what your creative arts journalism article will be about, as well as the central theme/idea you are exploring, or the 'angle' you are pursuing. Then explain the significance of each piece of research you've done/collected and how you will use each piece in the final article. Set out your report under headings based on each piece of research (eg 'Interview with XXXX') and write a few sentences under each heading.

Marking Criteria:

You will be marked on:

Demonstrated ability to conduct in-depth, relevant research using a variety of methodologies

Demonstrated ability to synthesise this research by focusing on one or two key themes to have emerged from it

Demonstrated ability to reflect on the relevance of such research to your proposed creative arts article

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

major article part 2

Due: **Friday 13 June**

Weighting: **40%**

Development of a substantial, well-researched piece of non-fiction writing of up to 3000 words.

A detailed assignment brief will be distributed in class.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of

literary non-fiction

- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

Delivery and Resources

Technology

This unit uses ILearn.

Lecture and tutorial times

Lectures and tutorials will run concurrently: Lecture 9am-10am, followed by by tutorial/workshop. Room 246, Building Y3A, Wednesdays.

Teaching and learning strategy

Not provided

ILearn

Week to week course details and additional information will be made available on via ILearn.

Changes since last offering of this unit

This unit has not been offered before.

Other material

Essential readings.

Please note, following our initial meeting(s) and consultation, further readings may be added or substituted as needed.

Fanny Burney, 'A mastectomy, 30 September, 1811' from *The Faber and Faber Book of Reportage*, John Carey, (ed), London, Faber, 1987.

Kelley Benham, 'Hearing our subjects' voices: quotes and dialogue' from *Telling True Stories: a Nonfiction Writers' Guide*, Mark Kramer & Wendy Call (eds), New York: Penguin, 2007, pp 107-109.

Eddie Campbell, *Alec, How to Be an Artist*, Paddington Qld: Eddiecampbellcomics, 2001, pp7-14.

Lane Degregory, 'Narrative is a daily habit', from *Telling True Stories: a Nonfiction Writers' Guide*, Mark Kramer & Wendy Call (eds), New York: Penguin, 2007, pp 240-243.

Terry Eagleton, *Saints and scholars*, London: Verso, 1987, pp35-36, 45-49.

Barbara Ehrenreich, "Selling in Minnesota" from *Nickel and dimed: undercover in low wage USA* (London: Granta, 2002) pp122-147

Tom French 'Sequencing: text as line', from *Telling True Stories: a Nonfiction Writers' Guide*, Mark Kramer & Wendy Call (eds), New York: Penguin, 2007, pp140-145.

Atul Gawande, 'The Itch,' *New Yorker*, 30 June, 2008, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/06/30/080630fa_fact_gawande

Malcolm Gladwell, 'Offensive play: how different are dogfighting and football?' *New Yorker*, 19 October, 2009 http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/10/19/091019fa_fact_gladwell

Anne Hull, 'Revising – over and over again', from *Telling True Stories: a Nonfiction Writers' Guide*, Mark Kramer & Wendy Call (eds), New York: Penguin, 2007, pp 205-208

Kevin Kelley, 'Becoming screen literate', from Steven Johnson (ed) *Best Technology Writing 2009*, New Haven, Yale, 2009, pp176-187

'Elmore Leonard's Ten Rules for Writing,' from *New York Times*, 'Writers on Writing' series, July 16, 2001

Joseph Mitchell extracts from 'Mr Hunter's grave' from *Up in the Old Hotel*, (New York: Vintage, 1993), pp 510-515

Michael Ondaatje, *Coming through slaughter*, Toronto: Anansi, 1976, pp8-14

George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, (London: Penguin, 2001) pp 3-17

Kate Rossmanith, 'Many me', *The Monthly*, February, 2007 <http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2007/february/1276233468/kate-rossmanith/many-me>

Kate Rosmmanith, 'On the edge' *The Monthly*, August, 2008 <http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2008/august/1272507853/kate-rossmanith/edge>

Kate Rossmanith, 'The release plan,' *The Monthly*, October 2013 <http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2013/october/1380549600/kate-rossmanith/out-parole>

Both at <http://www.themonthly.com.au/kate-rossmanith>

Joe Sacco, *Footnotes in Gaza*, NY: Henry Holt and Co. 2011 pp3-29

Luc Sante, various extracts from '12 Sides', 'Pinakothek'.

Luc Sante, *The Factory of Facts*, New York: Pantheon, 1998, pp3-11.

John Simpson, 'Tiananmen Square' from *The Granta Book of Reportage*, Ian Jack (ed) London: Granta, 1998 pp 259-266

Gabriel Thompson, *Working in the shadows: a year of doing th ejobs most Americans won't do*. Ny: Nation, 2010

Calvin Trillin, 'Paper Trials' from *The Best of Writers on Writing, Volume 2*, edited by Jack Heffron. (Cincinnati: Story Press, 1995), 71-73

Eliot Weinberger, 'Teeth' and 'The laughing fish' from *Karmic Traces*, New York, New Directions, 2000, pp80-84.

Unit Schedule

A detailed schedule, with lists of essential and supplementary readings will be made available on I-Learn before start of classes.

Week 1, 5 March. Introduction.

Week 2, 12 March. The building blocks of story, part 1: anecdote and shape, set-up and payoff.

Week 3, 19 March. Building blocks, part 2: considering structures and story types.

Week 4, 26 March. Places and places. Non-fiction writing and the near and far, the exotic and local.

Week 5, 2 April. Voice, character, trust.

Week 6, 9 April. Guest lecture, Dr Kate Rossmanith. Lightbulb Moments? Developing ideas from research to writing.

14 April-25 April, Mid semester break

Week 7, 30 April. Guest lecture, Dr Kate Rossmanith. Immersion journalism: being in the field.

Week 8, 7 May. Writing about music, culture, the arts.

Week 9, 14 May. Combining, mixing and crossing platforms.

Week 10, 21 May. The rise of the celebrity non-fiction author. Performing authors.

Week 11-13, 28 May, 4 June 11 June. Consultations, schedules to be arranged in weeks 1-3.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Lectures

Weekly lecture from course convenor and/or guest lecturer(s)

Tutorials/Workshops

Weekly workshops in which students' writing exercises and works-in-progress are read, discussed and constructively analysed.

Workshop/ discussions

Weekly topics and readings are critically examined in group discussions.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.ht

[ml](#)

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy

applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Weekly writing exercises
- major article part 1
- major article part 2

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.

Assessment tasks

- Seminar participation
- major article part 2

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or

practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- major article part 1

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

Assessment tasks

- Seminar participation
- major article part 2

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

Assessment task

- major article part 1

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their

professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing

Assessment task

- major article part 2