



MAS 311

Non Fiction Writing: Memoir and the Personal

S2 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	9
<u>Changes from Previous Offering</u>	13

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Willa McDonald

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W6A 150

1-2pm Thursday and Friday (by appointment)

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

CUL240 and (MAS210 or MAS211)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The genre of life writing is pervasive. Telling the stories of our own lives and the lives of others is a signature of the media in our age. This unit takes students on a journey through various manifestations of life writing from traditional memoir and autobiographies, to newspaper and magazine columns, personal essays, and internet blogs. At the same time, students are encouraged to produce their own personal, self-reflective writing, of a standard suitable for publication.

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:

Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.

Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.

Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.

Treat information in an ethical manner

General Assessment Information

Non-Fiction Writing Assignments:

The students' writing in both the writing exercises and the memoir article will be assessed on:

- the storytelling skills demonstrated; the quality and clarity of the writing; the syntax, grammar and spelling; evidence of research and of focus or theme.
- that an ethical approach was brought to the work.

Further, the memoir article should show evidence of structure, narrative flow, an enticing well-written lead and a satisfying conclusion.

Research Assignment:

The research portfolio will be judged on:

- whether or not the student presented the required range of sources,
- evidence of the breadth and depth of research,
- a clear indication of how the research will be used in the memoir essay,
- evidence of a clear theme the student is investigating or developing in the memoir essay,
- evidence of the structure the student is developing in the memoir essay,
- an ethical approach to the research and use of research material.

The research report should use correct use of spelling and grammar and should comply with the word count.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Participation</u>	25%	ongoing
<u>Writing Exercises</u>	20%	Ongoing till Week 6
<u>Research Portfolio</u>	20%	10am Thursday 18 Sept
<u>Memoir Article</u>	35%	Monday 17 Nov 10am

Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **25%**

Students will receive a participation mark for the unit. This will be based on the submission of:

- Contribution to class discussion, including editing of other students' work.
- 3 x writing exercises to be brought to tutorials in Weeks 3, 4 and 5 for editing by and

discussion with peers.

- 4 x 200-word sections of draft memoir to be brought to tutorials in Weeks 9,10, 11 and 12 for editing by and discussion with peers.

Note: students will not be marked on the above work they bring to class; rather, failure to submit this work will result in significant loss of participation marks.

The three writing exercises must be submitted together in Week 6. The final article must be submitted in Week 14.

Assessment Criteria:

Students will be assessed on their attendance and participation in class discussions, as well as on their role in the workshops as readers and editors of their own and their fellow students' work.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.

Writing Exercises

Due: **Ongoing till Week 6**

Weighting: **20%**

Students are to complete in advance three writing exercises to be brought to tutorials in Weeks 3, 4 and 5 respectively. After receiving feedback from your peers and tutor in the workshop/tutorial, the three polished exercises are to be submitted for assessment in week 6 - 10am Thursday 11 September.

Assessment Criteria:

The students' writing in the exercises will be assessed on:

- the storytelling skills demonstrated; the quality and clarity of the writing; the syntax, grammar and spelling; evidence of research and of focus or theme.
- an ethical approach to the work.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.

- Treat information in an ethical manner

Research Portfolio

Due: **10am Thursday 18 Sept**

Weighting: **20%**

Students to submit a research portfolio and report based on the research they've completed on a topic they intend to focus on for their memoir piece. The research may involve fieldwork/observational research, interviews, and/or archive research. Students must submit a report outlining how they anticipate the research will be used in their memoir piece.

Assessment Criteria:

- whether or not the student presented the required range of sources,
- evidence of the breadth and depth of research,
- a clear indication of how the research will be used in the memoir essay,
- evidence of a clear theme the student is investigating or developing in the memoir essay,
- evidence of the structure the student is developing in the memoir essay,
- an ethical approach to the research and use of research material.

The research report should use correct use of spelling and grammar and should comply with the word count.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Memoir Article

Due: **Monday 17 Nov 10am**

Weighting: **35%**

Students to submit a 2000-word memoir article based on their research and draft-writing throughout the semester, plus a 500-word reflection on the process of writing the article.

Append to the story a 500-word reflection on the process of writing the story. Consider:

- *Why you chose this particular story/topic. Why is it important to you?*
- *Whether you found it confronting to write - and if so, how you moved through that stage to complete the piece;*
- *Whether you faced ethical issues in the writing (what were these? how did they affect your approach? how did you ultimately resolve them?).*
- *Whether the types of literary techniques you used were well chosen and worked the way*

you wanted them to (e.g. dialogue, a seductive opening/lead; observation and description, anecdotes, structure, etc).

- *What you learned from using those techniques.*
- *What you learned from writing this piece. Why do you think it helped you to learn this/these thing/s?*
- *Other comments you would like to make.*

Assessment Criteria:

- the storytelling skills demonstrated; the quality and clarity of the writing; the syntax, grammar and spelling; evidence of research and of focus or theme.
- evidence of structure, narrative flow, an enticing well-written lead and a satisfying conclusion;
- an ethical approach to the work;
- an ability to reflect on the students' own work in light of the lessons learned over the semester and to improve it and rewrite it accordingly.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.
- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Delivery and Resources

Technology

No technology is required of students in this unit other than access to iLearn.

Lecture and Tutorial Times

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Lecture: Thursday 12-1pm Y3A T1

Tutorials: Please consult MQ Timetable website.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

This unit requires students to engage with Memoir Writing both in its production (by researching, writing and editing your own articles/stories) and in its reception (through thoughtful reading and critical analysis of a range of texts in this genre).

In this way, students will become familiar with:

- a range of memoir writing
- literary issues in the field;
- the demands of the craft of life writing.

Each week students will attend a lecture and a workshop where they will analyse set readings, discuss issues raised by those readings and from time to time undertake writing and other exercises.

Information

Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>.

Changes Since the Last Offering of this Unit

This unit has changed in only minor respects since it was last offered, e.g. some readings have changed as has the content and order of some of the lectures. The assessments have not changed in nature, although minor changes have been made, such as, students must now hand in the writing exercises for assessment.

Other Material

REQUIRED READING

Required readings for this unit are available in the unit reader (including links to online articles).

RECOMMENDED READING

Additional readings will be recommended in lectures and tutorials.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 - Introduction to Memoir

Week 2 - Researching Memoir

Week 3 - Writing Memoir - Issues of Ethics

Week 4 - Writing the Emotions

Week 5 - Life Writing as Journalism

Week 6 - Writing the Setting

Week 7 - Private Study Week (Conception Day)

Semester Break

Week 8 - Writing Testimonial Memoir

Week 9 - Writing the Spirit

Week 10 - Writing the Body

Week 11 - Memoir and the Personal Essay

Week 12 - Writing Memoir - Final Craft Tips

Week 13 - Consultation Week

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.html

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/

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

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

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to

demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Memoir Article

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.
- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing Exercises

- Research Portfolio
- Memoir Article

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing Exercises

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.

Assessment task

- Research Portfolio

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Memoir Article

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Memoir Article

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social

justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Analyse and research information using a variety of methodologies, to develop memoir-writing.
- Structure and write stories of a high standard that fall into the broad category of memoir-writing, and reflect on the processes involved.
- Treat information in an ethical manner

Assessment tasks

- Research Portfolio
- Memoir Article

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of life writing.

Changes from Previous Offering

The structure and content of this course has been amended to put more emphasis on the craft of the writing of memoir. Consequently, new lectures and new readings have been added.