



CUL 240

Literary Journalism

S1 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces students to the practice of literary journalism and creative non-fiction writing. Students discuss key readings in the field, at the same time learning the principles of non-fiction writing: word usage, writing style, interview skills, ethics and defamation, research skills, narrative structure, analyses and reflection.

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 literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.

Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.

Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.

Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.

Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Class Participation</u>	20%	Throughout the semester
<u>Research Portfolio</u>	25%	Week 6, Friday 11 April, 5pm
<u>SWF Report</u>	20%	Week 11, Friday 30 May, 5pm
<u>Literary Journalism Article</u>	35%	Week 14, Monday 16 June, 5pm

Class Participation

Due: **Throughout the semester**

Weighting: **20%**

Students must attend lectures and tutorials. As part of your participation in the course, you will be asked to complete three writing exercises and submit three sections of draft material from your Literary Journalism Article. Note: You will not be marked on this work; rather, failure to submit any or all of the exercises or draft material will result in you losing the total of your participation mark. The participation mark is also based on your contribution to discussion in class, and your contribution to the editing of other students' work.

The following 3 Writing Exercises have been designed to:

- sharpen students' writing skills appropriate to the aims of the unit
- provide students with feedback early in the unit on their progress
- identify early in the unit areas where students may need extra help or encouragement with their creative work

Writing Exercise 1: (Bring to tutorial in Week 2) Pick 10 people you know and write a one-sentence description of each of them, focussing on what makes each person unique and noteworthy.

Writing Exercise 2: (Bring to tutorial in Week 3) Pick a smell or aroma - eg, the smell of garlic or rose petals or a wet dog... - and recreate in 200 interesting words a memory associated with that smell. Avoid using any adverbs or adjectives. Instead, use strong verbs.

Writing Exercise 3: (Bring to tutorial in Week 4) Sit in a restaurant or a crowded area and write down the snippets of conversation you hear. Listen to the people around you. Listen to how they talk and to what words they use. Once you have done this, choose one conversation, record it and then add your version of what comes next in the conversation. Match their style.

(Exercises 1 and 3 adapted from <http://poewar.com/fifteen-craft-exercises-for-writers/>)

Literary Journalism Article Drafts: Bring 8 copies of 1 x 200-word draft section of your final article to your tutorials in weeks 8, 9 and 11. Each week, bring along a different draft section.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Research Portfolio

Due: **Week 6, Friday 11 April, 5pm**

Weighting: **25%**

Research Portfolio

Due Date: Week 6, Friday 11 April, 5pm

Weight: 25%

Students will submit a research portfolio and report based on original research they have conducted towards their final article. Research will take the form of fieldwork, interviews and/or archival research. Please attach evidence that you have used Twitter in the process of research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
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SWF Report

Due: **Week 11, Friday 30 May, 5pm**

Weighting: **20%**

SWF Twitter Report

Due Date: Week 11, Friday 30 May, 5pm

Weight: 20%

The purpose of this assignment is two-fold - to encourage participation in the Sydney Writer's Festival and to give students practice in getting to the nub of a factual story quickly and in few words.

Students are asked to attend a session at the Sydney Writers' Festival. While attending the session, send at least five tweets that, taken together, convey an accurate overview of the content of the session. Print out your tweets and submit with a cover sheet that gives the name, date and time of the session, plus a short description of the topic (from the program) and the

speakers. **Twittering:** Please open a new twitter account specifically for this exercise. Once the exercise is finished, please close the account. **DO NOT USE YOUR OWN NAME.** Use a made-up name and username. Do NOT add a location to your tweets. Most importantly of all - **TICK THE PRIVACY BOX** to protect your tweets. We do not want your tweets to go public. Your tweets are only for the purposes of this assignment. You may add other students in your tutorial group to be your followers. When tweeting, please read the information about **DEFAMATION** carefully - particularly the material concerning the incident involving Julie Posetti. Defamation is an issue we take very seriously here at the university and in the field of non-fiction writing generally.

Students enrolled in both MAS 210 and CUL 240 must choose two different sessions to report on - ie, students must not double-up and use the one session for both assignments.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Literary Journalism Article

Due: **Week 14, Monday 16 June, 5pm**

Weighting: **35%**

Literary Journalism Article

Due Date: Week 14, Monday 16 June, 2014

Weight: 35%

Task: Submit a 2,000-word original article based on research conducted for your research portfolio (as well as subsequent research).

The topic is of your choice (under the guidance of your tutor) but travel stories will not be approved.

Your story should be written with a publication in mind. The publication must be approved by your tutor. Attach to your final version of your assignment, a covering letter that pitches it to the editor of the publication you have chosen. Note that the editor's contact details must be correct.

When writing your article, make sure you tell an interesting story that has a point. Your piece should suit the publication you have chosen. It should include facts and information, anecdote, observation, and description. Remember to "show, not tell". Use concrete details. Write for the senses. Feel free to write passionately and to take risks with your content and expression. You may build on any of the exercises done in class to write your story. Work into the story any relevant insights gained from writing the reflection (see next par).

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.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery: Day

This unit will use:

ILecture

Times and Locations for Lectures and Tutorials

For current updates, lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetables website:
<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>.

Resources:

A Reader of compiled articles and resources will be available for purchase from the Co-op Bookshop.

Technology:

Lectures will be available on iLearn, where announcements, assignment tasks and other materials to be used in tutorials will be posted as needed.

Changes to the Unit since 2013.

Some of the lecture content has changed to improve the learning experience for the students. The assessments have also been altered. The quizzes have been dropped and a research portfolio assignment has been added. The requirement to use social media - specifically Twitter - has been increased in the assessment tasks.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 - 7 March - What is Literary Journalism?

Week 2 - 14 March - Writing Truth - Ethics and Literary Journalism

Week 3 - 21 March - Guest Lecture - Bunty Avieson - Researching

Week 4 - 28 March - Interviewing

Week 5 - 3 April - Writing with Care

Week 6 - 10 April - Structure

-----University Break-----

Week 7 - 2 May - Guest Lecture - Debra Jopson, Journalist

Week 8 - 9 May - Rewriting

Week 9: - 16 May - Defamation - Guest Lecture - Mandy Van Den Elshout

Week 10 - 23 May - Sydney Writers' Festival

Week 11 - 30 May - Musicality in Writing

Week 12 - 6 June - The Writer's "I"

Week 13 - 13 June - Unit Review

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/

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

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
- Research Portfolio
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism 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 literary journalism, while

gaining an overview of the history of the genre.

- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
- Research Portfolio
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism 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 literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
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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 outcomes

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
- Research Portfolio
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism Article

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

- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
- Research Portfolio
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism 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

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism 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

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary journalism, while gaining an overview of the history of the genre.
- Research, synthesise and apply information in the context of a creative writing project.
- Utilise and apply writing techniques of a high standard.
- Critically analyse and synthesise a variety of theoretical readings about the nature of writing and use these to reflect on their own writing.
- Understand the complexity of ethical issues in the field.

Assessment tasks

- Class Participation

- Research Portfolio
- SWF Report
- Literary Journalism Article