



MECO310

Telling True Stories 1

S1 Day 2015

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer and Unit convenor

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Y3A191F

TBA

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

MECO210 or MECO211 or (CUL240 and (MAS210 or MAS211))

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

In this unit we look at techniques and structures writers use to engage ever-more fickle audiences. Key readings are drawn from a number of platforms – books, feature articles, blogs, graphic novels, indie publishing – to exemplify some of the more dynamic and engaging recent trends in creative non-fiction writing. We focus in particular on new and novel ways of approaching the past – historical events, family sagas, crimes, eccentric and little known phenomena – and on new modes of writing about science, sport, technology and social change. Students are guided to find and develop their own original stories, and produce pieces of quality writing, suitable for print or broadcast.

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:

1. Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary

nonfiction writing

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Research Portfolio & Report</u>	25%	Week 7 2015
<u>Essay</u>	40%	Week 13 2015
<u>In-class Test</u>	25%	Week 12 2015
<u>Writing Exercises</u>	10%	ongoing

Research Portfolio & Report

Due: **Week 7 2015**

Weighting: **25%**

Research Portfolio

Task: Submit a research portfolio plus 600-word research report. Details of this assessment will be made available in Week 1. Worth 25%

Marking criteria:

- 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 literary nonfiction article

Submission: Students must submit this assignment in the boxes in the foyer of W6A by 5pm on Monday 20 April 2015.

Late Submission: A late penalty of 10% per day will be applied.

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

Turn It In: This unit does NOT use Turn It In.

On successful completion you will be able to:

2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary

nonfiction writing

Essay

Due: **Week 13 2015**

Weighting: **40%**

Essay

Your task is to write a 2000-word literary nonfiction article suitable for publication in a newspaper or magazine. This is not a university essay and does not require footnotes and bibliography. Further details of the essay assignment will be distributed in Week 1. Worth 40%

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to write vividly without using clichés, 'showing' not 'telling', and an awareness of nuances of meaning
- Evidence of intellectual investigation
- Demonstrated ability to synthesise in-depth research into a compelling, well-structured story
- Evidence that the writer has taken creative risks, both in choice of research/writing topic, and in the writing itself
- Demonstrated ability to write grammatically correct sentences, following accepted English syntax and punctuation.
- Evidence of a 'voice' in the piece – a consistent, warm, trust-worthy sense of authority

Submission: Students must submit this assignment in the boxes in the foyer of W6A by 5pm on Thursday 4 June 2015.

Late Submission: A late penalty of 10% per day will be applied.

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

Turn It In: This unit does NOT use Turn It In.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

In-class Test

Due: **Week 12 2015**

Weighting: **25%**

In-class test:

At the end of the semester you will be required to complete an in-class test which will be worth 25% of your overall mark. The test will take place during the Week 12 lecture (Wednesday 27th May at 9am). Students will answer questions based on: the lecture content for the unit; the unit readings; and on your excursion to the Sydney Writers Festival in Week 11. The test is designed to assist you in demonstrating your knowledge of the unit content as a whole. You will be given 40 minutes in which to write your responses. You are strongly advised to complete all set readings and attend all lectures.

Failure to sit the in-lecture test will result in a mark of zero (0) for that test. If you miss a test due to a medical issue then you will be given the opportunity to sit the test at a later date. In such cases you must supply a medical certificate. Please note that medical certificates issued a significant period after the date of illness may not be accepted as these may be contrary to AMA guidelines for issuing medical certificates (<http://ama.com.au/system/files/node/6505/Guidelines+for+Medical+Practitioners+on+Certificates+Certifying+Illness+2011.pdf>).

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the question
- Demonstrated knowledge of lecture and reading materials
- Application of materials to set question

Submission: In-class test responses will be handwritten and submitted to the lecturer during the lecture.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing

Writing Exercises

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Writing Exercises

The weekly writing workshops are the practical core of this course, so it is essential that the writing exercises be done and brought along in suitable form each week. Each week's exercise must be typed (double-spaced), and you must bring 8 copies to your tutorial for workshopping. A schedule of weekly exercises will be handed out in Week 1. Write approximately 200 words for each exercise. Worth 10% overall.

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to write grammatically correct sentences, following accepted English syntax and punctuation.
- Demonstrated ability to write vividly without using cliches, 'showing' not 'telling', and an awareness of nuances of meaning

- Evidence of having understood the set task

Submission: To be handed to your tutor each week during your tutorial. Failure to submit by the end of each tutorial will result in a loss of marks.

Extensions: Extensions can only be granted by the tutor in line with university policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Delivery and Resources

Below is a list of essential readings for this unit. A reader (hard copy), which will include essential readings plus additional recommended readings, will be available for purchase at the Co-op bookshop.

- Stephen King, *On Writing*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000
- Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*, New York: Penguin, pp. 15-17.
- Lee Gutkind, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, pp. 32-43
- Louise Kiernan, *Telling True Stories* (Kramer and Call, eds), pp. 145-7
- Kate Rossmanith, 'Many me', *The Monthly*, February, 2007,
- Kate Rossmanith 'On the Edge' *The Monthly*, August, 2008.
- Lane Degregory 'Narrative as a Daily Habit'
- Alice Pung, 'The Secret Life of Them', *The Monthly*
- Lee Gutkind, 'Immersion', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*
- Helen Garner, 'Labour Ward, Penrith', *True Stories*
- Chloe Hooper, 'Young Libs in the Chocolate Factory', *The Monthly*
- Claire Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*, Text Publishing, Melbourne 2013
- Matthew Ricketson, 'The Subtle and Slippery Art of Interviewing', *Writing Feature Stories: How to Research and Write Newspaper and Magazine Articles*
- Lee Gutkind, 'Interviewing', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*
- Fanny Burney, 'A mastectomy, 30 September, 1811' from *The Faber and Faber Book of Reportage*, John Carey, (ed) London, Faber, 1987.
- Naomi Klein, 'Risky Business,' from *The Nation*, January 5, 2004
- David Finkel, *The Good Soldiers*
- Vanessa Berry, *Mirror Sydney* 'Magic Kingdom'.
- Erik Lyle, "The Epicenter of Crime: The Hunt's Donuts Story"

- Helen Garner, *Joe Cinque's Consolation*
- Helen Garner, *The First Stone*
- Kelly Benham, *Telling True Stories*, (Kramer and Call, eds)

Unit Schedule

A full schedule for this unit will be available on iLearn in Week 1.

Tutorials for this unit commence in Week 2.

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/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Additional information

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

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

- 2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Writing Exercises

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

- 1. Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- In-class Test
- Writing Exercises

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

- 1. Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Research Portfolio & Report

- Essay
- In-class Test

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

- 2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership

Assessment task

- Research Portfolio & Report

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

- 2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- 3. Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- 4. Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Research Portfolio & Report
- Essay
- Writing Exercises

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 outcome

- 2. Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies

Assessment task

- Research Portfolio & Report