



MECO210

Narrative Journalism

S1 Day 2015

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Andrew Frost andrew.frost@mq.edu.au
Credit points 3
Prerequisites 12cp
Corequisites MAS203
Co-badged status
Unit description This unit introduces students to the practice of narrative journalism. Students discuss key readings in the field, at the same time learning the principles of this type of non-fiction writing: word usage, writing style, research skills including interviewing, narrative structure, ethical approaches (including issues in defamation), analysis 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 narrative 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>	10%	Throughout the semester
<u>Writing Exercises</u>	15%	Week 5, Friday 27 March, 5pm
<u>Research Portfolio</u>	25%	Week 8, Friday 1 May, 5pm
<u>Narrative Journalism Article</u>	25%	Week 11, Monday 18 May, 10am.
<u>SWF Article - 600 words</u>	25%	Week 13, Friday 5 June, 5pm

Class Participation

Due: **Throughout the semester**

Weighting: **10%**

Students must listen to lectures and attend tutorials. Some of the lectures this semester may be delivered in audio format only (rather than face to face). Please check the lecture schedule each week before the scheduled lecture time to keep up-to-date with any changes.

As part of your participation in the course, you will be asked to complete three writing exercises and three sections of draft material from your Narrative Journalism Article, as well as the lead of your Sydney Writers' Festival article and bring them to class for workshopping. Failure to bring to class any or all of the exercises or draft material will result in a lower participation mark. The participation mark is based on your contribution to discussion in class, and your contribution to the editing of other students' work.

Writing Exercises - Drafts: Bring 5 copies of each completed draft exercise to your tutorials in weeks 2, 3 and 4 as specified in the unit outline.

Narrative Journalism Article Drafts: Bring 5 copies of 1 x 200-word draft section of your final article to your tutorials in weeks 8, 9 and 10. Each week, bring along a different draft section.

Sydney Writers' Festival Article Draft: Bring 5 copies of the **first** 200 words of your article to class in week 12 for workshopping.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- 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.

Writing Exercises

Due: **Week 5, Friday 27 March, 5pm**

Weighting: **15%**

Writing Exercises

Due Date: Week 5, Friday 27 March, 5pm.

Weight: 15%

Task: To workshop 3 writing exercises in class. These should then be submitted online together as ONE assignment on Friday 27 March, 5pm.

The 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: (Due Tutorial Week 4) Visualise a place. Be there, see the details. Now write about it as if you love this place, but without telling the reader directly that you really like being there (150 words). It could be a corner of your bedroom, an old tree you sit under on Saturday afternoons, a table at McDonalds, a place near the ocean. What colours are there? Sounds? Smells? When someone else reads it, she should know what it is like to be there and understand how you feel about it. Now, do the same thing but write about the SAME place as if you really hate it. Again, don't tell the reader directly how you feel but use your description of the place, and the tone of your writing, to convey your feelings (150 words).

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

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.

Research Portfolio

Due: **Week 8, Friday 1 May, 5pm**

Weighting: **25%**

Research Portfolio

Due Date: Week 8, Friday 11 April, 5pm

Weight: 25%

Students will submit a research portfolio and report based on original research they have conducted towards their narrative journalism article. Research will take the form of fieldwork, interviews and/or archival research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Narrative Journalism Article

Due: **Week 11, Monday 18 May, 10am.**

Weighting: **25%**

Narrative Journalism Article

Due Date: Week 11, Monday 22 May, 10am

Weight: 25%

Task: Submit a 1200-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).

When writing your article, make sure you tell an interesting story that has a point. Your piece should include facts and information, anecdote, observation, and description and possibly quotes and/or dialogue. 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?
- What issues you faced in researching the story and in converting the research into a narrative.
- 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.

SWF Article - 600 words

Due: **Week 13, Friday 5 June, 5pm**

Weighting: **25%**

SWF Report

Due Date: Week 12, Friday 5 June, 5pm

Weight: 25%

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 required to attend the Sydney Writers' Festival and write an article about one seminar that they attended. The article should be 600 words long. It should give the reader enough information to get a solid impression of the content of the seminar. It should be written with an interesting lead and the article should answer all the reader's questions regarding the who, what, when, where and why of the seminar.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

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 2014.

Some of the lecture content has changed to improve the learning experience for the students. The assessments have also been altered, shortened and paced more evenly throughout the semester. The requirement to use social media - specifically Twitter - has been dropped.

Unit Schedule

Week 1- 27 Feb - What is Narrative Journalism?

Week 2 - 6 March - Writing Truth - Ethics and Narrative Journalism

Week 3 - 13 March - Researching

Week 4 - 20 March - Interviewing

Week 5 - 27 March - Writing with Care

Week 6 - No Classes due to Public Holidays

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

Week 7 - 24 April - Structure

Week 8 - 1 May - Rewriting

Week 9: - 8 May - Defamation - Guest Lecture - Mandy Van Den Elshout

Week 10 - 15 May - The Writer's 'I'

Week 11 - 22 May - The Sydney Writers' Festival Excursion

Week 12 - 6 June - Musicality in Writing

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/

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

- 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
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Writing Exercises
- Research Portfolio
- Narrative Journalism Article

- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Writing Exercises
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words

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 narrative 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
- Narrative Journalism Article
- SWF Article - 600 words