



MHIS747

Representing Lives: The Genres of Modern Biography

S2 External 2015

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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>	5
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	6
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	7

Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Kate Fullagar

kate.fullagar@mq.edu.au

Contact via kate.fullagar@mq.edu.au

W6A 401

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit seeks to understand the current rise in public interest in biography or life writing as well as the way in which the biographic mode is increasingly used as a key explicatory form in history and other humanist disciplines. We will briefly trace the history of the genre and then delve into examples of various kinds of biography, such as political lives, literary lives, indigenous lives, women's lives, and collective lives. We will also examine the problems of fiction and biography; arguments against biography; and modern enterprises to undertake massive regional or national biographical dictionaries.

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:

Advanced understanding of the history and use of biography in modern humanist research

Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography

Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography

Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Engage in online discussions with staff and fellow-students that are both critical and respectful

General Assessment Information

Assignment submission Please submit all written work online via the iLearn site.

Grading Policy Grades will be given as percentages.

High Distinction 85-100 Distinction 75-84 Credit 65-74 Pass 50-64 Fail 0-49

Rubrics See the sheet copied at end of the Reader.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Seminar Participation</u>	20%	Ongoing
<u>Book Review</u>	20%	31 August 2015
<u>Biographical Project</u>	60%	13 November 2015

Seminar Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Students are expected to do all the required readings, and post at least twice every week (at least one post in response to another student), which should amount together to 300 words. Discussion should not be a list of everyone's views for the week, but an interconnected conversation between members. Your grade is assessed on the basis of your generosity with your knowledge to other students and your willingness to ask relevant questions and also to have a go at trying to answer others' questions.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the history and use of biography in modern humanist research
- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography
- Engage in online discussions with staff and fellow-students that are both critical and respectful

Book Review

Due: **31 August 2015**

Weighting: **20%**

Write a 1000-word critical review of a biography published sometime in the last 20 years. Critical reviews should not just be summaries. They should assess the book by identifying its aims, discussing their aptness, and evaluating their successful execution. Consider, too, how the book relates to modern traditions or genres of biography. Please refer to the Modern History Essay Writing Guide for advice about argumentation, citation, and formatting. You must present your review with a title, wide margins, page numbers, and double-spaced. Immediately after your title, provide full publication details of the book under question.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography
- Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Biographical Project

Due: **13 November 2015**

Weighting: **60%**

Write a critical biographical essay in 4000 words. You may choose as your subject either one person, a pair of persons, a family, a circle, a place, a thing, or indeed yourself. Your subject does not necessarily have to have a public profile. *However, you may not conduct your own oral interviews, considering the ethics stipulations of Macquarie University.* You must work from a range of sources — written, oral (lodged in a public archive eg NLA), visual, aural, public or private — and they must come from at least three (or more) different authorities. That is, one's own memory cannot suffice. Nor can one diary, etc. Your project can take any written form (or structure) that you wish; it can cover as much or as little of the 'life' under question as you feel is adequate to satisfy the descriptor of 'biographical.' The project must, however, involve some primary research, and not rely only on secondary sources. In the humanities, even biographies have to have theses. When developing an argument about your subject, it may be helpful to consider the significance of your research. What is the pay-off for your reader? What do you want your readers to have learnt about your subject by the end of the essay that they could not have learnt elsewhere? Please refer to the Modern History Essay Writing Guide for advice about argumentation, citation, and formatting. You must present your essay with a title, wide margins, page numbers, and double-spaced. You must cite your references correctly and provide a bibliography at the end, starting on a new page.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the history and use of biography in modern humanist research
- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography
- Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography
- Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Delivery and Resources

Extensions and special consideration

Please ask me early if you need an extra day or two. If you need three days more extra time you will need to apply for special consideration. The penalty for late work of 2% for every day.

Students applying for Special Consideration circumstances of three (3) consecutive days duration, within a study period, and/or prevent completion of a formal examination must submit an on-line application with the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation. See <https://ask.mq.edu.au/>.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

Students must purchase the MHIS747 Unit Reader at the Co-op Course notes shop. They must also acquire Hermione Lee's Biography (2009). There are no other essential texts, though the further reading lists in each week's section may be a guide for personal projects.

UNIT WEBPAGE AND TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

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

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is an integral part of the core values and principles contained in the Macquarie University Ethics Statement: <http://www.mq.edu.au/ethics/ethic-statement-final.html>

Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- All academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim.
- All academic collaborations are acknowledged.
- Academic work is not falsified in any way
- When the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.

The link below has more details about the policy, procedure and schedule of penalties that will apply to breaches of the Academic Honesty Policy which can be viewed at: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/>

[academic_honesty/policy.html](#)

Unit Schedule

1 Introduction 2 Background I: Confession and Hagiography 3 Background II: Anecdote and the Pursuit of Intimacy 4 'Historic' Lives 5 Obscure Lives 6 Collective Lives 7 Indigenous Lives SEMESTER BREAK 8 Autobiography
9 Fictional/Experimental Biography 10 Writerly Lives 11 Against Biography
12 Mass Biography 13 NO READING. WORK ON BIOGRAPHICAL PROJECTS

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.

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 - 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

- Engage in online discussions with staff and fellow-students that are both critical and respectful

Assessment task

- Seminar Participation

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

- Advanced understanding of the history and use of biography in modern humanist research
- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography

Assessment tasks

- Book Review
- Biographical Project

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 outcomes

- Advanced understanding of the history and use of biography in modern humanist research
- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography
- Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography
- Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Book Review
- Biographical Project

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:

Learning outcomes

- Advanced understanding of the primary principles, methods, and concepts used in modern biography
- Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography
- Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Biographical Project

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

- Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography
- Exercise independence in identifying and formulating solutions to complex historical problems

Assessment tasks

- Seminar Participation
- Book Review
- Biographical Project

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

- Engage in synthesizing, analysing, evaluating and creating historical knowledge through biography

Assessment task

- Seminar Participation