



# CWPG815

## Writing Creative Non-Fiction - An Introduction

S2 Evening 2014

*English*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Rebecca Giggs

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MA in (Children's Literature or Creative Writing or English Literature) or  
PGCertArts in Creative Writing

Corequisites

Co-badged status

ENGL714

Unit description

In this practical introduction to writing creative nonfiction students research and write a number of narrative non-fiction pieces such as memoir, personal essay, and writing about place. We consider what creative non-fiction is, looking at the varied cultural contexts in which these very popular and influential texts are currently being written and published, with a focus on the Australian scene. This introductory unit assists students to devise their own topics and to develop skills in primary research and narrative techniques. Assessment is based on participation, practical research tasks and the student's narrative non-fiction writing.

## 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:

Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.

Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.

Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.

Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.

Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or production of narrative nonfiction writing.

Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Participation</u>	10%	Weekly and as scheduled
<u>Writing about Place Portfolio</u>	20%	Weeks 2-5. Submit 15th Sept
<u>Writing Assignment 1 - Place</u>	25%	29th Sept
<u>Writing Assignment 2</u>	35%	17th Nov
<u>Reflective Essay</u>	10%	19th Nov

### Participation

Due: **Weekly and as scheduled**

Weighting: **10%**

**Participation** involves –

- class or online discussion; listening to the lectures;
- maintaining a regular creative writing practice;
- weekly reading and commenting on other students' creative work in the workshops;
- diligently adhering to schedules in relation to workshopping, logging-in and general timeliness;
- and an Individual Presentation by each student.

Assessment is based on the quality and relevancy of participation. See full Unit Handbook for further details.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers

and own work.

- Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or production of narrative nonfiction writing.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

## Writing about Place Portfolio

Due: **Weeks 2-5. Submit 15th Sept**

Weighting: **20%**

Research and writing about place involves students in a range of activities and forms of writing.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.

## Writing Assignment 1 - Place

Due: **29th Sept**

Weighting: **25%**

Writing Assignment 1 consists of a substantially developed creative non-fiction work(s) on the topic 'writing about place'.

Word length 2,000-2,500 words

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers

and own work.

- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.

## Writing Assignment 2

Due: **17th Nov**

Weighting: **35%**

This will be a new work, which includes undertaking research of original material. The work will be a creative nonfiction piece themed around place, memoir, biography, politics or cultural debate.

Word length: 2,000-2,500 words for creative work, plus documentations of research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.

## Reflective Essay

Due: **19th Nov**

Weighting: **10%**

Reflection on Research and Writing. Word length: 750 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or

production of narrative nonfiction writing.

- Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

## Delivery and Resources

### REQUIRED READING

- Sondra Perl, Mimi Schwartz, *Writing True – the art and craft of creative nonfiction*, Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- Helen Garner, *The First Stone – some questions about sex and power*, Picador, 1995.
- The weekly readings of essays, articles and chapters are available from the unit's iLearn site and e-Reserve at the Library.

### RECOMMENDED READING

- Carmel Bird, *Writing the Story of Your Life*, Harper Collins.
- Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*, Harper Collins, 1990.
- Susie Eisenhuth, Willa McDonald, *The Writer's Reader – understanding journalism and non fiction*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kate Grenville, *Writing From Start To Finish: A Six-Step Guide*, Allen & Unwin, 2001.
- Jack Hodgins *A Passion for Narrative*, McClelland & Stewart, 2001.
- Robert Pack, Jay Parini, eds, *Writers on Writing – a Bread Loaf Anthology*, Middlebury College Press, 1992.
- Francine Prose, *Reading Like A Writer - A Guide For People Who Love Books and For Those Who Want To*, Harper Collins.
- Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision – a Guide to Writing History and Other Serious*
- Brenda Walker, (Ed), *The Writers' Reader*, Sydney: Halstead. 2002.

External and internal students must log in to the unit's iLearn site during Week 1. Students will be using the iLearn online site for communications each week. Students access reading materials, discussion boards, web links, each other's work and assignment marks through the unit's online web pages. Please familiarise yourself with the site in Week 1.

Students are expected to login and participate on a weekly basis, and to login a number of times, for instance 3-4 times during each week, in order to listen to the lecture, to workshop, and to participate in the discussions of the readings. You can choose what time you do this each week, depending on your family and work commitments. The online week begins on Monday mornings and ends on Sunday night.

## 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](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](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](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/](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](http://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](http://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 - 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

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.
- Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or production of narrative nonfiction writing.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay



## 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

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.
- Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or production of narrative nonfiction writing.
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### Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay

## 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

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.
- Advance skills in critiquing key issues relating to the creativity writing, publication or production of narrative nonfiction writing.

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay

## 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

- Capacity to raise questions and solve problems in relation to the planning, revision, editing and rewriting of written creative works.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay

## 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 outcomes

- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

## Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay

## 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 outcomes**

- Develop creative nonfiction writing skills in relation to concepts, topics, craft, technique and voice.
- Extend skills in individual reflection, revision, editing and textual analysis and communication through collaborative discussion of the creative work of student peers and own work.
- Develop research skills, including the use of libraries, journal and archival data-bases, visual records, site visits and/or interviews, and documentation of this research.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Australian writing and publishing contexts for this genre through reading, discussion and debate.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Participation
- Writing about Place Portfolio
- Writing Assignment 1 - Place
- Writing Assignment 2
- Reflective Essay