



# CWPG815

## Writing Creative Non-Fiction - An Introduction

S2 Evening 2017

*Dept of English*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor and Teacher

Jane Messer

[jane.messer@mq.edu.au](mailto:jane.messer@mq.edu.au)

Contact via 98508738

By appointment

Teacher

Hsu-Ming Teo

[hsuming.teo@mq.edu.au](mailto:hsuming.teo@mq.edu.au)

Contact via 9850 7018

By appointment

Michelle Hamadache

[michelle.hamadache@mq.edu.au](mailto:michelle.hamadache@mq.edu.au)

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MCrWrit or GradDipCrWrit or MA in Children's Literature

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	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#"><u>Participation</u></a>	20%	No	Weekly and as scheduled
<a href="#"><u>Minor Creative Work</u></a>	25%	No	22 September 2017
<a href="#"><u>Plan for Major Creative Work</u></a>	10%	No	16 October 2017
<a href="#"><u>Major Creative Work</u></a>	45%	No	8 November 2017

### Participation

Due: **Weekly and as scheduled**

Weighting: **20%**

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Assessed Weeks 1—12.

#### **IN CLASS AND/ OR ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS**

For both internal and online students there are 3 written components to the participation in this unit. You are required to:

**(1)** Participate weekly in your Forum Discussion Group (on Lectures and Readings);

**(2)** Guide one assigned Forum Discussion Group (on Lectures and Readings) in the session (Led Discussion);

**(3)** Provide weekly Workshop Feedback to Peers from Weeks 3—12 of the session.

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.

## Minor Creative Work

Due: **22 September 2017**

Weighting: **25%**

### **MINOR CREATIVE WORK**

Word Count: 2,000 words (CWPG815/ENGL714).

The full description of this task can be found in the Unit Handbook at the unit's iLearn site.

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.
- 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.

## Plan for Major Creative Work

Due: **16 October 2017**

Weighting: **10%**

### **PLAN FOR MAJOR CREATIVE WORK**

Word Count: Up to 500 words (word count will not be strictly enforced in this assessment).

The full description of this task can be found in the Unit Handbook at the unit's iLearn site.

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.

## Major Creative Work

Due: **8 November 2017**

Weighting: **45%**

### MAJOR CREATIVE WORK

Word Count:

- 2,000 words (ENGL714); *or*
- 3,000 words (CWPG815).

The Major Creative Work in this Unit is 2,000 words (for students enrolled in ENGL714) or 3,000 words (for students enrolled in CWPG815) of Creative Nonfiction writing underpinned by **significant research**. The full description of this task can be found in the Unit Handbook at the unit's iLearn site.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

## Delivery and Resources

Weekly readings will be made accessible by embedded links on iLearn or through the library's Multisearch function under codes CWPG815 & ENGL714. See: [http://www.mq.edu.au/on\\_campus/library/](http://www.mq.edu.au/on_campus/library/) The required readings are also detailed in the full Unit Handbook available at the unit's iLearn site.

### REQUIRED READING

- Perl, Sondra and Schwartz, Mimi. *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction*. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2014.
- Garner, Helen. *The First Stone: Some Questions on Sex and Power*. Chippendale, N.S.W: Picador, 1995.
- Further weekly readings of essays, articles and chapters are available from the unit's iLearn site and e-Reserve at the Library. Each week students will typically read two pieces of creative nonfiction and one 'craft' reading addressing the techniques, ethical concerns and professional standards of nonfiction writing. The reading list includes work by international authors such as Zadie Smith, George Saunders, Rebecca Solnit, Joan Didion, David Foster Wallace, Leslie Jamison, and Elliot Weinberger; and Australian essayists including Ashley Hay, Chloe Hooper, Kevin Brophy and Maria Tumarkin.

### RECOMMENDED (i.e. non-essential) READING

- Eisenhuth, Susie and McDonald, Wila (eds.). *The Writers' Reader: Understanding Journalism and Nonfiction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Hart, Jack. *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction*. London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Hemley, Robin. *A Field Guide for Immersion Writing: Memoir, Journalism and Travel*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2012.
- Kidder, Tracy and Todd, Richard. *Good Prose: the Art of Nonfiction*. New York: Random House, 2013.
- Kramer, Mark and Call, Wendy (eds). *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University*. New York: Penguin, 2007.
- Lazar, David (ed.). *Truth in Nonfiction: Essays*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008.
- Lopate, Philip. *To Show and to Tell: The Craft of Literary Nonfiction*. New York: Free Press, 2013.
- Ricketson, Matthew. *Telling True Stories: Navigating the Challenges of Writing Narrative Non-Fiction*. Sydney, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2014.

- Singer, Margot and Walker, Nicole (eds). *Bending Genre: Essays on Creative Nonfiction*. New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

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, paying particular attention to Announcements.

Students are expected to participate on a weekly basis, logging-in 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—there is no 'live classroom' in this unit. The online week begins on Monday mornings and ends on Sunday night.

## Unit Schedule

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Finding Your Voice in the Essay Form
- 3 Beginnings
- 4 The Voices of Others
- 5 Personal Essay—The Neighbourhood
- 6 Personal Essay—The Family
- 7 Personal Essay—The Body
- 8 Nonfiction Crime Writing
- 9 Creative Criticism
- 10 Experiments in Form
- 11 The Nonfiction Book
- 12 Nonfiction as Professional Practice

Those students who are enrolled in **internal study mode for CWPG815 and ENGL714** will meet face-to-face on campus five times during the session *and* participate weekly in a blended internal/external online group. The campus class schedule (Thursdays 6-8pm, as in **2017** Timetable) is:

1. 3 August (Week 1)
2. 17 August (Week 3)
3. 7 September (Week 6)
4. 12 October (Week 9)

5. 26 October (Week 11)

## 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\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html)

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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/)

## 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](http://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](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://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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 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
- Plan for Major Creative Work
- Major Creative Work

## 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
- Minor Creative Work
- Major Creative Work

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

### **Assessment tasks**

- Participation
- Minor Creative Work
- Major Creative Work

## **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

- Minor Creative Work
- Plan for Major Creative Work
- Major Creative Work

## 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
- Minor Creative Work
- Plan for Major Creative Work

## 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
- Plan for Major Creative Work

## **Changes from Previous Offering**

Changes to the assessment task weightings.