



MECO843

Writing the Real

S1 Day 2017

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Kate Rossmanith

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Y3A191F

TBA

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MCrMedia or MCrInd or MFJ or MCreIndMFJ

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the field of creative non-fiction, both as creative practice and as subject of critical enquiry. It combines critical analysis with the development of the students' own writing projects. It will consider a range of established and emerging modes including the non-fiction graphic novel, the magazine feature, the memoir, the essay and science/technology 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:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
4. Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|---|-----------|--------|------------|
| Writing exercises | 10% | No | Continuing |
| Research Portfolio & Report | 40% | No | 28/04/2017 |
| Major article | 40% | No | 06/06/2017 |
| Seminar Preparation Tasks | 10% | No | Ongoing |

Writing exercises

Due: **Continuing**

Weighting: **10%**

Writing Exercises

Each week students will bring multiple copies of that week's writing exercises for in-class workshopping. The exercises will comprise short pieces, ie less than 400 words, the purpose of which is to focus on particular writing craft skills. A detailed exercise brief will be distributed in-class week 1.

At semester end, students will choose four of their semester's exercises to be submitted for assessment. They will submit those exercises via Turn It In on Friday 16 May 2017 by 5pm. Students will incur a late penalty (10% per day) for late submissions.

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

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
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Research Portfolio & Report

Due: **28/04/2017**

Weighting: **40%**

Research Portfolio & Report

Task: Submit a research portfolio plus 600-word research report (to be submitted via Turn It In by 5pm on Friday 28 April 2017). Students will incur a late penalty (10% per day) for late submissions.

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

The background research and footwork is the core, the substance and the hidden bulk of any successful piece of non-fiction writing. (Insufficient research always shows – usually as repetitive, waffly, “puffy” prose.) Solid and thoughtful research is the hidden 90% of the iceberg. Research skills are vital, but each project presents its own unique challenges. This exercise is to help you become familiar with the broad contours and specifics of researching for non-fiction writing.

Portfolio:

Portfolio must be approximately 10-15 x A4 pages in length and include at least 4 different sources of research, such as (but not limited to):

*Interview transcript/s

*Fieldwork notes

Archival research (eg photographs and other material about particular building/s and venues, maps, early drafts of playscripts, etc – ie material you have accessed at an archive)

Objects/artefacts (include written details of them)

Your own discussion of relevant films/documentaries

Photographs

Statistics (eg. from the Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Books/literature/journalism

Scholarly journal articles

Additional readings

NOTE: Please don't include photocopies of books/articles in your portfolio. Instead include a detailed bibliography. Please don't include your entire interview transcript; perhaps instead just select particularly relevant sections.

*NOTE: Your portfolio must include at least one of the following research sources: interview transcript/s, and/or fieldwork

Research Report:

Submit a 600-word research report attached to the front of your portfolio. In 2 or 3 sentences, write what your creative arts journalism article will be about, as well as the central theme/idea you are exploring, or the 'angle' you are pursuing. Then explain the significance of each piece of research you've done/collected and how you will use each piece in the final article. Set out your

report under headings based on each piece of research (eg 'Interview with XXXX') and write a few sentences under each heading.

Marking Criteria:

You will be marked on:

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 creative nonfiction article

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Major article

Due: **06/06/2017**

Weighting: **40%**

Major Article

Development of a substantial, well-researched piece of non-fiction writing of up to 3000 words. A detailed assignment brief will be distributed in class. Students will submit their major article via Turn It In by 5pm on Tuesday 6 June 2017. Students will incur a late penalty (10% per day) for late submissions.

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

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.

- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

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Seminar Preparation Tasks

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Seminar Preparation Task

In Week 3, 5, 6, 9, & 11 of this unit, students will bring to class a 200-300 word written reflection regarding the readings for that week. Students will also submit each week's reflection via Turn It In. Further details of this assessment will be distributed in Week 2. Students will incur a late penalty (10% per day) for late submissions.

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

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- 3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

Delivery and Resources

Essential readings are listed below. They are available via the library online.

- James Agee & Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, 2001 (1939), pp. 4-35
- Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*, New York: Penguin, pp. 15-17.
- Lee Gutkind, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Da Capo Press 2012, pp. 32-43
- Louise Kiernan, 'Writing Complicated Stories', in *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction writers' guide*, Kramer and Call (eds), New York: Penguin, pp. 145-147
- Luc Sante, 'Resume' from *The Factory of Facts*, New York: Pantheon, 1998, pp3-11.
- Marc Weigarten (2005), *From Hipsters to Gonzo: How New Journalism Rewrote the*

World, pp.9-32

- Lane Degregory 'Narrative as a Daily Habit', in *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction writers' guide*, Kramer and Call (eds), New York: Penguin, pp.240-243
- Chloe Hooper, 'Consider the Lily', *The Monthly*, June 2006
- Leslie Jamison, 'The Empathy Exams', in *The Empathy Essays*, London: Granta Publications 2014, pp. 1-26
- Alice Pung, 'Caveat Emptor', *The Monthly*, October 2007
- Kate Rossmanith, 'Many me', *The Monthly*, February, 2007, pp.25-27
- Kate Rossmanith 'On the Edge' *The Monthly*, August, 2008, pp. 28-30
- The following required readings are taken from *In Short: A Collection of Brief Nonfiction*, New York & London: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1996:
 - Haines, John, 'Snow', pp. 107-109
 - Dunn, Stephen, 'Locker Room Talk', pp.149-151
 - Colman, John 'Cat-Like', pp. 157-161
 - Caldarezzo, John 'Running Xian', pp. 168-171
- Helen Garner, 'At the Morgue', in *True Stories: Selected non-fiction*, Melbourne: Text Publishing, pp 145-153
- Lee Gutkind, 'Immersion', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, John Wiley & Sons 1997, pp. 99-106
- Chloe Hooper, *The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island*, Penguin 2008, pp. 1-18
- Kate Rossmanith, 'The Release Plan', *The Monthly*, October 2013, pp. 30-37
- Anna Funder, *Stasiland: Stories from behind the Berlin Wall*, Melbourne: Text Publishing, pp.1-30
- Lee Gutkind, 'Interviewing', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, John Wiley & Sons 1997, pp. 107-116
- Matthew Ricketson, 'The Subtle and Slippery Art of Interviewing', in *Writing Feature Stories: How to Research and Write Newspaper and Magazine Articles*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin 2004, pp. 111-126
- Fanny Burney, 'A mastectomy, 30 September, 1811' from *The Faber and Faber Book of Reportage*, John Carey, (ed) London, Faber, 1987, pp. 272-277
- Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*, Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1997, pp. 1-32
- David Finkel, *The Good Soldiers*, Melbourne: Scribe 2009, pp.3-24
- Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land: The triumph and tragedy of Israel*, Scribe 2014, pp. ix-22

- Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, Harper Perennial 2005 (first published 1971), p. 3-9
- Lee Gutkind, 'Inner Point of View', in *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Da Capo Press 2012, pp. 138-182

Unit Schedule

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

Seminars for this unit will commence in Week 2. They take place on Tuesdays 10am-12pm in room Y3A246.

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_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

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): 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/

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://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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 4. Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- 3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- 4. Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- 3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- 3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 2. Synthesise and expand their practical knowledge of non-fiction writing.
- 3. Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- 4. Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

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

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse range of methodologies and creative techniques informing production processes of literary non-fiction writing.
- 4. Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.