



# MECX210

## Narrative Journalism

S1 OUA 2017

*Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies*

### 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>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	11

#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Jillian Kramer

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Contact via via email

Y3A 152, Phone: (02) 9850 2252

2-4pm on Mondays

Tutor

Undine Sellbach

[undine.sellbach@mq.edu.au](mailto:undine.sellbach@mq.edu.au)

Contact via via email

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is designed for students who are interested in exploring writing both creatively and critically. The aim of this unit is to help students develop their own skills and knowledge as creative writers. It will do this in two ways: 1. By a series of lectures on key theoretical issues to do with writing, such as the historical identity of the writer, the nature of narrative, the relationship between writing and subjectivity and the representation of truth. 2. By workshopping students' writing projects. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see [www.open.edu.au](http://www.open.edu.au)

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.

Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.

Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-

evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## General Assessment Information

In this unit, students must submit original work. If you have previously been enrolled in this unit, please note that you cannot submit the same piece of work. Please contact your convenor for an alternative task.

If students require assistance with their assessments, they should contact their tutor and consult the resources on referencing and essay writing in the 'Assessments' section on ilearn. Students can also contact the Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) team for advice on academic writing, study strategies and planning. Additional support services are listed here: <http://student.s.mq.edu.au/support/>.

### Late Submissions:

Tasks 10% or less: No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the decline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Tasks above 10%: No extensions will be granted. Students who submit late work without an extension **will receive a penalty of 10% per day**. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#">Essay One</a>	30%	No	Wed. Week Five 11:59pm (AEST)
<a href="#">Activities Reflection Task</a>	30%	No	Wed. Week Eight 11:59pm (AEST)
<a href="#">Final Proposal and Excerpt</a>	40%	No	Wed. Week 13 11:59pm (AEST)

### Essay One

Due: **Wed. Week Five 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **30%**

Students are required to write a 1,000 word academic essay that responds to the following:

- “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (Barthes 1977, p. 147). Drawing on the unit readings, discuss Barthes’ statement. How does this statement complicate dominant conceptions of the author and the text?

Students are also required to develop academic writing skills in their essays. If you have any questions about the structure of an academic essay, please ask your tutor, raise questions on

the general discussion board and use the resources available at [mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills). You should also include in-text referencing and attach a reference list at the end of their essay. For more information on referencing please follow the link to Macquarie University Library's Referencing Guide here: <http://libguides.mq.edu.au/Referencing>.

Essays will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Demonstrates a clear and effective grasp of relevant key concepts, including Barthes' work
2. Demonstrates engagement with the unit readings and material
3. Develops a strong argument that is well-supported by research
4. Effective use of writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing

**Submission:** Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

**Disruptions to Studies:** In this unit, extensions will only be granted in line with the university's [Disruption to Studies Policy](#). If you experience a serious and unexpected disruption to your studies and would like to seek an extension of 1-7 days, please contact your unit convenor. If you are seeking an extension of more than 7 days, please submit a disruption to studies notification via [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au). Extensions will not be granted on the grounds of work commitments. For more information about this process, please read the section below on policies and procedures.

**Late Penalty:** Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Activities Reflection Task

Due: **Wed. Week Eight 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **30%**

For this assessment, students are required to select two of their own responses to the weekly activities undertaken in the discussion forms between weeks one to eight. They are required to complete a 400-500 word scholarly reflection task for each post.

In these scholarly reflections, students are required to outline the context of their post on the discussion forum, demonstrate how it enhances their understanding of the key concepts or

methods explored in the unit, and discuss how their thoughts have developed since writing their post.

Students can find a template for this assessment task on the main iLearn page, underneath the link to the dialogue module and unit guide. Each post they include should be 150-300 words in length (about a paragraph). This means you may either use a full post, or an extract. The posts are not included in the word count.

This assessment task will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Well-selected sample of two of the student's weekly responses to the activities
2. Demonstrates a clear grasp of relevant key theoretical concepts and their context
3. Demonstrates the ability to identify the significance and implications of relevant key concepts
4. Demonstrates a critical engagement with relevant unit readings, cultural studies scholarship and debates
5. Stages a thoughtful reflection on the process of learning and engaging with cultural studies scholarship
6. Effective use of writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing

**Submission:** Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

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**Late Penalty:** Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Final Proposal and Excerpt

Due: **Wed. Week 13 11:59pm (AEST)**

Weighting: **40%**

From week ten onwards, we will undertake a series of workshops in this unit to prepare for your final assessment task. For this task, students are required to complete a writing proposal and submit an extract of their work.

### **Part One: A proposal of 1,500 words**

This task requires students to write a theoretically informed proposal for a piece of narrative journalism. On one level, this is an exercise in presenting your work to someone who might be interested in publishing or producing it. Different outlets have different ways in which they require you to present your work for their consideration. If you aim to approach one in the future, you should follow instructions on their website about exactly what form they would want any approach to take.

On another level, students must also demonstrate in their proposal that they have engaged with critical and theoretical understandings of authorship and non-fiction writing. They should draw on what they have learnt about writing from the lectures and unit readings in order to inform their proposal. For example, they should discuss ideas surrounding the use of time, narration, the role of the author and narrative structure (to suggest a few).

A proposal should include the following:

1. Overview: Give a compelling summary of your project. What is it, and what is it about?
2. Rationale: What is interesting and distinctive about your project? Why should it be written? What does it hope to achieve?
3. Outline: Give a breakdown of the components of your project. If it has a plot, what is it? If it has chapters or scenes, write a paragraph summary of each one. What will the work actually be made up of? How long will it be?
4. Style: How will your work be written? What writing conventions will it follow? How will time operate?
5. Competition: What works in the market-place is your work like? Is it similar enough to successful works to show that there is a market for it, yet different enough to justify it being written?
6. Audience: Who would be interested in consuming your work? What kind of audience do you have in mind?

### **Part Two: 1,500 word excerpt.**

The second part of the assignment requires students to provide a 1500-word excerpt from their creative work. This word-limit is based on your project being book-length and prose. These pieces will be workshopped from week 10 onwards.

This assessment task will be marked according to the following **assessment criteria**:

1. Demonstrates a clear grasp of relevant key concepts
2. Identifies the significance and implications of the key concepts in both their creative and

critical pieces

3. Scholarly understanding of relevant issues and debates within the publishing industry
4. Uses appropriate theoretical concepts that demonstrate engagement with the unit materials
5. Original creative work that demonstrates an understanding of the unit material, the student has engaged with innovative understandings of narrative devices
6. Provides a well-developed creative piece that has few typos or grammatical mistakes and is clearly and cogently written
7. Stages a thoughtful reflection on the process of learning and engaging with cultural studies scholarship
8. Effective use of writing skills to present academic research, including consistent and accurate use of in-text referencing

**Submission:** Students will submit this task via the Turnitin link on the unit iLearn Site.

**Disruptions to Studies:** In this unit, extensions will only be granted in line with the university's [Disruption to Studies Policy](#). If you experience a serious and unexpected disruption to your studies and would like to seek an extension of 1-7 days, please contact your unit convenor. If you are seeking an extension of more than 7 days, please submit a disruption to studies notification via [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au). Extensions will not be granted on the grounds of work commitments. For more information about this process, please read the section below on policies and procedures.

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On successful completion you will be able to:

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## Delivery and Resources

Students will complete this unit online. At the beginning of the study period, they will find the weekly schedule listed sequentially down the ilearn page from week 1 to week 13. Listed underneath each week, they will find details about the content and a link to the lecture (downloadable PDF document), a link to the unit readings and a link to the weekly activity and discussion forum.



**Unit Lectures:** The lectures in this unit are available as downloadable PDF documents. They are written by many of the cultural studies staff in the Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies Department at Macquarie University.

**Unit Readings:** The readings for each week are available via online 'Unit Readings,' a service provided by the [Macquarie University Library](#). A link to the readings is provided in the listing for each week. If you have trouble finding and/or accessing the readings, please search the library's online database and consult your tutor.

**Weekly Activities and Discussion:** At the beginning of each week, your tutor will send an announcement that introduces the weekly topic and highlights any upcoming tasks. Following the announcement, they will also post an activity for you to complete in the weekly listing. These activities are designed to help you develop your understanding of the unit content. They also aim to provide a space to ask questions and interact with your peers.

**The General Discussion Forum:** If you have any general questions about the unit or an assessment, and would like to share them with your peers, please start a conversation in the general discussion forum. This forum is open for everyone to start discussions, share resources and ask questions.

**The Dialogue Module:** This module is available for students who would like to have private conversations with their tutor.

**Planning the study period:** The OUA Weekly Calendar can be used to plan both your assessment tasks and weekly activities. It can be found here: <http://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/weekly-calendars>

## Policies and Procedures

### Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

### Extension Request

**Special Consideration Policy and Procedure**  
(<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying



for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

## Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

## OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

### Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

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

### 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

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

#### Assessment tasks

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

### 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 in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Assessment tasks

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Assessment tasks

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## 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

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.
- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-

evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## **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**

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.
- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## **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**

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.

- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## **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**

- Develop research and writing skills that will enable students to write narrative journalism pieces.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## **Assessment tasks**

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## **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 in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Assessment tasks

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt

## Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Identify and critique key issues in the production of narrative journalism.
- Demonstrate critical skills, informed by cultural theories, that will enable students to re-evaluate the historical identity of the writer and the relationship between writing, subjectivity and representation.

## Assessment tasks

- Essay One
- Activities Reflection Task
- Final Proposal and Excerpt