



ENGL714

Writing Creative Non-Fiction: An Introduction

S2 Evening 2019

Dept of English

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor and Teacher

Michelle Hamadache

Michelle.hamadache@mq.edu.au

Level 2, North, Australian Hearing Hub

By Appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

CWPG815

Unit description

In this practical introduction to writing creative nonfiction students research and write a number of narrative non-fiction pieces from genres including memoir, personal essay, and environmental writing. 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 is suitable for students from interdisciplinary backgrounds including creative writing, ethnography, cultural studies, journalism, philosophy and history. You devise your topics in consultation with the lecturer, and are guided in the development of skills in primary research and narrative writing techniques. Assessment is based on participation, practical research tasks and your 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.

General Assessment Information

Special Consideration Policy

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. Link Below: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

Late Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved:

- Penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and*
- 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.*

Written **feedback** from your instructor will be provided through the Turnitin interface, usually in the form of in-text comments. It will be beneficial for students to read all marking rubrics prior to submitting assessment, and to reflect on feedback from their instructor.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Participation</u>	20%	No	Weekly and as scheduled
<u>Minor Creative Work</u>	20%	No	First Friday of Recess
<u>Plan for Major Creative Work</u>	10%	No	Monday, Week 10
<u>Major Creative Work</u>	50%	No	Wednesday, Week 13

Participation

Due: **Weekly and as scheduled**

Weighting: **20%**

PARTICIPATION

Assessed Weeks 01—13.

ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS

Word count:

- **Workshop Feedback Post:** 200 words min., posted weekly and for each student workshoping in your group x 11 weeks;
- **Discussion Forum:** 200 words min.—300 words max. per draft, per week x 10 weeks.
Response to readings & lecture
- **Led Discussion:** 300 words min.—400 words max. Initiating the Weekly Discussion with questions on readings and lecture x 1 week.

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: **First Friday of Recess**

Weighting: **20%**

MINOR CREATIVE WORK

Due: First Friday of Recess

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

The Minor Creative Work in this Unit is 2,000 words of Creative Nonfiction writing: typically in the genre of essay. Students will have the opportunity to Workshop early drafts of the Minor Creative

Work in the first half of the session. Criteria for Assessment include: creativity of concept; demonstrated and/or implied understanding of genre and readership; use of technique, structure and language; evidence of development; and presentation.

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: **Monday, Week 10**

Weighting: **10%**

PLAN FOR MAJOR CREATIVE WORK

Due: Monday, Week 10

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

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: **Wednesday, Week 13**

Weighting: **50%**

MAJOR CREATIVE WORK

Due: Wednesday, Week 13

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**: typically in the genre of essay. Students will have the opportunity to Workshop early drafts of the Major Creative Work in the second half of the session. Criteria for Assessment include: the integration and identification of research within creative nonfiction; creativity of concept; demonstrated and/or implied understanding of genre and readership; use of technique, structure and language; evidence of development; and presentation.

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 are accessed via the embedded link to the library's leganto system located on the unit's iLearn site. For more information, including an online tutorial, visit: <http://libguides.mq.edu.au/leganto>

REQUIRED READING

- Perl, Sondra and Schwartz, Mimi. *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction*. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2014.
- Further weekly readings of essays, articles and chapters are available from the unit's iLearn site and Leganto 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

6 Personal Essay—The Family

7 Personal Essay—The Body

8 Nonfiction Crime Writing

9 Creative Criticism

10 Science Writing

11 Food Writing

12 Travel Writing

Those students who are enrolled in **internal study mode for CWPG815 and ENGL714** will meet face-to-face on campus four times during the session *and* participate weekly in a blended internal/external online group. Check University Timetables and iLearn for dates and times.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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> or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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>

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

- 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

The reading list, assessments and lectures have all been changed for the 2016 offering.