# LING291

## Writing in English

D2 2012

*Linguistics*

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### Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Sue Spinks
sue.spinks@mq.edu.au
Contact via sue.spinks@mq.edu.au
C5A 517
Friday 11am-1pm

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
12cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This is a general education unit for students of any discipline who are concerned about writing, especially writing for academic, professional and other functional purposes. It aims to provide insights into the English language as a communicative system, and to foster a critical and informed attitude to language use in various kinds of written texts. Both in lectures/workshops and in the tutorials we analyse various principles of linguistic choice and organisation that produce successful written communication. By developing an understanding of what makes for successful communication in writing of others, writers can also learn to develop techniques for writing successfully themselves.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes

1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
4. Constructing and maintaining an argument
5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience
6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 4</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 5</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 6</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Exam period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment 1**

**Due:** *Week 4*

**Weighting:** 10%

For this task you will be given a text to summarise. Your summary should present the same content and point of view as the original but more concisely and in your own words. It should not read as an external review or comment on the original. The text to summarise will be given to you in tutorials in week 2.

500 words

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience

**Assessment 2**

**Due:** *Week 4*

**Weighting:** 15%

For this assignment you will be given a text to analyse for cohesion. In a short essay, you will be asked to discuss the main cohesion systems used in the passage, and their importance for communicating the theme. The text and full details for the assignment will be given in tutorials in week 4.

750 words
On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument

Assessment 3
Due: Week 6
Weighting: 10%

This will be a piece of “free” writing, aimed at getting you to demonstrate your ability to set up and maintain a theme on a certain topic. Full details will be given in tutorials in week 6.

500 words

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure

Assessment 4
Due: Week 8
Weighting: 15%

This assessment will require you to compare two texts from the point of view of readability. The full details of the task will be given to you in the tutorial in week 8.

750 words

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
- 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument

Assessment 5
Due: Week 10
Weighting: 25%

Details of this assignment will be given in tutorials in week 10.

1000-1200 words
On successful completion you will be able to:

• 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
• 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
• 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
• 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument

Assessment 6

Due: Exam period
Weighting: 25%

The topic for the exam essay will be given to you in advance, giving you a chance to prepare your response before writing an essay under exam conditions. Details will be given in lectures and tutorials in week 12, and will also be uploaded to iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

• 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
• 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
• 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
• 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument
• 6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function

Delivery and Resources

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

For LING291 there are two hours of lecture per week: Wednesday 12-2pm. Tutorials will be held weekly and will begin in week 2. Attendance at tutorials is compulsory and tutors will keep a record of attendance. If misadventure causes you to miss a tutorial please notify your tutor or the unit convener. If you want to change your tutorial you must fill out a Linguistics Department “change tutorial form”, available from the Linguistics Undergraduate Office, C5A, 508. We will also bring some to the first lecture.

Most of the lectures run as a formal lecture for about 1.5 hours, followed by a half hour interactive workshop where we use a variety of texts to explore the issues raised in the lecture.

1a. Teaching Staff
2. ACADEMIC CONTENTS

2a. Unit Description

This is a general education unit for students of any discipline who are concerned about writing, especially writing for academic, professional and other functional purposes. It aims to provide insights into the English language as a communicative system and to foster a critical and informed attitude to language use in various kinds of written texts. Both in lectures/workshops and in the tutorials we will analyse various principles of linguistic choice and organisation that produce successful written communication. By developing an understanding of what makes for successful communication in writing of others, writers can also learn to develop techniques for writing successfully themselves. Written assignments are set at roughly fortnightly intervals, and there is a two-hour exam held during the University exam period.

2b. Unit Rationale

This unit looks at the English language as a vehicle for effective written communication, aiming to show how the resources of the language may be used for effective writing. Although it introduces a number of linguistic approaches to text analysis, it does not assume any prior study in or knowledge of linguistics. It can be taken as an elective unit in any degree program.

2c. Learning Outcomes and generic skills

The content of this unit will help you to develop a number of the key generic skills that an undergraduate degree at Macquarie University should provide. For instance, the six assignments in the unit cover a range of writing tasks, increasing in size and complexity as the semester progresses and they, together with the lectures and tutorials, are intended to help
you develop your writing skills across several aspects of writing:

1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
4. Constructing and maintaining an argument
5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience
6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function

We offer regular feedback on your writing, which we hope will help you to develop both your writing strategies and your confidence as a writer of English.

The reading list for the unit will allow you to go deeper into some of the issues raised in class. It is available through Library E-Reserve. A list identifying which reading(s) go with which lecture(s) will be made available on ilearn. Further readings may be suggested in specific lectures during the semester. We hope the unit will enhance your awareness of the English language and give you useful ideas about how to manage the written medium.

**Graduate capabilities:**

The learning outcomes of the unit are aligned with the following MU Graduate Capabilities:

**2.2 Critical, analytical and integrative thinking:** Most of the assignments will need students to practice their critical and analytical skills in order to successfully complete the assessment task.

**2.5 Effective Communication:** As a unit about the theory and practice of writing in English (for both academic and professional purposes) LING291 by its very nature delivers on this graduate capability.

**2.9 Commitment to Continuous Learning:** In lectures and tutorials we will stress the need for ongoing development of one’s knowledge about successful writing strategies, whether in one’s own work or when assessing the writing of people under one’s guidance in the workplace.

**3. DELIVERY AND RESOURCES**

3a. Teaching and Learning Strategies
Unit Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Tutorials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>Written and spoken language</td>
<td>The nature of summarising</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>Genre and Register</td>
<td>Spoken and written texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>Cohesion in texts</td>
<td>Cohesion in texts 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>Sentence grammar and sentence architecture</td>
<td>Cohesion in texts 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 6</td>
<td>Theme, thematic progression and ways to foreground your message</td>
<td>Theme and themes 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/policy.html). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- **Special Consideration Policy** [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html)

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/policy.html) of Policy Central.

### 5. POLICIES

#### 5a. University Policy on Grading

Your final result will include one of the following grades plus a standardised numerical grade (SNG):

- **HD (85-100)**
- **D (75-84)**
- **Cr (65-74)**
- **P (50-64)**
- **F (0-49)**.

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Please note that an SNG is NOT a raw mark; it is a rank. Your SNG is not always simply the sum total of a range of raw marks. For this reason, if your SNG is just below the next grade (e.g., a 64 or 74 for instance), you cannot assume you were therefore just one RAW mark off the next grade. Raw results may sometimes be scaled; the process of scaling does not change the order of marks (and thus of the ranking) among students.

5b. Plagiarism/ Academic Honesty

Plagiarism (also known as Academic Honesty) is an issue taken very seriously by the Department and the University. Students who submit plagiarised material will most likely receive zero. All assignments are scanned on a database and compared with other assignments (past and present) and with content on the internet.

Please refer to the Linguistics Department’s advice about avoiding plagiarism at http://www.linguistics.mq.edu.au/support/policies_plagiarism.htm and to Macquarie University’s policy at http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.htm

It is expected that you will be familiar with the University’s policy before you begin work on the assignments.

5c. Appeals Against Grades

If you have a problem with the mark given for a particular assessment, please contact Sue Spinks, Unit Convener. If you request a remark of the assignment, the final mark can be sustained, raised or lowered. If you wish to appeal against the final grade for the whole unit, then you should also see the Unit Convener first. To lodge a formal appeal there are strict University guidelines. The Faculty of Human Sciences information can be found at the following URL:


The University policy can be found at:


5d. Student Email Account

All Macquarie students have been issued with a University email account.

It is University policy that the University issued email account will be used for official University communication. All students are required to access their University account frequently. Email can be automatically forwarded from your Macquarie account to another account but each student is responsible for the information sent to a non-Macquarie account and for managing mailbox size to ensure that account remains active.
Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: http://students.mq.edu.au/support/.

UniWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops http://www.mq.edu.au/learning_skills/
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

Student Enquiry Service

Details of these services can be accessed at http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/.

Equity Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Unit who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

IT Help

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at 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 and it outlines what can be done.

Graduate Capabilities

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 outcome

- 6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function
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**

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
- 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument
- 5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience
- 6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function

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**

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument

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**

- 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
- 5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience
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**

- 1. Selecting material, synthesising and summarising the main points
- 2. Planning a structure for a piece of writing
- 3. Controlling detailed information in setting up a thematic discussion, including managing the topical focus through manipulation of sentence structure
- 4. Constructing and maintaining an argument
- 5. Modifying style to suit a particular audience
- 6. Appreciating the interplay between form and function