MECO843
Writing the Real

S1 Day 2016

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit convenor
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TBA

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MCrMedia or MCrInd or MFJ

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:

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.
Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.
Assessment Tasks

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Writing Exercises

Due: Continuing  
Weighting: 10%

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 in class (11am-1pm) on Friday 20 May 2016.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Seminar participation

Due: Continuing  
Weighting: 10%

This component recognises students' active participation in weekly seminars.

Marks for this component are earned by:

* evidence of familiarity with each week's readings, demonstrated by students' ability to contribute to discussions and analysis in class
* active engagement in workshopping fellow students' exercises and major article drafts
* students’ demonstrated abilities to develop and further explore ideas and themes which arise in class
*active contributions to in-class discussions
*students bringing completed exercises each week, suitably copied ready for in-class workshopping

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Research portfolio & report

Due: **Week 7**
Weighting: **40%**

Task: Submit a research portfolio plus 600-word research report (to be submitted in class, 11am-1pm on Friday 29 April 2016).

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/collection and how you will use each piece in the final article. Set out your report under headings based on each piece of research (e.g. ‘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 arts article

On successful completion you will be able to:
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• Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

Major article
Due: Thursday 9 June 2016
Weighting: 40%
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 on Thursday 9 June 2016 by 5pm. The hard copy submission procedure will be posted on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
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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.

Delivery and Resources

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

• Marc Weigarten (2005), *From Hipsters to Gonzo: How New Journalism Rewrote the World*, pp.9-32
• Lee Gutkind, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Da Capo Press 2012, pp. 32-43
• Kate Rossmanith, ‘Many me’, *The Monthly*, February, 2007, pp.25-27
• Kate Rossmanith ‘On the Edge’ *The Monthly*, August, 2008, pp. 28-30
• Alice Pung, ‘Caveat Emptor’, *The Monthly*, October 2007
• Chloe Hooper, ‘Consider the Lily’, *The Monthly*, June 2006
• 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, ‘Young Libs in the Chocolate Factory’, *The Monthly*, June 2005
pp. 107-116


**Unit Schedule**

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

Seminars for this unit commence in Week 2. They take place on Fridays 11am-1pm in room Y3A246.

**Policies and Procedures**

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


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
Unit guide MECO843 Writing the Real

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.

Additional Information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/ MMCCS Session Re-mark Application

http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914

Information is correct at the time of publication

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

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

Assessment tasks

- Research portfolio & report
- Major article

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

- 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.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

Assessment tasks

- Writing Exercises
- Seminar participation
- Research portfolio & report
- Major article
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**

- 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.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

**Assessment tasks**

- Writing Exercises
- Seminar participation
- Research portfolio & report
- Major article

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**

- 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.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction

**Assessment tasks**

- Writing Exercises
- Research portfolio & report
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**

- 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.
- Critically analyse and engage with theories and contemporary debates in the field of literary non-fiction
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical conduct in relation to contemporary non-fiction writing.

**Assessment tasks**

- Writing Exercises
- Seminar participation
- Research portfolio & report
- Major article

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**

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

**Assessment tasks**

- Research portfolio & report
- Major article