



MECO310

Telling True Stories 1

S1 Day 2019

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

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TBA

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

(39cp at 100 level or above) including (MECO210 or MECO211 or CUL240 or MAS210 or MAS211)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

In this unit we look at techniques and structures writers use to engage ever-more fickle audiences. Key readings are drawn from a number of platforms – books, feature articles, blogs, graphic novels, indie publishing – to exemplify some of the more dynamic and engaging recent trends in creative non-fiction writing. We focus in particular on new and novel ways of approaching the past – historical events, family sagas, crimes, eccentric and little known phenomena – and on new modes of writing about science, sport, technology and social change. Students are guided to find and develop their own original stories, and produce pieces of quality writing, suitable for print or broadcast.

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:

Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing

Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of

methodologies

Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership

Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

General Assessment Information

Assessment standards in this unit align with the University's grade descriptors, available at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

To apply to have your assessment re-marked, please see: <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Examples of relevant and related assessment tasks will be made available on iLearn and will be discussed in tutorials.

Methods of Feedback:

- Informal: comments from tutors during tutorials; through the announcement function in iLearn; interactions with peers during tutorial activities; personal reflections on learning during the course.
- Individual: in email communication with individual students where comments are made by the tutor and/or unit convenor in response to questions related to course activities and assessments; in personal face-to-face consultations during Weeks 6, 11 and 12 of the unit, or as requested (either by phone or face-to-face)
- Formal: general comment and in-text comments attached to assignments marked in Turn-It-In; rubrics; reflections from peers; in-class comments from tutors in regards to assessments; marks are made available through the Gradebook function in iLearn.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Research Report & Portfolio</u>	25%	No	30/04/2019
<u>Final article</u>	40%	No	06/06/2019
<u>Online Test</u>	25%	No	23/05/2019
<u>Writing exercises</u>	10%	No	17/05/2019

Research Report & Portfolio

Due: **30/04/2019**

Weighting: **25%**

Research report & portfolio

Task: Submit a research portfolio plus 600-word research report. Details of this assessment will be made available in Week 1.

Worth 25%

Marking criteria:

- 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 literary nonfiction article

Submission: Students must submit this assignment via Turn It In by 11.59pm on Tuesday 30 April 2019.

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 (including weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

Turn It In: This unit uses Turn It In

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
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Final article

Due: **06/06/2019**

Weighting: **40%**

Essay

Your task is to write a 2000-word literary nonfiction article suitable for publication in a newspaper or magazine. This is not a university essay and does not require footnotes and bibliography. Further details of the essay assignment will be distributed in Week 1.

Worth 40%

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to write vividly without using cliches and an awareness of nuances of meaning
- Evidence of intellectual investigation
- Demonstrated ability to synthesise in-depth research into a compelling, well-structured story
- Evidence that the writer has taken creative risks, both in choice of research/writing topic, and in the writing itself
- Demonstrated ability to write grammatically correct sentences, following accepted English syntax and punctuation.
- Evidence of a 'voice' in the piece – a consistent, warm, trust-worthy sense of authority

Submission: Students must submit this assignment via Turn It In by 11.59pm on Thursday 6 June 2019.

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 (including weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted by the unit convenor in line with university policy.

Turn It In: This unit uses Turn It In.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
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Online Test

Due: **23/05/2019**

Weighting: **25%**

Test

At the end of the semester you will be required to complete an online test that is worth 25% of your overall mark. The test will take place during the Week 11 lecture timeslot (Thursday 1pm-2pm)), and students can take the test at a place of their choosing. Students will answer

questions based on: the lecture content for the unit, and the unit readings. The test is designed to assist you in demonstrating your knowledge of the unit content as a whole. You will be given 60 minutes in which to write your responses. You are strongly advised to complete all set readings and listen to all lectures.

Failure to sit the in-lecture test will result in a mark of zero (0) for that test. If you miss a test due to a medical issue then you must apply for Special Consideration and, if approved, will be given the opportunity to sit the test at a later date. In such cases you must supply a medical certificate.

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the question
- Demonstrated knowledge of lecture and reading materials
- Application of materials to set question

Submission: The test will take place online via iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing

Writing exercises

Due: **17/05/2019**

Weighting: **10%**

Writing Exercises

The weekly writing workshops are the practical core of this course, so it is essential that the writing exercises be done and brought along in suitable form each week. Each week's exercise must be typed (double-spaced), and you must bring 8 copies to your tutorial for workshopping. A schedule of weekly exercises will be handed out in Week 1. Write approximately 200 words for each exercise. Worth 10% overall.

Marking Criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to write grammatically correct sentences, following accepted English syntax and punctuation.
- Demonstrated ability to write vividly without using cliches and an awareness of nuances of meaning
- Evidence of having understood the set task

Submission: All five exercises are to be formally submitted online via Turn It In by 11.59pm on Friday 17 May 2019.

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 (including weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

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

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Delivery and Resources

Lectures will take place on Thursdays at 1pm in 4 Western Road - 320 tutorial room. Some lectures will not take place live, but will be pre-recorded and uploaded to iLearn. In Week 1 students will be informed as to which lectures are live, and which are pre-recorded.

Tutorials commence in Week 2.

Below is a list of essential readings, which are available through Leganto on iLearn.

- 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
- 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 Kate Rossmanith, 'Many me', *The Monthly*, February, 2007, pp.25-27
- Kate Rossmanith 'Jenolan's Ancient Archives', *The Australian*, 2006
- Vanessa Berry, 'Excavating St Peters' in *Mirror Sydney: an Atlas of Reflections*, pp. 135-147, Giramondo: Sydney, 2017
- Lee Gutkind, 'Immersion', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, John Wiley & Sons 1997, pp. 99-106
- Helen Garner, 'Labour Ward, Penrith', in *True Stories: Selected non-fiction*, Melbourne: Text Publishing, pp 230-242
- Lee Gutkind, 'Interviewing', in *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, John Wiley & Sons 1997, pp. 107-116

- Eve Vincent, 'Meat-Eaters', *Sydney Review of Books*, 8 June 2018
- Kate Rossmanith 'On the Edge' *The Monthly*, August, 2008, pp. 28-30
- Fanny Burney, 'A mastectomy, 30 September, 1811' from *The Faber and Faber Book of Reportage*, John Carey, (ed) London, Faber, 1987, pp. 272-277
- Naomi Klein, 'Risky Business,' from *The Nation*, January 5, 2004 <http://www.thenation.com/print/article/risky-business>, accessed 11 February, 2013
- David Finkel, *The Good Soldiers*, Melbourne: Scribe 2009, pp.3-24
- Maria Tumarkin, 'This Narrated Life', *Griffith Review*, April 2014
- Peter Doyle 'Stranger in the House', *Sydney Review of Books*, 14 November 2016: <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/stranger-in-the-house/>
- Kate Rossmanith, *Small Wrongs: How we really say sorry in love, life and law*, Melbourne & London: Hardie Grant Books, pp. 1-9
- Lee Gutkind, 'Inner Point of View', in *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Da Capo Press 2012, pp. 138-182

Unit Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Literary nonfiction, telling the truth

Week 2: Immaculate Conception? Coming up with ideas

Week 3: Finding Story

Week 4: Fieldwork & Interviewing

Week 5: What is the story about? What is it *really* about?: Developing ideas in writing

Week 6: consultations with tutor

Week 7: Voice and Point of View

Week 8: On Story

Week 9: Telling True Crime Stories

Week 10: On Structuring Writing

Week 11: consultations with tutor

Week 12: consultations with tutor

Week 13: final article due

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

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 literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Writing exercises

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

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
- Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Online Test
- Writing exercises

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

- Identify and critique key issues raised in the production of literary nonfiction writing
- Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Online Test
- Writing exercises

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 literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Writing exercises

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 literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies
- Apply unique methods of presenting research in writing for a general readership
- Construct and write stories yourself that fall into the broad category of literary nonfiction writing

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Writing exercises

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 outcome

- Develop literary nonfiction writing through in-depth relevant research using a variety of methodologies

Assessment tasks

- Research Report & Portfolio
- Final article
- Writing exercises