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ARTS1032

The Literature Laboratory: Writing Beyond Limits

Term Two // 2019

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

| Name | Email | Availability | Location | Phone |
|-------------|--|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Helen Groth | h.groth@unsw.edu.au | Tuesday 11-12 | Webster 220 | +61 2 9385 4864 |

Lecturers

| Name | Email | Availability | Location | Phone |
|----------------|--|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Julian Murphet | j.murphet@unsw.edu.au | Monday 2-4 | Webster 246C | 93854521 |

Tutors

| Name | Email | Availability | Location | Phone |
|----------------|--|--------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Mette Jakobsen | m.jakobsen@unsw.edu.au | TBA | Room 231L, Robert Webster | 93856016 |
| Elizabeth King | e.king@unsw.edu.au | | | |

School Contact Information

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The School of the Arts and Media would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Subject Area: *English*

This course can also be studied in the following specialisation: *Creative Writing*

This introductory course challenges you to think about writing as experimental, world-building, adventurous, challenging, radical, and even dangerous, and to write as though it can change the way things are. It teaches that literature has been the engine-room of many of history's most decisive changes to social, cultural, ideological, and behavioural norms. Divided into four primary modules – Utopian Speculation, The Urgency of Now, Beyond Form and Formlessness, Rhetorics of The Inhuman – it exposes you to some of the most exciting and unconventional writing in English, and equips you with some of the skills necessary to resist the cultural conformities that deaden the mind. Treating literature as process, intervention, and experiment, the course asks you to see writing as a lifelong education in how - to use Samuel Beckett's phrase - to fail better.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. think and write about literature in its social contexts
2. think and write about literature as an ongoing process
3. recognise and discuss the long tradition of experimentation in English literature
4. participate in the experimental project of literary production

Teaching Strategies

This course will be taught by 1 x 1.5 hr lecture and 1 x 1.5 hr tutorial per week and will deploy LMS.

Assessment

Please be aware that ALL assessment tasks are required course components (hurdle components). You MUST attempt each task in order to pass the course. Failure to complete any of these tasks will result in a failure of the entire course, even if your results in the other two tasks might add up to a numerical passing grade.

It is also an expectation of the course that you attend all classes, lectures and tutorials.

We prefer the use of the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, for all style and referencing matters.

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

We also like to see a strong independent voice in all written tasks. Find confidence in your own views and judgements, while testing them against the ideas of other critics and thinkers.

Assessment Tasks

| Assessment task | Weight | Due Date | Student Learning Outcomes Assessed |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Literary Experiment | 35% | 05/07/2019 11:00 PM | 1,2,3 |
| The Writing Lab | 35% | 09/08/2019 11:00 PM | 2,4 |
| Take Home Exam | 30% | 21/08/2019 06:00 PM | 1,2,3 |

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Literary Experiment

Start date:

Details: 1500-word essay, feedback provided via Turnitin.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: The Writing Lab

Start date:

Length: 2000 words per student

Details: 2000-word (per student) group essay, feedback provided via Turnitin.

Submission notes: Each participant in group work must post a separate, identical version of the same assignment, indicating via highlights what sections of the work are particularly theirs.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Take Home Exam

Start date: 19/08/2019 09:00 AM

Details: 1500-word examination, no feedback apart from grade.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

| Date | Type | Content |
|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Week 1: 3 June - 7 June | Lecture | Opening introductory lecture, addressing the broad aims of the course and its purpose. We will consider the privileged relationship between literature and realism, and question it. Why should writing be representational? What other kinds of literary language are available? Why might we want to use them? We then turn to a consideration of the manifesto as a form, and wonder why it has been such a powerful and instrumental form for the modern era. |
| | Tut-Lab | <p>Meet your tutor and your classmates! Important to get to know all class members, before selecting groups for group work. Introduction of all modules and explanation of the structure of the course, particularly the Writing Lab assessment, group work, and the choice of creative or critical. The relationship between context, content, and form will be considered. As per the lecture, constative and non-constative language will be explored in more detail and the idea that literature and writing can have an impact on the real world will be stressed.</p> <p><i>Writing task:</i> After a recap on constative/non-constative language, put students into pairs and get them to select a topic of their choosing. One is to write ONLY in constative language and the other ONLY in non-constative language.</p> <p><i>Close analysis:</i> Look at excerpts from a range of manifestos, chosen to demonstrate the following key elements of the genre: definition of the group in question; demonising the enemy; descriptions of the (unbearable) present and projections of a (brighter) future; calls for supporters; instructions and demands; the use of visual elements (optional).</p> <p><i>Group task:</i> In groups of 3 or 4, come up with a group identity and something you are petitioning for. Collaborate on a rousing 4-5 line invitation to others to join their revolutionary group using some</p> |

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| | | of the language techniques discussed earlier and observed in manifestos. |
| Week 2: 10 June - 14 June | Lecture | This lecture will turn to the most explosive genre of modernity: the manifesto. Looking in detail at a few manifestos – Marx and Engels' <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , Marinetti's <i>Futurist Manifesto</i> , the Surrealist manifesto, etc. – we will consider the wider rules of the form and ask what motivated its proliferation between 1890-1930 in particular. Later examples will also be considered. The link between politics and the arts is a major point of concern. |
| | Tut-Lab | <p>This tutorial will focus on an in-depth discussion of the <i>Communist Manifesto</i>.</p> <p><i>Close analysis:</i> Read selected passages from the manifesto, paying particular attention to Marx's argument and his use of figurative language and other rhetorical devices.</p> <p><i>Group task:</i> In groups of 3-4, students will imagine their own revolution, large or small, practical or ideological (an end to reality TV, a ban on single use plastics, the demise of geographical borders, a free and efficient public transport system, etc.) and write up a 10-point plan to achieve it.</p> |
| Week 3: 17 June - 21 June | Lecture | We will turn to consider the late modifications to the genre of political 'now-writing' in the work of James Baldwin, and his inflection of it through the accents of prophecy and Biblical rage. Looking at the tradition of the oppressed (particularly the descendants of American slaves) as a critical resource for literature, we will see how Baldwin fused two traditions into one incendiary genre. This is not a manifesto, and not prophetic writing as such, but a new form predicated on the essay and reaching urgently for the future. |
| | Tut-Lab | <p>Students should consider what Baldwin's writing has in common with the genre of the manifesto, and how it differs from it. On paper, his work may have a similar purpose and function to many manifestos, but he goes about writing quite differently. How do his formal choices (for example, to use personal anecdotes and a more composed manner) affect the political urgency of his task? What different kinds of resource is he drawing upon? Why?</p> <p><i>Close Analysis:</i> Look at sections of Baldwin's writing, focusing on religion and racial inequality, and how these two intersect in Baldwin's thinking.</p> |

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| | | <p>Consider Baldwin's rhetorical strategies and how these mirror or differ from those employed in the manifestos we have looked at.</p> <p><i>Writing task:</i> Students will be given time to write a short piece using a personal anecdote to make a larger point about something they want to change in the world.</p> |
| Week 4: 24 June - 28 June | Lecture | We will consider in some detail the founding text of the 'utopian' genre: Sir Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i> (1516). |
| | Tut-Lab | <p>The class will consider the idea of utopian writing, give an overview of the major components, pitfalls, and formal characteristics of the genre with some exploration of More's text. Many utopian and dystopian texts insist that constructing the best possible world always entails a trade-off: from More's slavery, to the trade-offs made in these two short stories. Do we agree with this? How do the short stories deal with this problem and the problems of utopian thinking more broadly (consider both style and content)? What are the advantages/disadvantages of writing shorter utopian texts? How has utopian writing changed since More's <i>Utopia</i> and how can we link this to changing views and attitudes/historical contexts?</p> <p><i>Close analysis:</i> Begin by thinking about why More may have chosen to write a fictional text about a faraway land rather than a non-fictional work, like a petition to the King or a proposal for amendments to the law – what can imaginative works achieve that non-fiction can't?</p> <p><i>Group task:</i> students (3-4) will agree on one current institution the world can do without, or which needs to be drastically changed. In their assessment groups, they should work together to come up with a list of the benefits to be gained by making this happen, and a list of the potentially negative consequences or side effects this might entail.</p> |
| Week 5: 1 July - 5 July | Lecture | We will look at later variations of the utopian genre, particularly at late Victorian examples, before focusing on the classic utopian novel <i>The Dispossessed</i> , by Ursula K. LeGuin. We will be interested in the many changes the genre has been through, and the constants that have made it a powerful and recognisable genre still today. |
| | Tut-Lab | An overview of the major ideas presented in <i>The Dispossessed</i> should be constructed through |

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| | | discussion, looking at aspects of life including the family unit, employment, gender roles, class, and so on. Attention should be given to the cold war context which informs Le Guin's novel, and the basic ideologies of socialism, communism, and capitalism should be canvassed in relation to the two worlds of the text. <i>Group task:</i> students should prepare notes using evidence from the text for a debate on the topic of whether earth should be more like Anarres (or similar). |
| Week 6: 8 July - 12 July | Lecture | In this lecture, we will stand back and consider what it might mean to model different, more or less perfect worlds in literary texts: do such texts have a 'predictive' quality, or are they (in always being unreal) inherently satirical in nature? Do utopias, and their close cousins, dystopias, mean to suggest real alternatives to the status quo? Does their negative relationship with the way things are make them like fantasies, unrealisable dream-worlds? Or do they keep faith with the future in a way that cynical Realpolitik and the concessions of Realism simply cannot? This lecture will model a 'how-to' approach to utopias, while testing that model against existing utopian, and dystopian, texts and films. |
| | Tut-Lab | What does a comparison of More's and Le Guin's texts tell us about the genre of utopian fiction? What are the staples of the genre? In terms of both ideas and execution, how do the two compare and which text is more 'convincing' and why? <i>Writing task:</i> Rather than simply explaining their utopian worlds, Le Guin and More both recognise that language and cultural practices tell us a great deal about a society. Students will be given writing time to invent their own cultural customs, rituals, aspects of language etc., before sharing them with their groups. This will transition into time for working on the major project. |
| Week 7: 15 July - 19 July | Reading | This week is a reading week. There are no classes. |
| Week 8: 22 July - 26 July | Lecture | Entering the final module of this course – on experimental writing, formless or unprecedented kinds of textuality – we will look in detail at one of the greatest innovators in the history of writing, William Blake. Showing how his concern for spiritual liberty informed every rule he broke and every mark he left behind him, the lecture will consider in particular detail his illuminated book, <i>The Marriage of Heaven & Hell</i> , as an example of writing without limits or predictable |

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| | | directions. |
| | Tut-Lab | The class will come to session having read, closely, William Blake's <i>The Marriage of Heaven & Hell</i> (1793). Discussion and in-class activities will circle around: the nature of prophetic utterance; spirituality and the imagination as a release from the 'prison house' of the senses and realism; the nature of the 'proverb' as a genre; the relationship between writing and visual imagey; political dissidence and the printed text; and so on. |
| Week 9: 29 July - 2 August | Lecture | Continuing with our focus on experimental modes of writing, we take a look at the period known as 'modernism', which saw the emergence of many very strange and utterly unprecedented textual forms. We survey a few of these, and explain some of their motivations, before settling in for a closer look at Gertrude Stein's <i>Tender Buttons</i> , a classic of the genre. |
| | Tut-Lab | Why did modernism look the way it did? Looking in detail at Gertrude Stein's loopy text <i>Tender Buttons</i> , the class will investigate some of the reasons why words might be asked to do this kind of thing, and complete a couple of in-class activities. Towards the end of the session, time will be set aside to continue the writing of the 'Literature Laboratory' component. |
| Week 10: 5 August - 9 August | Lecture | Turning finally to the postmodern period, this lecture will explore the experimental forms to have proliferated in the age of media saturation and the triumph of neoliberal capitalism as a global way of life. Considering some of the more outrageous and daring forms of recent years, we will turn to look at a recent book of poetry – M. NourbeSe Philips' <i>Zong!</i> – as an outstanding instance of what writing can do today. |
| | Tut-Lab | The main topic for this tutorial is the idea of constrained or restricted writing, with discussion of oulipo, found poetry, Flarf, and close readings of <i>Zong!</i> <i>Writing task:</i> students experiment with various kinds of constrained writing (newspaper poems, google poems, predictive text poems, etc.) and discuss the results. |

Resources

Prescribed Resources

The **set texts** for this course are:

Manifesto: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848): on Moodle

Various artistic and political **manifestos**: on Moodle

Book: James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963): at book shop and on Moodle in the form of two constituent essays

Book: Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516): at book shop and on Moodle

Book: Ursula LeGuin, *The Dispossessed* (1974): at book shop and on Moodle

Book: William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven & Hell* (1793)

Book: Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (1914): at book shop & on Moodle

Book: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* (2008): at book shop and on Moodle

Recommended Resources

Recommended Resources

There will be reference to several other texts collated on the Moodle site, and the Course Administrator strongly advises motivated students to read as many of them as possible.

Course Evaluation and Development

We've used your feedback to make some improvements.

We regularly alter the course to reflect student feedback and criticism.

This year, we have maintained the general expectations around reading and assessment, while reducing the number of modules to three (from four). This was necessary to achieve consistency in course substance, while reflecting the reduced number of reading weeks.

We have altered the assessments so that no student has to work in a group for their 'creative writing' task, although all are still strongly advised to do so.

Please feel free to offer commentary and criticism to the Course Authority at any time.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Oberhausen - Gasometer - Der schöne Schein - The Ancient of Days %28William Blake%29_01_ies.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Oberhausen_-_Gasometer_-_Der_sch%C3%B6ne_Schein_-_The_Ancient_of_Days_%28William_Blake%29_01_ies.jpg)

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