ARTS3023

Fiction Writing

Term Two // 2020

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

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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

This Level 3 course provides students with the opportunity to develop work on a novel. Students undertaking this course will examine the poetics of the contemporary novel, exploring a variety of technical aspects essential to fiction, such as narrative structure, creation of character and the development of prose style. Students will read both novels and critical texts in order to deepen their understanding of the composition of the novel. Comparative and historical analysis will inform the development of student's own creative practice. Students will have experimented with a range of writing genres in Level 1 and 2 Creative Writing courses. As a Level 3 course students will extend their writing skills by working on a sustained piece of prose fiction.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Create a sustained piece of fiction
2. Identify and critically discuss formal and thematic features of the contemporary novel in English
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the key issues surrounding the development of the contemporary novel
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the practical decisions writers make concerning the craft of writing
5. Critically appraise your own work and the work of others
6. Demonstrate skills in literary analysis developed through a close reading of texts in English
7. Improved skills in drafting, revising and editing your own manuscripts

Teaching Strategies

This course will be delivered wholly online with a pre-recorded lecture made available via Moodle each week and an online real-time seminar/workshop via Blackboard Collaborate each week. The seminar/workshop will expand on issues raised in the lecture, address weekly readings and provide a space to workshop your creative writing.

In addition to the lecture and seminar/workshop, there will be an hour of structured online creative writing activities each week. These activities will be designed in order to further develop your creative projects. Please see Moodle for further information.

Lecture aim: to impart knowledge of the genre and range formal devices evident in the contemporary novel, to draw attention to key critical concerns that contribute to an understanding of the formal elements of the novel and to provide an understanding of the craft of writing fiction.

The seminar will provide an opportunity for students to analyse and discuss set texts, develop their own writing, gain peer group feedback on works in progress and to develop skills of critical appraisal, editing and redrafting.

Assessment

Important Information About How this Course Works

The function of the lectures

The lectures for this course will be divided into three sections: (1) Critical Readings (2) Writing Process/Writing Practice (3) Vocational Pathways

In the first section, the lectures will focus on key critical elements central to the work of the contemporary novel. Four main areas will be considered: the role of truth in fiction, the musical elements of composition in the novel, the function of images and the practice of image making, and the role of time in the contemporary novel. In this first series of lectures we will be looking closely at a selection of contemporary novels that deal with and address these issues. These texts will provide you with a series of models to inspire your own writing and will encourage a broad and comparable view of the poetics of the contemporary novel. All lectures will engage with practical issues concerning the composition of the novel and will encourage you to build creative and critical links between your work as a reader/critic and as a writer. One of the most challenging aspects of creating a sustained piece of fiction is the process of revising and editing – something which can be far more arduous than the production of early drafts. Reading widely and deeply, and thus honing your skills as critics, will allow you to cast a productive critical eye over your own work. The lectures are designed with this in mind. They are devised to deepen your understanding of the novel, quick-start your creative work and help you develop the ability to critically appraise your own writing. Please be aware that this course is based on collaborative principles of group learning and relies on your active participation in both lectures and seminars. Your thoughtful and vocal responses are vital to the success of this course. It is essential that you have read the weekly texts before coming to the lecture.

In the second section of the lectures, the focus will shift towards your own writing. Some of these lectures will be practice-based, others will ask that you think critically and practically about the connections between the set texts and your own work in progress. Throughout the course we will be interrogating the stylistic and compositional elements of the contemporary novel considering, in particular:

- The compositional background of each novel: what we know about the creative process

- The governing formal and poetic qualities of the novel
- The relationship between form and content
- The relationship between a novel's philosophical foundation - what it thinks about, the aspects of the world that it most closely engages with - and its formal/technical innovations

Poetic elements that we will be considering include:

- Use of the image, montage, symbol
- The life of objects and things
- The manipulation of time
- Patterns of interiority
- Close readings of style
- Acts and processes of memory
- The relation between novel/essay, novel/poem, novel/blog

Such elements may be considered across different texts and in relation to your own work in progress, providing a comparable view of the poetics of contemporary fiction. We will be focusing on how these poetic elements work together, reflecting the overall course emphasis on the broader composition of the novel.

You are expected to read all of the set texts, and read them closely. There is an overt attempt within this course to encourage you to build links between critical and creative practice and to see these two activities as mutually informative. Critical inquiry will be thus accompanied by reflection on your own creative practice. *Some key questions that we will consider and discuss therefore include:* What are the sustaining poetic "laws" of the set texts? When do these become apparent? How does the use of formal devices change or develop over the course of the book? How do such elements support the core idea or experience of a book? On a practical level in regards to your own work we will be asking questions such as: How are these poetic elements instructive for your own creative work? How do these works challenge and inspire experimentation within your own projects? What happens when you use these works as models for you own writing? What does it mean to pay homage to certain stylistic traits? What can you borrow? What can you develop? What is the relationship, in your writing, between tradition and innovation?

In the final, vocational series of lectures we will look at the various pathways open to you as writers and the potential careers that support creative practice. We will also engage in a practical discussion about what it means to survive as a writer, looking at how to apply for grants, mentorship programs and higher degree study in the area of creative writing.

The function of the seminar

Each seminar runs for 2 hours. In this time there will be three core activities:

- Discussion of that week's text and lecture – in relation to critical and creative practice
- Discussion of creative writing exercise based on lecture material, the aim being to link your reading with your writing practice.
- Discussion of work in progress and workshopping your own writing

Discussion will develop around the lecture material and your writing projects. We will then use the critical material of the lectures to prompt your own creative practice and explore aspects of composition that are relevant to your projects. Please be aware that there is the expectation that you will be writing regularly throughout the semester and will be expected to discuss this process, its pleasures and challenges.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Research Essay	25%	10/07/2020 11:00 PM	2,3,6
Major Creative Work	60%	10/08/2020 11:00 PM	1,4,5,7
Peer Feedback	15%	Not Applicable	2,4,5,6,7

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Research Essay

Start date:

Details:

2000 words, Turnitin submission, feedback provided via Turnitin

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Major Creative Work

Start date:

Details:

3000 words. Final Assessment. Turnitin submission, summative feedback via Turnitin.

Additional details:

This assessment requires you to submit the opening chapters of a novel, up to 3000 words. It is expected that this piece of work will be a further development of the writing that was submitted to the class for group feedback.

You will be assessed on the following:

- Flow/reading coherence: transitions between sentences and paragraphs – movement within the piece
- Presence and development of interiority
- Use of language: precision, experimentation, lyricism, vivacity
- Special qualities: such as risk-taking, humour, unusual images, compelling digression
- Use of time: how are we orientated in time? How is time used to structure the piece?
- Sense of idea/event: what matters most? Does the piece build/evolve around on this?
- Narrative development
- Overall focus of the piece
- Ability to create change within the piece
- Engagement with topic/ reader/ engaging nature of idea
- Improvement of work from draft manuscript workshopped in class to final polished piece submitted for assessment; i.e. evidence of redrafting and editing of original manuscript based on judicious consideration of feedback from tutor and fellow students
- Evidence of having reflected on elements of craft and poetics as discussed in lectures and seminars
- Originality and initiative

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Peer Feedback

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 200-300 words per student submission

Details:

Written feedback on draft creative work completed by fellow students. 200-300 words per student submission. Moodle Blog submission.

Additional details:

Each student will be scheduled to submit an early draft of their creative writing project to the class. These presentations form the basis of the writing workshop. As writers you will be expected to submit a focused piece of creative work (fiction) to the group for comment. As critics you will be expected to read these manuscripts thoroughly and provide written, constructive feedback on the work of your peers. this feedback constitutes this Peer Feedback Assessment. Where possible you will be expected, in your feedback, to relate your discussion of this creative work to the principles raised in the set texts and lectures. The feedback process for this part of the assessment occurs in two stages: 1) Students provide written feedback on the work of their peers 2) This written feedback is further developed in group discussion, chaired by the tutor. There will be the option of continuing/developing this feedback process in an online discussion format.

Submission notes: Peer feedback needs to be posted each week.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Required Texts:

Jennifer Egan*, A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Corsair 2011

Deborah Levy, *Swimming Home,* Faber and Faber 2011

Rachel Cusk, *Transit*, Faber and Faber 2017

Recommended Resources

Please see Moodle

Course Evaluation and Development

This course is routinely revised for improvement. Feedback is welcomed through myexperience, and in acted on in the future development of the course.

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/

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.