

ARTS3025

The Art of the Essay: Writing Creative Non-Fiction

Term 3, 2021



Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

| Name | Email | Availability | Location | Phone |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| Roanna Gonsalves | roanna@unsw.edu.au | By appointment via email | n/a | |

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

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Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Kensington and Paddington campuses are built on Aboriginal Lands. We pay our respects to the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples who are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.



Image courtesy of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous [UNSW's Indigenous strategy](#)

Course Details

Units of Credit 6

Summary of the Course

This course will explore the form and practice of the personal essay. A flexible and radical form, the personal essay is one of the most influential and provocative modes of writing in the contemporary moment. Both playful and investigative, the personal essay is a means by which urgent feeling is translated into thought. As a cross-disciplinary genre the personal essay can take many guises, including literary journalism, cultural criticism and experimental and narrative non-fiction. Starting with the history of the essay, the course will move forward towards more recent examples that grapple with pressing concerns in bold ways. In this course you will have the chance to develop your opinions and shape your experiences into compelling arguments. You will acquire a critical awareness of the diversity of the genre as well as develop your creative ability as essayists. Critical analysis of the form will complement and support the practical development of your writing. Writing exercises will be provided, and you will have the chance to develop and discuss your creative work in class. Attention will also be given to enhancing your vocational knowledge, with the personal essay as a leading example of long-form freelance writing.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate a historical and critical awareness of the essay as a genre
2. Demonstrate familiarity with variations and experiments within the essay as a form
3. Demonstrate an ability to clearly analyse and compose written texts in English
4. Demonstrate improved skills in the drafting, revising and editing of critical work and creative manuscripts

Teaching Strategies

Lectures will introduce students to a range of ideas associated with the personal essay. The primary aims of the lectures are to impart critical and historical knowledge, along with an awareness of craft. The seminars will provide the opportunity for critical discussion and development of students' own creative work.

Assessment

| Assessment task | Weight | Due Date | Course Learning Outcomes Assessed |
|------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Critical Essay | 40% | 18/10/2021 11:59 PM | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2. Major Creative Work | 60% | 19/11/2021 11:59 PM | 1, 2, 3, 4 |

Assessment 1: Critical Essay

Assessment length: 2000 words

Due date: 18/10/2021 11:59 PM

1500-words

This assessment requires students to develop and demonstrate a strong critical understanding of the personal essay.

Percentage: 40

Feedback via LMS

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

Assessment 2: Major Creative Work

Assessment length: 3000 words

Due date: 19/11/2021 11:59 PM

3000-words

This major assessment requires students to write, revise, and re-draft a substantial and completed piece of work.

Percentage: 60

Feedback via LMS

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: 13 September - 17 September | Lecture | Telling true stories and telling them well <ul style="list-style-type: none">• About this course• Imagining the possibilities of creative nonfiction• A historical overview of creative nonfiction including the personal essay and other forms• How to begin making a beautiful piece of creative nonfiction |
| Week 2: 20 September - 24 September | Lecture | Who is speaking? Narration in creative nonfiction |
| Week 3: 27 September - 1 October | Lecture | Voice, style, language |
| Week 4: 4 October - 8 October | Lecture | Shapes of creative nonfiction: On pattern and structure |
| Week 5: 11 October - 15 October | Lecture | The 'I' who is and isn't me: On the self and other characters in creative nonfiction |
| Week 6: 18 October - 22 October | -- Select -- | READING WEEK: NO LECTURES AND SEMINARS THIS WEEK |
| Week 7: 25 October - 29 October | Lecture | Truth, memory and the imagination in creative nonfiction |
| Week 8: 1 November - 5 November | Lecture | Making a scene |
| Week 9: 8 November - 12 November | Lecture | The essay in the world: Insta essays, audio essays and other wild things |
| Week 10: 15 November - 19 November | Lecture | Echoes and resonances: Revising and editing your essay |

Resources

Prescribed Resources

All readings are available via Moodle

Recommended Resources

All readings are available via Moodle

Course Evaluation and Development

Each year, reading materials and pedagogical strategies are revised as a result of students' responses, as long as they are considered and productive. Students are encouraged to comment informally on the course throughout the semester. The formal, and anonymous, CATEI evaluation process at the end of semester is of vital importance for the ongoing development of this course.

Now that CATEI evaluations are conducted online, student participation has dropped dramatically, resulting in feedback which is statistically unreliable. For instance, when only a small proportion of students respond, one dissatisfied student can constitute 20% of the overall response. It tends to be only the students who loved a course or those who were disillusioned by it who take the time to fill out the surveys. This presents a skewed overall impression of what students thought. You are thus urged to take the time to fill out the CATEI survey at the end of semester. Remember too, that in the same way comments on an assignment are more helpful than a mark, your written feedback on the course is more important than the boxes you tick, or the circles you click on with your mouse.

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 includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original 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 for the purpose of them plagiarising, 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

The [UNSW Academic Skills support](#) offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. 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 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

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided.)

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

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