



MDIA5006

Feature Writing

Term One // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Dr Larry Buttrose	larryphilip.buttrose@unsw.edu.au	By appointment		0416151499

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

Room 312, Level 3, Robert Webster Building (G14)

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Website: www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sam

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 course builds on the core Writing For Media course offered in Term 1, which teaches the fundamentals of writing for print journalism. In this course, you will learn how to write feature articles. You will develop your interview, research and writing skills for both print and online media. You will learn techniques for writing in a range of feature article genres and forms. This course will also cover the roles of editors and freelance writers in producing feature articles. You will study the history and the contemporary social significance of the feature genres. You will critically consider key writers, texts and audiences for these genres.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Generate features of varying lengths on deadline, to length, conforming to requirements of different genres in various media outlets
2. Plan, research, structure and write features, queries and pitches
3. Rely on well-developed reporting and news gathering skills
4. Understand professional editorial processes, ethics and the demands of the market place
5. Work as part of a team to create features for mainstream media
6. Take on the challenge of new story telling techniques

Teaching Strategies

This course combines ONE two-hour seminar/week WITH small and large group discussions, in-class workshops, evaluation, exercises based on course readings, handouts and seminar content, and four assessed tasks with deadlines.

Assessment

The text of all assignments must be submitted as WORD docs (no PDFs). On the first page always provide your student number and enrollment name (first name followed by family name), as well as course & assignment number, seminar group day and time, the story's genre (opinion, profile, etc), and an accurate word count for your submission. Do not include your personal, class or interviewee details or reference lists in this word count. On the final page of your submission provide the names and contact details of all interviewees plus interview place, date, time and whether the interview was conducted in-person, or by telephone, email, webchat/social media or Skype. Unless you have your tutor's written permission all interviews must be conducted in Australia and must be recorded (smart phone audio recordings and webchat transcripts are acceptable). All interviewee quotes-direct and indirect-must be accurately rendered in English. Make sure you maintain a mix of direct and indirect quotes in your stories. Interview recordings MUST be retained for assessment purposes until December 31st of each academic year. In this course, the sources of all facts and quotes must be briefly mentioned WITHIN the story (for example, 'University of Melbourne researchers say', or "A 2018 report by the Institute of Accountants said", or "The Attorney General admitted" etc.). Full citation of all statements and facts must be provided either by embedding the source URL in the text where the reference occurs, or in a reference list on the final page of your submission. Direct and indirect quotes from your interviewees need not be cited in reference lists but MUST be attributed to their source in the body of the story. It is not necessary to follow an established scholarly referencing system, but all reference lists must provide the author's name, headline or title of work cited, publication name, and publication date. References to books must include page numbers. The above guidelines also apply to multimedia assignment submissions, all of which must be accompanied by a full transcript of spoken words and audio/visual elements. Submissions that are primarily multimedia must be preceded by a 100-150 word text intro and must be submitted in a file type and size compatible with UNSW's Moodle learning platform.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Short Feature	25%	end week 4	1, 3, 4
Long Feature	40%	end week 7	1, 3, 4
Feature Writing and Research Portfolio	35%	end week 9	2, 5, 6

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Short Feature

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 750-850 words

Details:

800 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

The 800-word feature (750-850 word limit) must be written in one of the following genres: Review, Opinion, Analysis, Explainer or Immersion. Your submission may be in the form of text, audio (podcast) or video (vodcast)

Submission notes: See general assessment information

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

Assessment 2: Long Feature

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 1400-1600 words

Details:

1,500 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

The Long Feature must be written in one of the following genres: News or Issue-based feature, Profile, Lifestyle/Trend report or Immersion. Your submission may be in the form of text, audio (podcast) or video (vodcast)

Submission notes: See General Assessment Information

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

Assessment 3: Feature Writing and Research Portfolio

Length: 1400-1600 words

Details:

1,500 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

Portfolio submissions, which account for 35 percent of the available marks in this course, cannot include material submitted in Assignments One and Two. Student portfolios must contain only the text, images or audio of their ORIGINAL SUBMISSIONS in response to tasks assigned as homework or in-class activities during the course. The portfolio must contain a minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) individual pieces of work totaling 1,400-1,600 words of text (or multimedia equivalent). The portfolio MUST contain your Week 10 Story Pitch (500 words). Please provide the date on which each individual element of your portfolio was originally submitted. DO NOT CHANGE OR CORRECT THE ORIGINAL

SUBMISSION. The types of material that may be submitted include pre-class and in-class submissions or text-based activities, story pitches, reflections on tasks and readings, reflections on interview questions or research strategies that produced newsworthy material, and other kinds of work. Students are responsible for choosing and submitting only their best work for their portfolio. Poor choices in this regard are not grounds for appeal.

Submission notes: See General Assessment Information

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not 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: 15 February - 19 February	Homework	<p>BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Students should access the GENRE LIBRARY on the Moodle course site for examples of feature article genres before choosing the genre they will attempt for Assignment One (opinion, analysis, explainer, review or immersion). Please also view the following videos:</p> <p>‘What if we helped refugees to help themselves?’ Alexander Betts, 19.11.15 TEDxVienna https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiWwrdMqvM</p> <p>‘Quit Social Media’, Dr Cal Newport, 20.9.16, TEDxTysons https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7hkPZ-HTk</p>
	Assessment	<p>WEEK 1 PRE-CLASS SUBMISSION (PORTFOLIO 1, 200 words) Browse the opinion articles in the Genre Library on Moodle. Choose one of the Ted Talks above and submit 200 words on what they can teach us about effective approaches to the opinion genre of evaluative feature writing. What topic might you choose if you were to write an opinion article?</p> <p>DEADLINE: 5 pm MONDAY 1 JUNE 2020</p> <p>SUBMIT VIA THE MOODLE PORTFOLIO 1 LINK UNDER THE ASSESSMENT TAG</p>
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February	Homework	<p>BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Students should access the GENRE LIBRARY on the Moodle course site for examples of feature article genres before choosing the genre they will attempt for Assignment One (opinion, analysis, explainer, review or immersion). Please also view the following videos:</p> <p>‘What if we helped refugees to help themselves?’ Alexander Betts, 19.11.15</p>

		<p>TEDxVienna https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiWwrdMqvVM</p> <p>‘Quit Social Media’, Dr Cal Newport, 20.9.16, TEDxTysons https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7hkPZ-HTk</p> <p>PRE-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 1 (200 words) Browse the opinion articles in the Genre Library on Moodle. Choose one of the Ted Talks above and submit 200 words on what they can teach us about effective approaches to the opinion genre of evaluative feature writing. What topic might you choose if you were to write an opinion article?</p> <p>DEADLINE: 5 pm MONDAY 1 JUNE 2020 - SUBMIT VIA THE MOODLE PORTFOLIO 1 LINK UNDER THE ASSESSMENT TAB</p>
	Lecture	<p>Feature Writing Genres: Explanatory, Evaluative and Experiential</p> <p>Feature articles have a very different structure and purpose to hard news stories. We survey the many different types of feature writing, a diverse and thriving sector of media markets. From sober analysis to escapist travel and consumer indulgence, there are feature articles for all tastes and purposes, each of them with its own conventions and affordances. What kinds of feature articles will you research and write this semester?</p>
	Tutorial	<p>“So you've got an opinion? Or is that a polemic?”—Turning your ideas and beliefs into evaluative feature articles</p> <p>This class starts with a vodcast from the phenomenally successful TedTalk series that contains many of the same elements we find in text-based evaluative writing. Students then discuss the issues that unite, divide and animate their societies and nations. What are the issues that trouble or inspire you? Talking with new colleagues and friends about them can be the spark that ignites great feature articles in the genres of opinion, analysis, review, explainer and immersion.</p>
Week 3: 1 March - 5 March	Homework	<p>PRE-CLASS SUBMISSION (PORTFOLIO 2)</p> <p>Assignment One story proposals: 300-500 words (in writing via Moodle submission link) Due: 12 noon Tuesday 9 June</p>

	<p>SUBMIT VIA THE MOODLE PORTFOLIO 2 LINK UNDER THE ASSESSMENT TAB</p> <p>BRING TO CLASS: Three (3) copies of your Assignment One story proposal</p> <p>READ & BE READY TO DISCUSS: Ricketson & Graham CH.5 'Generating Fresh Story Ideas'</p>
Lecture	<p>Opinion versus analysis, reviews versus explainers</p> <p>In this class we explore the research and writing principles commonly applied in analytical, explanatory and evaluative feature writing. How great feature writers "frame" their stories.</p>
Tutorial	<p>The Art of the "Follow Up"</p> <p>We live in story-rich times. Just open your Twitter feed and it seems that all the stories have already been told. But great feature writers are masters of the "follow up", reading between the lines of current stories for the unanswered questions that will feed the next round of the eternal news cycle.</p> <p>In this class, students work together, comparing story ideas and coming up with creative solutions to the question "What should I be writing about?" Don't leave class without answers to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your 800-word feature article (Assignment 1) going to be about? 2. Is it Review, Opinion, Analysis, explainer or Immersion? 3. What background material or previously published stories have you gathered on this topic? (Provide story author, headline and publication only) 4. What does your story say or do that hasn't been said or done recently by other writers. 5. Name relevant organisations and people you have or will engage in order to ensure that your opinions and analysis are informed by people closely involved with the topic. 6. What multimedia materials could you create or collect to enrich your story and boost its chances

		<p>of being published?</p> <p>7. Will you tell the story in 1st person or 3rd person? Explain the reasons for your choice.</p>
Week 4: 8 March - 12 March	Homework	<p>BRING TO CLASS: Three (3) URLs of recently published stories that match the genre of your proposed feature article, and three (3) other URLs of recently published news stories on the topic you wish to write about.</p> <p>READ & BE READY TO DISCUSS:</p> <p>Ricketson & Graham (2017) CHAPTER 6 'Gathering the Raw Material'</p> <p>Kremmer, C. (2014) <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>, "Ramadan: empty stomach, nourished soul".</p> <p>Paul, Anthea. (2015) 'Jurassic Shark' (student submission)</p>
	Lecture	<p>Factual Foundations</p> <p>Feature writers need allies to help them tell stories. These can range from professors and political activists, to community organisations, artists and others who are strongly motivated to participate in civic discourse by gathering facts to support their opinions. Connecting to individuals or organisations is often essential in writing successful feature articles. But direct observation, and even participation in the story you are writing about, can provide a different, more subjective kind of truth that is informed by acts of witnessing or immersion in the world you are writing about.</p>
	Tutorial	<p>All feature genre options in Assignment One require background research to provide factual justification and context for explanatory, evaluative and experiential journalism stories.</p> <p>GROUP ACTIVITY & IN-CLASS SUBMISSION</p> <p>Using the feature examples you have brought to class, discuss whether your proposed feature article fits within the opinion, analysis, review, explainer or immersion feature genres. Groups members must provide helpful feedback on each student's proposal.</p> <p>IN-CLASS SUBMISSION - PORTFOLIO 3 (300</p>

		<p>words)</p> <p>For the Week 3 Portfolio submission you must compile a 300-word digest listing the facts, evidence and context for the arguments and observations you intend to make in Assignment One story.</p> <p>Submit a 300-word digest of key facts, observations, and quotes from your own research and other people's stories that will form a bedrock of verifiable facts that will support your story's claim to truth.</p> <p>SUBMIT IN CLASS UNDER THE WEEK 3 ASSESSMENT TAB</p>
Week 5: 15 March - 19 March	Homework	<p>BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 9 'Finding the Right Structure for the story' AND Metzler CHAPTER 14 'Special Problems' (available in Moodle Week 4 Folder)</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT ONE SUBMISSIONS DUE BY 5 PM FRIDAY OF WEEK 4</p>
	Lecture	<p>Story structure and editing for accuracy, persuasiveness and critical distance</p>
	Tutorial	<p>IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS - YOUR STORY TOLD IN ONE MINUTE</p> <p>Week 4 is a critical moment in your studies in this course. You will submit your first assignment 'Short Feature' (25%) by the end of the week. Our job this week is to pressure test your draft story so make sure you bring two copies of your draft story to class.</p> <p>Waiting for you will be Connie Levett, Editor of <i>Newsworthy</i>. Connie is eager to hear you explain what your story is about, the it is written in, and how it advances the news cycle - and you have only one minute to make it stick!</p>
Week 6: 22 March - 26 March	Lecture	<p>No classes this week.</p>
	Homework	<p>Read</p>

		<p>Laskas, Jeanne Marie (2012) "Guns 'R Us." GQ, September 2012, http://www.gq.com/story/gun-shopping-gq-september-2012</p> <p>Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 7 'The subtle and slippery art of interviewing'</p> <p>Now is also a good time to reconnect with the Feature Genre Library on Moodle to read examples of the Assignment 2 genres you can choose from.</p>
	Tutorial	No tutorial this week
Week 7: 29 March - 2 April	Homework	<p>GROUP ACTIVITY</p> <p>Interviewing for Features</p> <p>Feature writers ask more and different questions than their colleagues in hard news. They find stories in the most unexpected people and places. This week we examine how to get the results you need from interviewing sources. Everyone has a story to tell. In this activity, students interrogate each other looking for the extraordinary and ordinary in everyday people's lives.</p> <p>IN-CLASS SUBMISSION PORTFOLIO 4 (300 words): Identify and elaborate on the story ideas you unearthed during the "Everyone is a Story" in-class activity.</p> <p>SUBMIT IN CLASS UNDER THE WEEK 4 ASSESSMENT TAB</p>
	Fieldwork	Plan and commence interviewing, visits to relevant locations, and targeted research for Assignment 2
Week 8: 5 April - 9 April	Homework	<p>BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss:</p> <p>Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 10 'Leads, closes and that big lump in the middle'</p> <p>Clayton CHAPTER 3 'Step-by-Step Process for a Feature' (see Moodle Week 7 folder)</p>
	Lecture	<p>'Get some narrative into it'</p> <p>Essential storytelling techniques to enhance reader engagement</p>
	Tutorial	<p>GROUP ACTIVITY</p> <p>In the class, students and tutors "road test" your</p>

		feature for style, structure and substance
Week 9: 12 April - 16 April	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read, watch and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 11 'Wordcraft' and 'A Game of Shark and Minnow' http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/index.html
	Lecture	'Get some media into it' In addition to crafting fine prose, today's news media content creators curate the reader experience with slideshows, multi-media storytelling, visual and interactive features, and data visualizations
	Tutorial	GROUP ACTIVITY Multimedia essentials, copyright and permissions IN-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 5 (200 Words) : Discuss how you will use multimedia in your story. SUBMIT IN CLASS UNDER THE WEEK 5 ASSESSMENT TAB
Week 10: 19 April - 23 April	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 12 'Editing your story and getting published' Cohen, Roger (2015) "Charlie Hebdo's Multi-Million-Dollar Pile of Tragedy Money." Vanity Fair, August 2015. http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/07/charlie-hebdo-money-in-france
	Lecture	Masters of Style in Writing and Editing From leads to transitions, and quotations to persuasive conclusions
	Tutorial	Tutorial

	<p>GROUP ACTIVITY</p> <p>Test your skills as an editor and proof-reader by running your eye over drafts of previous students' stories. Then read a fellow student's story draft and share your suggested improvements with fellow students and the class.</p>
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Resources

Prescribed Resources

All students must purchase the following textbook which is set reading in most weeks of this course:

Lamble, S. (2017) *News As It Happens - An Introduction to Journalism*, OUP, Melbourne.

Recommended Resources

UNSW LIBRARY SERVICES

All Masters students are entitled to a consultation with one of the efficient and helpful RESEARCH LIBRARIANS at the UNSW Library on the main campus. Students of MDIA5006 are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to take advantage of this services. Students who have NOT sought and undergone a research consultation are missing an important opportunity to score higher grades in this research and writing course.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Enrolment in UNSW's PELE PROGRAM and range of other free English conversation classes is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for students from English as a Second Language backgrounds.

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feedback is invited via the myExperience survey in the second half of term. Feedback from previous years has contributed to changes in curriculum and activities, and is an important part of the development and improvement of courses.

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.