

Victoria

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

*Te Whare Wānanga
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



WRIT 203 – WRITING FOR PRINT MEDIA 2008 - Second Trimester

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Course Coordinator Dr Derek Wallace

Room Von Zedlitz 319

Phone 463 5630

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Tutors:

Sandi Hall

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Room (for office hour and appointments): VZ 207, ph. 463 5612

Lucy Orbell

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Room (for office hour and appointments): VZ 207, ph 463 5612

(Tutors will inform you at class of their designated office hours.)

LALS Main office: Von Zedlitz 210

LALS administrative assistants: Vivien Trott: Ph. 463 5600

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course runs for 12 weeks, **7 July – 10 October 2008**. The Mid-trimester break is **18 - 31 August**.

The course consists of three hours of workshops per week.

Workshop Times and Venues

Tuesday 9:00 am – 11:50 am: KP24202 and OK524

Wednesday 1:10 pm – 4:00 pm: KP24202 and OK524

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This is a course in advanced writing techniques, focusing on the non-fiction genres of personal essays, personality profiles, commentaries, reviews, features and researched investigative articles. It is not a course in journalism, but will include techniques and forms typical of magazine journalism. The course aims not only to teach the techniques required in these different genres, but also to help students discover their writing strengths.

The course comprises:

- assigned readings for critique and discussion
- writing exercises and assignments
- weekly three-hour workshops for writing practice, presentation, discussion, and peer review

During the course you will

- explore a variety of non-fiction writings
- undertake a variety of writing exercises
- read about and discuss aspects of writing theory, process, techniques and style
- analyse the requirements, problems and constraints in writing contexts
- develop two writing assignments to publication standards through multiple drafts, revision and editing
- review other students' texts
- submit a portfolio of writings for final assessment.

The course covers five main topics:

- Introduction: the context and nature of professional, non-fiction writing
- Auto/biographical writing (essays, memoirs and portraits)
- Interactive writing (information articles, arguments, commentaries and reviews)
- Investigative writing (features and researched articles)
- Editing for publication.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aims and objectives listed above will be met as follows. The earlier part of the course will deal with writing based on personal experience and observation, followed by more interactive modes, i.e. writing that aims to inform, or present a viewpoint or argument to the reader. The focus in this part of the course will be on representing reflection, action, observation, person, place, point-of-view, and time in writing, as well as on organisational techniques. In-class writing exercises will provide opportunities to experiment with subjects, forms and styles. One piece of writing, of about 1000 words, plus two shorter writing exercises, will be required from this part of the course.

The second part of the course will focus on developing a researched piece of writing of 1500-2000 words, with a non-academic, public audience in mind. This piece will use the techniques developed in the earlier part of the course, but the emphasis will be on presenting research findings and personal knowledge in an interesting and intelligible way. This part of the course will cover research and interviewing, structuring, cutting and editing. It is recommended that you start planning the assignment early. Guidelines will be given for this. Up to 10 marks will be given for your assignment plan, including interview plans. A separate interview and write-up exercise will also be required.

Throughout the course we will be working in non-fiction, particularly “creative non-fiction”, also known as literary journalism. This is an increasingly popular hybrid form that uses fictional writing techniques to create non-fiction works.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for grade assessment at the end of the course, you must meet these conditions:

1. Complete all assignment drafts by their due dates (unless you have formal permission from the co-ordinator to submit late). Late submission without permission will incur a penalty of 2% per day.
2. Attend all workshops. You may not miss more than 6 hours of workshops unless the course coordinator agrees that there are exceptional circumstances.

WORKLOAD

It is difficult to estimate the time you will spend on your assignments, since individuals vary in their writing processes and speeds. Generally, students enrolled in writing courses are expected to spend on the course about 10 hours per week outside of class.

COURSE TEXTS

Prescribed: WRIT 203 Course Readings (available from Student Notes)

Recommended: Gerard, P. (1996) *Creative Nonfiction*. Cincinnati: Story Press. (Available from VUW library on closed reserve)

Cheney, T. *Writing Creative Nonfiction*. Ten Speed Press. (Available at Victoria Books at price of \$34.95 or at VUW library on closed reserve)

Minot, S. *Literary Nonfiction: The Fourth Genre*. Prentice Hall. (Available at Victoria Books at price of \$47.95)

Pertl, S. and M. Schwartz (2006) *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction*. Houghton Mifflin. (Library closed reserve)

ASSESSMENT

Assignment 1 (25%)

A personal essay (memoir, portrait or reflective commentary), developed, peer reviewed, and revised. Length: 1000 words.

The first draft of this essay will receive written feedback from a peer in the class. You will then rework it and submit it on the appointed date for tutor feedback. You will further revise it for re-submission in your final portfolio.

Assignment 2 (45%)

A researched article written for a non-academic audience, developed, peer reviewed, and revised. Length: 1500 – 2000 words.

As with Assignment 1, the first draft of this article will receive written feedback from a peer. You will then rework it and submit it on the specified date for tutor feedback. You will further revise it, with tutor help if requested, and re-submit it in your final portfolio.

Ten of the marks allocated to this assignment will be for your assignment plan.

Assigned Exercises:

These are short, informal, but compulsory tasks which will be done both in class and at home. All must be peer reviewed, and included in your final portfolio. Together, they will be worth 30% of your final assessment (i.e. 10% for each). Each exercise will be one to two A4 pages long.

Exercise 1: *Personality profile* - of a class member or someone else you know or have met

Exercise 2: *A review* of a play, film, show, concert, book, new CD, restaurant, OR *a commentary* on a topical issue

Exercise 3: *Interview and write-up*

The due date for the final revised portfolio is 5 p.m. on Monday 13 October. Dates of interim submission of drafts for tutor and peer review will be given in the first workshop.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied: see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

