

*School of English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies*

**Engl 243 Contemporary Fiction  
1/3, 2009**

***Staff***

**Convenor:** Charles Ferrall VZ 904 Ext. 6804; e-mail: Charles.Ferrall@vuw.ac.nz  
**Lecturers:** Anna Jackson; VZ 918 Ext. 6840; Anna.Jackson@vuw.ac.nz

***Trimester Dates:*** Teaching: March 2 – June 5. Examination and study period: June 8 – July 1.

***Class Hours***

**Lectures:** Tues, Wed, Fri 9am 10am, Hunter (HU) LT 323

**Tutorials:** TBA

**Student Consultation Time:** Students may make an appointment with any of the lecturers to discuss any aspect of the course at any mutually convenient time.

***Course Content***

This course will familiarise students with some of the most critically acclaimed novels in English published within the last ten years. Issues that will be examined include the marketing, critical reception and evaluation of these novels; their narrative strategies in a post-modern media-saturated cultural context; and the ways in which their authors work with the intersecting ideas of nation, history and cultural identity.

***Learning Objectives***

At the end of the course students should:

- have a familiarity with all the set texts;
- have a familiarity with some of the reviews and debates about these texts;
- be able to construct their own discussion of the central issues involved.

***Set Texts***

Murray Bail, *Eucalyptus*; Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections*; Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*;

Marisha Pessl, *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*; Barry McCrea *The First Verse*; Zadie Smith, *On Beauty*; Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty*; Kinan Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss*. Reviews, interviews and other material relating to the set texts will also be available on Blackboard.

### ***Assessment***

There will be two essays set during the course worth 25% each and a final 3-hour examination worth 50%. Students will be expected to write exam questions on at least four of the writers on whom they have **not** written in-term essays. The exam is closed-book.

### ***Essays***

It is important that your essays are considered, well-planned pieces of writing, and not drafts. You are assessed on your ability to control material, handle ideas, write concisely and directly, and relate your critical views to specific textual locations. Essays should be approximately 1500 words.

Essay topics will be available by the second week of term. Written work must be handed in by the due date to the English Programme Office, VZ 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Late work submitted without an extension will be penalised by a lowering of the grade (e.g. A to A-, C+ to C) and will not receive any written comments. Extensions will be granted for students with medical certificates or other valid reasons (to be decided by the convenor).

The first essay is due on **April 9** and the second on **May 22**

### ***Mandatory Requirements***

The minimum course requirements that must be satisfied are submission of both essays, sitting the final examination and attendance at 70% or more of the lectures and tutorials.

### ***Workload***

You should expect to spend, on **average**, about 15 hours per week on work for this course (**apart** from time in class). **Please note that this is a rough guideline only**. Some students might have to put in more time, others less. The time commitment will be greatest in the weeks immediately prior to essay submission dates.

### ***Return of Written Work***

Work that has been handed in on time will normally be marked within two weeks. Marked work can be collected from English department administration until the end of examination marking.

## ***Attendance***

Attendance at 70% or more of the lectures and tutorials is mandatory.

## ***Academic Integrity and Plagiarism***

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## ***Students with Disabilities***

The contact for students with disabilities enrolled in English courses is Charles Ferrall.

## ***General University Requirements***

### **General University policies and statutes**

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* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

### *Timetable*

Week 1	Mar 3	Introduction	CF
	Mar 4	Franzen	AJ
	Mar 6	Franzen	AJ
Week 2	Mar 10	Franzen	AJ
	Mar 11	Franzen	AJ
	Mar 13	Bail	CF
Week 3	Mar 17	Bail	CF
	Mar 18	Bail	CF
	Mar 20	Bail	CF
Week 4	Mar 24	Adiga	CF
		Adiga	CF
	Mar 27	Adiga	CF
Week 5	Mar 31	Adiga	CF
	Apr 1	Desai	CF
	Apr 3	Desai	CF
Week 6	Apr 7	Desai	CF
	Apr 8	Desai	CF
	Apr 9	First essay due	
	Apr 10	Public holiday; no lecture	
	Apr 13-25	Mid-trimester break; no lectures	
Week 7	Apr 28	Desai	CF
	Apr 29	Smith	CF
	May 1	Smith	CF
Week 8	May 5	Smith	CF
	May 6	Smith	CF
	May 8	Hollinghurst	CF
Week 9	May 12	Hollinghurst	CF
	May 13	Hollinghurst	CF
	May 15	Hollinghurst	CF
Week 10	May 19	Lecture on reviewing	CF/AJ
	May 20	McCrea	TBA

	May 22	McCrea; second essay due	TBA
Week 11	May 26	McCrea	TBA
	May 27	Pessl	AJ
	May 29	Pessl	AJ
Week 12	June 2	Pessl	AJ
	June 3	Exam Revision	CF/AJ
	June 5	No lecture	