



SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

Writing Programme WRIT 203: Writing for Print Media

TRIMESTER 2 2011
11 July to 12 November 2011

Teaching dates: 11 July to 14 October 2011
Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2011
Study week: 17–21 October 2011
Examination/Assessment period: 21 October to 12 November 2011

WRIT 203 has no examination.

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator

Dr Derek Wallace
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Office Hours: Friday 1-2 pm

Course Administrator

Vivien.Trott Tel: 463 5894, Fax: 463 5604, Vivien.Trott@vuw.ac.nz

Class times and locations

CRN 19731 Tuesday 1.00 to 3.50pm in MY403
CRN 19730 Wednesday 9.00 to 11.50 am in MY403
CRN 11054 Wednesday 1.10 to 4 pm in MY403
CRN 11335 Friday 9.00 to 11.50 am in MY403

Course delivery

WRIT 203 has writing workshops. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, practical writing activities and analyses of texts.

Communication of additional information

Additional information will be communicated through e-mail and Blackboard,
www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz

Course content

This course focuses on the appreciation and practice of the creative genres of print journalism: the personal essay, the personality profile, the review, the commentary, and the investigative article. Students will be introduced to research and interview procedures, composition techniques - including those characteristic of creative nonfiction - and editing of their own and others' texts. The course will be of relevance to anyone intending to write informatively or persuasively to a public audience. 100% internal assessment.

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

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.

Learning objectives

Students passing the course should be able to :

- 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.

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.

Expected workload

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours spread over the trimester, including the mid trimester break. It is difficult to estimate the time you will spend on your assignments, since individuals vary in their writing processes and speeds.

Readings

Essential texts:

WRIT 203 Course Readings (available from Student Notes)

Recommended Readings:

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)

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

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 4 to 22 July 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Materials and equipment

Required:

1. Writing material, such as a writing pad, a pen and a pencil (for editing activities)
2. A folder to keep handout material

Assessment requirements

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 Tuesday 25 October. Dates of interim submission of drafts for tutor and peer review will be given in the first workshop.

Return of Final Assignments

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your final portfolio if you wish them to be returned to you. As you will be handing them in after workshops finish you should bring them to LALS reception (see first page of this outline for details), or make arrangements with your tutor.

Victoria University Grades

Marks	85+	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	55-59	50-54	40-49	<40
Grades	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	E

Grading

Excellent (A+, A, A-): Independent learning taking place with some consistency to an exceptionally high standard of proficiency. Submitted writing is exceptional: it has something of substance to say and says it with some originality, clarity, purpose and voice; a variety of strategies are tried and commented on in feedback to the tutor; evidence is provided of insightful observations and reflections on writing and learning; there is thoughtful engagement with other students, both orally and in written responses; and there is clear evidence of an emerging professionalism in relation to own and others' writing.

Very good (B+, B): Evidence of independent learning to a high standard of proficiency. Submitted writing is of a high standard: convincing in style and presentation, clearly and consistently achieving "competency" in substance and clarity, though not to an exceptional degree; evident commitment and thought in peer response work; some attempt to try different strategies and reflect on these.

Good (B-, C+): Some evidence of competent proficiency, without being exceptional in any way. Conscientious completion of tasks; writing is reasonably competent and clear, but without significant substance or originality; it may be pedestrian, or inconsistent. Independent learning is not markedly obvious. Revision is largely superficial.

Satisfactory (C): A minimally acceptable level of proficiency. Work may be flawed, but writing is definitely communicative and there is evidence of commitment, understanding of what is required to achieve competency, and ability to improve. All course requirements are met.

Unsatisfactory (D, E) Unsatisfactory level of proficiency demonstrated, based on the submitted work. A Fail in WRIT 101 is intended to signal to the University that the student is unlikely to succeed in university studies without undertaking remedial work in writing and study skills.

Penalties

Assignments submitted late without permission are penalised by 2% per late day, including weekends. An assignment that is more than two weeks late will be refused a grade.

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).
2. Attend all workshops. You may not miss more than 6 hours of workshops unless the course coordinator agrees that there are exceptional circumstances.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

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>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.