



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

**CREW 591: CREATIVE WRITING PORTFOLIO
120 POINTS**

FULL YEAR 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates:

Trimester 1: 2 March – 2 April and 20 April – 5 June 2015

Trimester 2: 13 July – 21 August and 7 September – 16 October 2015

Mid-trimester break 1/3: 3 April to 19 April 2015

Mid-year break: 6 June to 12 July 2015

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 22 August to 6 September 2015

Last assessment item due: 3 November 2015

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Names and contact details

Names and contact details:

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Cliff Fell

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Class times and locations

Workshops will take place in Room 102, 16 Waiteata Road (the workshop room), Kelburn Campus.

Emily Perkins workshops (Fiction): Thursdays 10am – 1pm

Emily Perkins reading programme: Wednesdays 12.30 – 2.30pm

Cliff Fell workshops (Poetry and Nonfiction): Tuesdays 1.30 – 4.30pm

Cliff Fell reading programme: Wednesdays 3 – 5 pm

From time to time, the reading programme meetings will be combined on Wednesdays 2 – 4pm (see Teaching Format below).

Each year we also try to offer at least two international masterclasses, timing dependent on the schedules of visiting writers. Details of masterclasses are announced as they are confirmed. Note that they are often scheduled outside of workshop hours.

Communication of additional information

Additional information or information on changes will be made available at workshop meetings, conveyed to students by email to all class members or distributed into student pigeonholes.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who attain this degree should be able to:

1. Initiate and develop a creative writing project into a full book, film or play-length body of resolved work that is written to a high literary standard
2. Develop and document a reading research programme that will inform and extend their principal project
3. Creatively analyse this project's potential readerly or audience effects and generate further composition and revisions accordingly
4. Extend their body of writing with attention to ideas, innovation and craft
5. Demonstrate critical reading skills, give respectful constructive criticism of other's writing and receive constructive criticism judiciously
6. Formulate structures and routines that will support their writing process for this project and beyond.

Teaching format

WORKSHOPS:

At workshops a range of exercise work is presented and discussed, and workshop members present for discussion folio work-in-progress.

The first few workshops will concentrate on weekly exercise pieces.

In the later part of the year, students will also be required to produce written commentaries on the work of other workshop members.

Unless we agree otherwise, there are no formal classes during university breaks: see attached meetings schedule.

READING PROGRAMME:

Where appropriate, we will run combined sessions. These will be held on Wednesday afternoons, 2.00–4.00 pm. Therefore, please keep the whole of Wednesday afternoon free.

Reading Programme meetings provide a forum for the discussion of craft and literary issues, as well as a number of texts from individual reading lists (each class member leads at least one meeting). They also provide a forum for guest visits.

There are no Reading Programme meetings during university breaks.

Mandatory course requirements

If you fail to meet these requirements your folio will not be assessed, and you will automatically fail.

There are three requirements:

- you must attend and participate in the weekly workshop meeting (except in extenuating circumstances)
- you must meet Reading Programme requirements as described above, including attendance at the weekly meeting (except in extenuating circumstances), and completion of the Reading Journal.
- you must submit your portfolio by the due date.

Workload

The MA is a full-time course. In practice, this means you should expect to spend about **40 hours a week** on it.

Assessment

Assessment is based entirely on your submitted portfolio. You will receive a letter grade, and there is provision for the degree to be awarded with distinction or with merit. Two examiners – an external reader from the writing community and the Publisher of Victoria University Press – will read the portfolio and make their recommendations. Your supervisor will also write a report. Copies of their written reports will be returned to you.

You must submit three copies of your folio or thesis by Tuesday 3 November 2015.

These should be in soft or temporary bindings. When examining is completed, copies will be returned to you, along with readers' reports. At this point you can make any necessary corrections.

Your Portfolio

This is the equivalent of an academic thesis. While you will be discussing your folio at the workshop meetings, you will also be assigned a portfolio supervisor, with whom you will have regular meetings. (These should average out at one hour per fortnight across the teaching year.) As against the diversity of views you are likely to meet in workshops, your supervisor provides the response of a single, continuing reader.

The recommended length of an MA thesis in a subject such as English Literature is up to 40,000 words. It is recognised, however, that the length of a Creative Writing portfolio will depend very much on the nature of each project. A fiction portfolio, for example, is likely to have a much larger word count, while a poetry portfolio will be shorter. This is a matter you should discuss with your supervisor, as well as with Cliff Fell or Emily Perkins.

Reading Journal

As part of your Reading Programme you are required to read extensively in an area related to your main writing project. You report on your Reading Programme by keeping a detailed, regular journal where you note your responses to the texts you have been reading, as much as possible in the light of your own writing.

The Reading Journal, which is not formally assessed, must be submitted by Friday, 11 September 2015.

Depositing Your Thesis

After you have received your readers' reports, you must then lodge THREE copies of your thesis: one softbound, one hardbound, and one electronic copy. The IIML will keep the softbound copy as part of its record of work done for the MA. The hardbound and electronic copies will be deposited in the University Library. The Library requirements for the depositing of theses can be found at: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/using-library/submit-your-thesis>

You must complete and sign an Availability of Thesis form at the time of deposit. If you plan to submit your thesis or a revised version of it to a publisher, we recommend that you choose to deposit the electronic thesis in the Library's Restricted Archive. Otherwise you may choose to make it freely available online in the Open Archive.

Human Ethics Regulations

If your research involves quoting directly from interviews with living people, you may need to seek approval from the Human Ethics Committee. If you are in doubt, talk first to your supervisor or workshop coordinator.

Master's Thesis Policy

The MA in Creative Writing is a distinctive research degree, with its own protocols and requirements. Broader information about Victoria's university-wide Master's thesis policy can be read at: www.victoria.ac.nz/fqr/policies-and-resources/#masters. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also has guidelines for Master's students at: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/study/postgraduate/ma and www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/study/postgraduate/postgraduate-resources-and-links

Please note the following reporting responsibilities for Master's students:

Master's thesis students are required to complete a progress report in July.

MA students are also required to submit (via the IIML) a research proposal within one calendar month of their initial enrolment. This may take the form of your project proposal as outlined in your application, or reflect any changes made to the project plan and agreed with your workshop supervisor.

Further information on these requirements will be available from your workshop supervisor.

Practical Matters

As well as the Workshop Room, there are three rooms set aside for students in the MA Creative Writing programme. Room 401 at 16 Waiteata Road contains a small library, student lockers and pigeonholes as well as an on-line Mac and PC. There are also two small writing rooms next to the IIML at 14 Waiteata Road, which you can book for private work. One is available at all times and the other every day except Wednesday and Friday. You will have key access to the buildings and rooms, so that you can come and go after hours. (You will need to see the IIML's administrators about keys and swipe cards.)

There is also a kitchen on the ground floor of the IIML. You are welcome to use anything here – fridge, microwave, stove – but please wash your dishes and clean up after yourself.

Printing and copying arrangements: read the document titled 'Information for MA Students 2015' in your course information folder, then check with the IIML's administrators.

We are building a small library of contemporary writing in the Postgraduate Room (Room 401). Please use this library as a resource (books may be borrowed on a card system; journals must be read in the library only). We subscribe to a range of contemporary journals, while a number of current NZ literary magazines – *Landfall*, *New Zealand Books*, *Sport* – have generously donated gift subscriptions. Donations of your own future publications will of course be very welcome!

Writers DVDs

We have a significant resource in the Lannan Writers DVD Collection, which features readings and conversations with many of the world's leading writers. The DVDs may not be borrowed, but we have booked the Workshop Room on Fridays from 2.00 p.m. should you wish to view these DVDs. (Certain Fridays will not be available due to the PhD programme's requirements – please check with the office.) These DVD sessions are not a formal requirement but offer you a chance to see a favourite writer in performance or to discover new writers.

There is also a collection of New Zealand and international poetry recordings on CD available to listen to in the Workshop Room. They may not be borrowed.

Other Meetings and Events

The Workshop and Reading Programme make up the MA's formal requirements. Informal meetings between students are another way of developing networks and skills.

The IIML also runs a series of writer events – "Writers on Mondays" usually held at lunchtimes in the second trimester. The venue for this year is Te Papa. Attendance at these events, where invited writers read and speak about their work, is strongly encouraged. Students will also have the opportunity to take part in this series as writers in September.

Masterclasses

In the past few years we have presented international masterclasses as part of the MA programme. Previous visiting writers have included Janice Galloway, Mary Ruefle, Michael Schmidt, Michael Hofmann, Richard Ford, Eliot Weinberger, Lavinia Greenlaw, Michael Palmer, Richard Powers, Christopher Reid, Glyn Maxwell, David Vann, Joy Harjo, Teju Cole and Lee

Gutkind. There will be a masterclass with Irish poet Vona Groarke on 22 May, and other visiting writers to be confirmed (see schedule for dates and times).

Blackboard

The MA programme uses Blackboard to post and store course information, requirements and schedules; important announcements; class writing exercises; guidelines for workshop, reading journals and the reading programme packets; literary articles, essays and interviews; and university links. Access and log-in instructions will be given at the beginning of Trimester 1.

Newsletter

The IIML produces an occasional newsletter that includes information about literary events and launches (particularly in Wellington), new books by graduates, writing competitions and other book-related goings-on. To receive the newsletter email modernletters@vuw.ac.nz with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. (Please note that we will assume that you are receiving the newsletter, rather than repeating the information it contains during the workshops.)

For more up-to-the-minute information about upcoming events, competition deadlines and opportunities, as well as links to useful or curious web-reading about writing, follow us on Twitter:

www.twitter.com/modernletters

Prizes and Scholarships

The Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing is awarded to the best folio submitted by an MA student in any one year. Recipients to date have been Catherine Chidgey (1997, for *In a Fishbone Church*), William Brandt (1998, for *Alpha Male*), Tim Corballis (2000, for *Below*), Paula Morris (2001, for *Queen of Beauty*), Cliff Fell (2002, for *The Adulterer's Bible*), Josh Greenberg (2003, for *A Man Who Eats the Heart*), Emily Dobson (2004, for *A Box of Bees*), Michele Amas (2005, for *The Angle of Clouds*), Anna Horsley (now Anna Taylor, 2006, for *Going Under*), Eleanor Catton (2007, for *The Rehearsal*), Lynn Jenner (2008, for *Dear Sweet Harry*), Ashleigh Young (2009, for *Can You Tolerate This?*), Rayne Cockburn (2010, for *Someplace for Boys*), Hera Lindsay Bird (2011, for *And Together We Fight Crime*), Kerry Donovan-Brown (2012, for *Lamplighter*), Helena Wiśniewska Brow (2013, for *Give Us This Day*), and Craig Gamble (2014, for *The Watch List*). Copies of these and all the other completed MA theses are available for reading in the VUW Library.

Created in 2006, the \$3000 Biggs Poetry Scholarship, which seeks to recognise the potential of a writer, has been awarded to Amy Brown (2006), Joan Fleming (2007), Louise Wallace (2008), Bill Nelson (2009), Aleksandra Lane (2010), Rachel Sawaya (2011), Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle (2012), Morgan Bach (2013) and Faith Wilson (2014).

There are also four post-MA project scholarships awarded to allow selected students to work towards publication of their folios. These are valued at \$3000 each depending on available funds.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats

- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz