



UNSW
A U S T R A L I A

**Faculty of Arts and Social
Sciences**

School of the Arts and Media

ARTS3051

Fiction Writing

Session 2, 2015

UNSW Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Course Authority	Stephanie Bishop	stephanie.bishop@unsw.edu.au	Wednesday 1-2 Thursday 2-3	Webster 204	

School of the Arts and Media Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

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Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Attendance Requirements

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a F2F or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).
- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.
- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.
- A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.
- For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Essential Information For SAM Students

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Course details

Credit Points: 6

Summary of the Course:

This Level 3 course provides students with the opportunity to develop work on a novel. Students undertaking this course will examine the poetics of the contemporary novel, exploring a variety of technical aspects essential to fiction, such as narrative structure, creation of character and the development of prose style. Students will read both novels and critical texts in order to deepen their understanding of the composition of the novel. Comparative and historical analysis will inform the development of student's own creative practice. Students will have experimented with a range of writing genres in Level 1 and 2 Creative Writing courses. As a Level 3 course students will extend their writing skills by working on a sustained piece of prose fiction.

Aims of the Course:

- To introduce students to a range of exemplary and contemporary novels
- To explore a range of techniques essential to the novel as a form
- To consider historical and critical issues that impact on the development of the contemporary novel
- To build on writing skills developed at Level 1 and 2 and supplement those skills being developed Level 3
- To develop a single, sustained piece of prose fiction

Student learning outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Create a sustained piece of fiction
2. Identify and critically discuss formal and thematic features of the contemporary novel in English
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the key issues surrounding the development of the contemporary novel
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the practical decisions writers make concerning the craft of writing
5. Critically appraise your own work and the work of others
6. Demonstrate skills in literary analysis developed through a close reading of texts in English
7. Improved skills in drafting, revising and editing your own manuscripts

Graduate Attributes:

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. The skills involved in scholarly enquiry
2. The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem-solving
3. The ability to engage in independent and reflective learning

4. The capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity
5. The skills required for collaborative and multidisciplinary work
6. The skills of effective communication

Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach
Important Information About How this Course Works

The function of the lectures

The lectures for this course will be divided into three sections: (1) Critical Readings (2) Writing Process/Writing Practice (3) Vocational Pathways

In the first section, the lectures will focus on key critical elements central to the work of the contemporary novel. Four main areas will be considered: the role of truth in fiction, the musical elements of composition in the novel, the function of images and the practice of image making, and the role of time in the contemporary novel. In this first series of lectures we will be looking closely at a selection of contemporary novels that deal with and address these issues. These texts will provide you with a series of models to inspire your own writing and will encourage a broad and comparable view of the poetics of the contemporary novel. All lectures will engage with practical issues concerning the composition of the novel and will encourage you to build creative and critical links between your work as a reader/critic and as a writer. One of the most challenging aspects of creating a sustained piece of fiction is the process of revising and editing – something which can be far more arduous than the production of early drafts. Reading widely and deeply, and thus honing your skills as critics, will allow you to cast a productive critical eye over your own work. The lectures are designed with this in mind. They are devised to deepen your understanding of the novel, quick-start your creative work and help you develop the ability to critically appraise your own writing. Please be aware that this course is based on collaborative principles of group learning and relies on your active participation in both lectures and seminars. Your thoughtful and vocal responses are vital to the success of this course. It is essential that you have read the weekly texts before coming to the lecture.

In the second section of the lectures, the focus will shift towards your own writing. Some of these lectures will be practice-based, others will ask that you think critically and practically about the connections between the set texts and your own work in progress. Throughout the course, and in this section in particular, we will be interrogating the stylistic and compositional elements of the contemporary novel and how this might influence your own writing. We will consider, for example:

- The compositional background of each novel: what we know about the creative process
- The governing formal and poetic qualities of the novel
- The relationship between form and content
- The relationship between a novel's philosophical foundation - what it thinks about, the aspects of the world that it most closely engages with - and its formal/technical innovations

Poetic elements that we will be considering include:

- Use of the image, montage, symbol
- The life of objects and things
- The manipulation of time
- Patterns of interiority
- Close readings of style
- Acts and processes of memory
- The relation between novel/essay, novel/poem, novel/blog

Such elements may be considered across different texts and in relation to your own work in progress, providing a comparable view of the poetics of contemporary fiction. We will be focusing on how these poetic elements work together, reflecting the overall course emphasis on the broader composition of the novel.

You are expected to read all of the set texts, and read them closely. There is an overt attempt within this course to encourage you to build links between critical and creative practice and to see these two activities as mutually informative. Critical inquiry will be thus accompanied by reflection on your own creative practice. *Some key questions that we will consider and discuss therefore include:* What are the sustaining poetic “laws” of the set texts and of your own writing project? When do these become apparent? How does the use of formal devices change or develop over the course of a piece of work? How do such elements support the core idea or experience of a given piece of literature? On a practical level in regards to your own work we will be asking questions such as: How are these poetic elements instructive for your own creative work? How do these works challenge and inspire experimentation within your own projects? What happens when you use these works as models for your own writing? What does it mean to pay homage to certain stylistic traits? What can you borrow? What can you develop? What is the relationship, in your writing, between tradition and innovation?

In the final, vocational series of lectures we will look at the various pathways open to you as writers and the potential careers that support creative practice. We will also engage in a practical discussion about what it means to survive as a writer, looking at how to apply for grants, mentorship programs and higher degree study in the area of creative writing.

The function of the seminar

Each seminar runs for 2 hours. In this time there will be three core activities:

- Discussion of that week’s text and lecture – in relation to critical and creative practice
- Discussion of creative writing exercise based on lecture material, the aim being to link your reading with your writing practice.
- Discussion of work in progress and workshopping your own writing

Discussion will develop around the lecture material and your writing projects. We will then use the critical material of the lectures to prompt your own creative practice and explore aspects of composition that are relevant to your projects. Please be aware that there is the expectation that you will be writing regularly throughout the semester and will be expected to discuss this process, its pleasures and challenges.

Teaching Rationale:

- Lecture aim: To impart knowledge of the genre and range formal and poetic devices evident in the contemporary novel, to draw attention to key critical concerns that contribute to an understanding of the formal elements of the novel and to provide an understanding of the craft of writing fiction.
- Seminar aim: The seminar will provide an opportunity for students to analyse and discuss texts, develop their own writing, gain peer group feedback on works in progress and to develop skills of critical appraisal, editing and redrafting.
- Writing exercises will be provided in order to encourage practical experimentation and extension.
- Workshopping of student manuscripts to gain peer group feedback on works in progress and to develop skills of critical appraisal, editing and redrafting.

Teaching strategies

- The course will have one lecture per week followed by a two hour seminar/workshop which will expand on issues raised in the lecture, address weekly readings and workshop creative writing.
- Lecture aim: to impart knowledge of the genre and range formal devices evident in the contemporary novel, to draw attention to key critical concerns that contribute to an understanding of the formal elements of the novel and to provide an understanding of the craft of writing fiction
- The seminar will provide an opportunity for students to analyse and discuss texts, develop their own writing, gain peer group feedback on works in progress and to develop skills of critical appraisal, editing and redrafting.

Assessment

Assessment Details and Criteria

a) **MINOR ASSIGNMENT: ESSAY (25%) 2000 Words**

One essay that provides (1) a close, critical reading of one of the set texts discussed between weeks 2 - 5 and (2) an overview of your own creative project in relation to this critical discussion/set text.

You might think of this of this as an essay in comparative criticism - considering aspects of your own burgeoning poetics in relation to the developed poetics contained within the set texts. You will be expected to critically examine your own creative project in light of the discussion that has taken place around the set texts. You may include a discussion of influences, processes ideas and theories.

This essay is both critical and reflective. It should therefore:

- **Clearly identify** which of the set texts are/have been of greatest influence/ interest in relation to your own creative work. Clearly identify which **key aspects** of these texts have furthered your thinking in regards to your own creative project.
- **Critically evaluate** the way in which these key aspects have informed the development of your writing over the semester, i.e. **provide a close, critical reading** of those key aspects that supports the concerns of your creative work. This is the more formal part of the essay. For example, you might choose to discuss the symbolic image in Deborah Levy (with reference to your own project), the function of the image in relation to Elain Scarry (again, with reference to your own project), the role of digressive essay/travelogue in Rachel Cusk etc.

You will be assessed on the following:

- Critical awareness: the capacity to place/discuss your work in a critical context
- Demonstration of critical knowledge surrounding the selected set text
- Evidence of analytical and critical thinking in relation to the chosen text
- Originality and initiative

b) **MAJOR ASSIGNMENT: FINAL PIECE OF CREATIVE WORK (55%) 3-4000 words**

This assessment requires you to submit the opening chapters of a novel, up to 4000 words. It is expected that this piece of work will be a further development of the writing that was submitted to the class for group feedback.

You will be assessed on the following:

- Flow/reading coherence: transitions between sentences and paragraphs – movement within the piece
- Presence and development of interiority
- Use of language: precision, experimentation, lyricism, vivacity
- Special qualities: such as risk-taking, humour, unusual images, compelling digression
- Use of time: how are we orientated in time? How is time used to structure the piece?
- Sense of idea/event: what matters most? Does the piece build/evolve around on this?
- Narrative development
- Overall focus of the piece
- Ability to create change within the piece
- Engagement with topic/ reader/ engaging nature of idea
- Improvement of work from draft manuscript workshopped in class to final polished piece submitted for assessment; i.e. evidence of redrafting and editing of original manuscript based on judicious consideration of feedback from tutor and fellow students

- Evidence of having reflected on elements of craft and poetics as discussed in lectures and seminars
- Originality and initiative

c) SEMINAR PREPARATION (20%)

- To satisfy this assessment requirement you are expected to:
- Provide critical feedback on work of peers (10%)
- Submit your own work for workshopping (10%)

Guidelines for workshopping

Each student will be scheduled to submit an early draft of their creative writing project to the class. These presentations form the basis of the writing workshop. As writers you will be expected to submit a focused piece of creative work (fiction) to the group for comment. As critics you will be expected to read these manuscripts thoroughly and provide written, constructive feedback on the work of your peers. Where possible you will be expected to relate your discussion of this creative work to the critical principles raised in the set texts and lectures. The feedback process for this part of the assessment occurs in four stages: 1) Students provide written feedback on the work of their peers 2) This written feedback is further developed in group discussion, chaired by the tutor 3) The tutor provides written feedback on each student manuscript 4) There will be the option of continuing/developing this feedback process in an online discussion format.

Formal workshopping will begin in Week 3. Two or three students will have their writing workshopped in each seminar during the second hour. A class timetable will be drawn up and each student must put their name down for one workshopping session. **All manuscripts submitted for workshopping should be double-spaced, page numbered, with a minimum of two centimetre margins.** This formatting is important for two reasons: 1) ease of reading and workshopping. Readers need space in the margins and between the lines for proof-reading suggestions, annotations and commentary. Page numbers help everyone find a particular line or passage being discussed in class; 2) professional practice. Manuscripts submitted to literary journals need to be professionally presented, otherwise they run the risk of being rejected without being read.

It is the responsibility of all students to print up and read these manuscripts before class and come to class prepared to edit and critically assess the material. Bring hardcopies. All work should then be returned (hardcopy) to its author with written feedback. **It is very poor form to miss the class following the week in which you have workshopped your manuscript.**

This early creative work will be assessed on following:

- Attempt to explore complex ideas/experiences
- Formal innovation and originality
- Vividness of the work
- Evidence of craft skills (eg: consistency of voice, movement and structure, development of imagery, uses of dialogue, characterisation, creation of interiority etc)
- Originality and initiative

These criteria ought to provide a guideline for peer review and discussion.

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Learning outcomes assessed	Graduate attributes assessed	Due Date
Critical Development of Project (25%)	2000 words max	25%		1,2,3,4,5,6	Week 7 September 11, Friday 12pm
Major Creative Writing Project (55%)	3000-4000 words max	55%		2,3,4,6	Week 12 October 23, Friday 12pm
Tutorial Presentation and Preparation (20%)	1500-2000 words per workshop presentation, plus 1-2 paragraph synopsis/overview. Please ensure your work is double-spaced.	20%		2,3,4,5,6	Ongoing – the timetable will be drawn up in the first weeks of semester, and every student will be assigned a week in which they are expected to present their creative work

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their **names** and **student numbers** on **every page** of their assignments. 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 in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments 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.

The essay and the major creative work will be submitted through Turnitin.

The workshop assessment is to be submitted electronically via moodle and/or an email list in order for the material to be distributed to class members.

Late Submission

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE RULES APPLY FOR ALL COURSES IN SAM.

If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 3% per day (including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays) will be imposed for up to 2 weeks. For example, if you are given a mark of 72 out of 100 for an essay, and your essay were handed in two days late, it would attract a penalty of 6% and the mark would be reduced to 66%. If the same essay were handed in seven days late (i.e. a penalty of 21%) it would receive a mark of 51%. If your assignment is not submitted within 2 weeks of its due date, it will receive a mark of 0. For more information on submission of late work, consult the SAM assessment protocols at <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Extension Procedure

- A student seeking an extension should submit a SAM extension application form (found in Forms on SAM website) to the Course Authority before the due date.
- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
- The Course Authority can only approve an extension of up to five days. A student requesting an extension of more than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
- If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.
- This procedure does not apply to assessment tasks that take place during regular class hours or any task specifically identified by the Course Authority as not subject to extension requests.
- A student who missed an assessed activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.
- For more information, see the SAM extension protocols on the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Special Consideration

In the case of more serious or ongoing illness or misadventure, you will need to apply for Special Consideration. For information on Special Consideration please go to this URL: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

Students who are prevented from attending a substantial amount of the course may be advised to apply to withdraw without penalty. This will only be approved in the most extreme and properly documented cases.

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 information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.
- **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.

Details of what plagiarism is can be found on the Learning Centre's Website Plagiarism & Academic Integrity website (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/academic-integrity-plagiarism>), in the myUNSW student A-Z: Guide <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism> and in Appendix A of the Student Misconduct Procedure (pdf-<https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf>).

The Learning Centre also provides substantial education written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example:

- 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. 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.

Course schedule

Week	Topic	Lecture Content
Week 1: 27-31 July	Lecture one: Introduction to Course - The idea of composition	Introductory lecture
Essential Readings:		
No readings this week		
Week 2: 3-7 August	Lecture two: Truth and Confession - The Auto-fictional Novel	The relationship between truth and fiction, the use of auto/biography in the novel.
Essential Readings:		
Extracts from:		
Ben Lerner, <i>10:04</i>		
Sheila Hetti <i>How Should a Person be?</i>		
Knausgaard <i>My Struggle</i>		
Cusk, <i>Outline</i>		
Week 3: 10-14 August	Lecture three: "Time is a Goon	Proust, Hypertext and Pause: the elasticity of time. How does the novel manipulate chronology? What does hypertextual time look like when adapted to narrative?
Essential Readings:		
Jennifer Egan, <i>A Visit from the Goon Squad</i>		
Week 4: 17-21 August	Lecture four: Fugue Writing/Dream Language	Musical principles in the composition of the contemporary novel: fugue, polyphony and contrapuntal narrative forms
Essential Readings:		
Deborah Levy, <i>Swimming Home</i>		
Week 5: 24-28 August	Lecture five: Image and Narrative	Image-based writing, structuring narrative around images, the psychic life of images, the persistence of the technological image
Essential Readings:		
Extracts from		
Elaine Scarry <i>Dreaming by the book</i>		
David Foster-Wallace		
'E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction'		
Gerald Murnane TBC		
Week 6: 31 August - 4 September	Lecture six: Moving images Practice	Practical extension of some of the

	based lecture	critical ideas discussed in last week's lecture.
Essential Readings:		
TBC		
Week 7: 7-11 September	Lecture seven: Writing the Symptom - Practice based lecture	How can the external body be used to signal internal life? How can malady and symptom communicate and extend the life of a character? What contributes to symptom formation and can this complicate our experience of character?
Essential Readings:		
TBC		
Week 8: 14-18 September	Lecture eight: The Evolution of a Novel	I will discuss the genesis and development of my novel <i>The Other Side of the World</i> . This will be quite practical and will involve a discussion of editing and shaping a manuscript for publication.
Essential Readings:		
Stephanie Bishop, <i>The Other Side of the World</i>		
Week 9: 21-25 September	Lecture nine: Vocational Pathways #1	A guide to grant applications in support of early creative work and a discussion of mentorship programs.
Essential Readings:		
TBC		
Week 10: 6-9 October	Lecture ten: Vocational Pathways #2 Editing and Publishing Pathways	What is the editing process? How does a manuscript change over the course of being edited? What does a career in editing and publishing look like? We'll discuss editing and publishing from both a creative and professional/vocational perspective.
Essential Readings:		
TBC		
Week 11: 12-16 October	Lecture eleven: Vocational Pathways #3 Higher degree options and Creative Writing in the Academy	
Essential Readings:		
TBC		
Week 12: 19-23 October	Student Readings	
Essential Readings:		
No readings this week		

Course evaluation and development

This course is continually being developed to reflect shifts in contemporary literature and the lecturers' changing approaches to teaching, in the context of ongoing international scholarship on Creative Writing pedagogy. Honest and productive student feedback is vital to this ongoing process. Why do students enrol in Creative Writing classes? What do they actually hope to learn? These are key questions. If you have any comments about the course which can reasonably be addressed during the semester, please offer these thoughts informally to the coordinator

The formal, and anonymous, CATEI evaluation process at the end of semester is also of great significance. Feedback from this forum has resulted in assessment criteria being refined and sharpened, lectures being pitched at a more appropriate level and heads being nodded in frustrated agreement about the paucity of time available for workshopping.

Now that CATEI evaluations are conducted online, student participation has dropped dramatically, resulting in feedback which is statistically unreliable. For instance, when only a small proportion of students respond, one dissatisfied student can constitute 20% of the overall response. It tends to be only the students who loved a course or those who were disillusioned by it who take the time to fill out the surveys. This presents a skewed overall impression of what students thought. You are thus urged to take the time to fill out the CATEI survey at the end of semester. Remember too, that in the same way comments on an assignment are more helpful than a mark, your written feedback on the course is more important than the boxes you tick, or the circles you click on with your mouse.