

Victoria University of Wellington
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika Maui
School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

**WRIT 203 – WRITING FOR PRINT MEDIA
2006 - Second Trimester**

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Course Coordinator Dr Derek Wallace

Room Von Zedlitz 319

Phone 463 5630

E-mail: derek.wallace@vuw.ac.nz

Tutors:

Glenys Bowman

Ph: 463 5233 ext 8825

E-Mail: glenys.bowman@vuw.ac.nz

Room 101

22 Kelburn Parade

Peter Stevens

E-mail : peter.stevens@vuw.ac.nz

Ph. 021 611 900

Room: VZ 302 (during office hours)

Pete Hutton

E-mail: peter.hutton@vuw.ac.nz

Ph. 463 5615 (office hours)

Room VZ 302 (office hours)

LALS Main office: Von Zedlitz 210

LALS administrative assistants: Vivien Trott and Jane Dudley. Ph. 463 5600

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course runs for 12 weeks, **11 July – 10 October 2006**. The Mid-trimester break is **21 August - 03 September** (incl.).

The course consists of three hours of workshops per week.

Workshop Times and Venues

Tuesday 10:00 am – 12:50 pm: KK 105 (first week; second class venue to be advised)

Tuesday 2:10 pm – 5:00 pm: KK 105 (first week; second class may be established)

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 articles. It is not a course in journalism, but will include techniques and forms found in 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
- Personal 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 personal writing, 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 workshops regularly. You must not miss more than 6 hours of workshops without approval from the course coordinator.

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).

A good dictionary (such as Oxford, Collins or Macquarie)

Handout material will be distributed in class.

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 your tutor. You will then rework it and bring it to class on the appointed date for peer review. 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 your tutor. You will then rework it and bring it to class on the specified date for peer review. 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
- 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 Friday 13 October. Dates of interim submission of drafts for tutor and peer review will be given in the first workshop.

**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 available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

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:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements,

please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.