MDIA5006

Feature Writing

Term Two // 2019

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenor	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Dr Christopher Kremmer	c.kremmer@unsw.edu.au	BY APPOINTMENT ONLY: Mondays 12-1 pm in teaching weeks	Room 231J, Level 2, Robert Webster Building	93856364

School Contact Information

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The School of the Arts and Media would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

This course builds on the core Writing For Media course offered in Semester 1, which teaches the fundamentals of writing for print journalism. In this course, you will learn how to write feature articles. You will develop your interview, research and writing skills for both print and online media. You will learn techniques for writing in a range of feature article genres and forms. This course will also cover the roles of editors and freelance writers in producing feature articles. You will study the history and the contemporary social significance of the feature genres. You will critically consider key writers, texts and audiences for these genres.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Generate features of varying lengths on deadline, to length, conforming to requirements of different genres in various media outlets
2. Plan, research, structure and write features, queries and pitches
3. Rely on well-developed reporting and news gathering skills
4. Understand professional editorial processes, ethics and the demands of the market place
5. Work as part of a team to create features for mainstream media
6. Take on the challenge of new story telling techniques

Teaching Strategies

This course combines ONE two-hour seminar/week WITH small and large group discussions, in-class workshops, evaluation, exercises based on course readings, handouts and seminar content, and four assessed tasks with deadlines.

Assessment

Student work is assessed based on quality at the time of submission only. Subsequent improvements to stories arising from the opportunity to work with the Digital Editor (Newsworthy) may result in publication, however the original mark awarded to all submissions stands. The Digital Editor may advise on story development but is not responsible for marking assignments. In all matters of assessment the decisions of the course convenor are final. All assignments must be submitted as WORD docs (no PDFs). On the first page always provide your student number and enrolment name (first name followed by family name), as well as course & assignment number, seminar group day and time, the story's genre (opinion, profile, etc), and an accurate word count for your submission. Do not include your personal, class or interviewee details or reference lists in this word count. On the final page of your submission provide the names and contact details of all interviewees plus interview place, date, time and whether the interview was conducted in-person, or by telephone, email, webchat/social media or Skype. Unless you have your tutor's permission in writing, all interviews must be conducted in Australia and must be recorded (smart phone audio recordings and webchat transcripts are acceptable). All interviewee quotes must be accurately rendered in English. Interview recordings MUST be retained for assessment purposes until December 31st of each academic year. In this course, the sources of all facts and quotes must be briefly mentioned WITHIN the story (for example, 'University of Melbourne researchers say', or "A 2018 report by the Institute of Accountants said", or "The Attorney General admitted" etc.). Full citation of all statements and facts must be provided either by embedding the source URL in the text where the reference occurs, or in a reference list on the final page of your submission. Information obtained via your interviews need not be cited in reference lists but MUST be accurately reported in direct and/or indirect quotes in the text of your story and/or video and audio multimedia clips. Note that referencing requirements may differ for each assignment. For submissions containing multimedia, the total word count can be reduced by 180 words per minute of media clips included in the submission via Moodle or the Newsworthy Content Management System. Submissions that are primarily multimedia must be preceded by a 100-150 word text lead and be submitted in a file type and size compatible with Moodle.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Short Feature	25%	28/06/2019 05:00 PM	1,3,4
Long Feature	40%	02/08/2019 05:00 PM	1,3,4
Feature Writing and Research Portfolio	35%	09/08/2019 05:00 PM	2,5,6

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Short Feature

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 750-850 words

Details: 800 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

The 800-word feature (750-850 word limit) must be written in one of the following genres: Immersion, Colour, Commentary, Review, Opinion, Analysis, Backgrounder or Explainer. Your submission may be in the form of text, audio (podcast) or video (vodcast). Your submission may be in the form of text, audio (podcast) or video (vodcast)

Submission notes: See general assessment information

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Long Feature

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 1400-1600 words

Details: 1,500 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

The Long Feature must be written in one of the following genres: News or Issue-based feature, Profile, or Lifestyle/Trend report, Investigative or Immersion. Your submission may be in the form of text, audio (podcast) or video (vodcast)

Submission notes: See General Assessment Information

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Feature Writing and Research Portfolio

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 1400-1600 words

Details: 1,500 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Additional details:

Portfolio submissions, which account for 35 percent of the available marks in this course, cannot include material submitted in Assignments One and Two. Student portfolios must contain only the text, images or audio of their ORIGINAL SUBMISSIONS in response to tasks assigned as homework or in-class activities during the course. The portfolio must contain a minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) individual pieces of work totalling 1,400-1,600 words of text (or multimedia equivalent 180 words per minute). The portfolio MUST contain your Week 10 Story Pitch (500 words). Please provide the date on which each individual element of your portfolio was originally submitted. DO NOT CHANGE OR CORRECT THE ORIGINAL SUBMISSION. The types of material that may be submitted include pre-class and in-class submissions or text-based activities, story pitches, reflections on tasks and readings, reflections on interview questions or research strategies that produced newsworthy material, and other kinds of work. Students are responsible for choosing and submitting only their best work for their portfolio. Poor choices in this regard are not grounds for appeal.

Submission notes: See General Assessment Information

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 6: Feature Writing and Research Portfolio

Start date: Not Applicable

Details: 1,500 words, qualitative feedback provided via Turnitin.

Attendance Requirements

- Attendance at face-to-face Lectures and Tutorials is mandatory in this course. Unexcused absence from more than 22.3 % of classes (two lectures and two seminars) will result in the award of a fail grade.
- TUTORIALS: In tutorials you will actively engage with core course content that will help you to attain Course Learning Outcomes 2 and 4
- LECTURE: In lectures you will actively engage with core course content that will help you to attain Course Learning Outcomes 1, 2 and 4

Course Schedule

View class timetable

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 3 June - 7 June	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Students should access the GENRE LIBRARY on the Moodle course site for examples of feature article genres before choosing the genre they will attempt for Assignment One (opinion, commentary, analysis, review and explanatory writing). Please also view the following video editorial: Betts, A (2017) 'Why Brexit happened": https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_why_brexit_happened_and_what_to_do_next?language=en **PRE-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 1 (200 words)** Read the Genre Library on Moodle and discuss what Alexander Betts' Ted Talk can teach us about feature writing?
	Lecture	**Feature article genres** Feature articles have a very different structure and purpose to hard news stories. We survey the many different types of feature writing, a diverse and thriving sector of media markets. From sober analysis to escapist travel and consumer indulgence, there are feature articles for all tastes and purposes, each of them with its own conventions and affordances. What kinds of feature articles will you research and write this semester?
	Tutorial	SCREENING AND IN-CLASS ACTIVITY **"So, you've got an opinion?"—Turning your ideas and beliefs into evaluative feature articles"**

		We review Alexander Betts' TedTalk for clues to the essential elements of evaluative writing. Then, students discuss the issues that unite, divide and animate their societies and nations. What are the issues that trouble or inspire you? Talking with new colleagues and friends about them can be the spark that ignites great feature articles in the genres of opinion, commentary, analysis, review and explanatory writing.
Week 2: 10 June - 14 June	Homework	**PRE-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 2 (300-500 words): Assignment One story proposals: 300-500 words (in writing via Moodle submission link) Due: 9 am 10 June** BRING TO CLASS: Three (3) copies of your Assignment One story proposal **Read** Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 5 'Generating Fresh Story Ideas' Brodesser-Akner, T. (2015) 'Revenge of the Nerds' *Paris Review* (on Taylor Swift) Winton, Tim (2013) "The C Word: Some thoughts about class in Australia." The Monthly, December 2013-14 https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2013/december/1385816400/tim-winton/c-word Thompson, H.S. "He was a Crook" The Atlantic/Rolling Stone 16 June 1994 http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/07/he-was-a-crook/308699/
	Lecture	**Opinion versus commentary, analysis, reviews and explainers** In this class we explore the research and writing principles commonly applied in polemical, analytical, explanatory and evaluative feature writing. How great writers "frame" their stories
	Tutorial	Students read each others story pitches and answer the following questions:

		1. What is your 800-word feature article (Assignment 1) going to be about? 2. Is it Commentary, Review, Opinion, Analysis or Explainer? 3. What background material or previously published stories have you gathered on this topic? (Provide story author, headline and publication only) 4. What does your story say or do that hasn't been said or done before by others. 5. Name relevant organisations and people with whom you have engaged in order to ensure that your opinions and analysis are informed by people closely involved with the topic. 6. What multimedia materials will you create or collect to enrich your story and boost its chances of being published? 7. Will you tell the story in 1st person or 3rd person? Explain the reasons for your choice.
Week 3: 17 June - 21 June	Homework	**PRE-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION** **PS3 (300 words)** submit a 300-word digest listing the facts, evidence and context for the arguments and observations you intend to make in your story. **Due date: 5 pm Monday 17 June 2019** BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham (2017) 'Gathering the Raw Material' Ch.5 AND Kremmer, C. (2014) *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "Ramadan: empty stomach, nourished soul".
	Lecture	**Feature structures**

	Tutorial	**Research Methods** Value adding and pressure testing the content, context and thesis of your feature article
Week 4: 24 June - 28 June	Homework	***A1 Feature Draft pre-class Portfolio submission PS4 (700-800 words) Due: 9 am Mon 24 June** BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 12 'Editing'
	Lecture	Editing
	Tutorial	GROUP ACTIVITY Editing Workshop
Week 5: 1 July - 5 July	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 7 'The subtle and slippery art of interviewing'
	Lecture	**Unpacking the News** News and issue-based features, profiles, lifestyle and trends reporting and follow ups.
	Tutorial	GROUP ACTIVITY **Interviewing for Features** Feature writers ask more and different questions than their colleagues in hard news. They find stories in the most unexpected people and places. This week we examine how to get the results you need from interviewing sources. Everyone has a story to tell. In this activity, students interrogate each other looking for the extraordinary and ordinary, everyday people's lives.

		IN-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 4 (300 words): Identify and eloborate on the story ideas you unearthed during the "Everyone is a Story" activity.
Week 6: 8 July - 12 July	Homework	POSTGRADUATE READING WEEK (NO CLASSES) ESSENTIAL READINGS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 8 'Seeing things for yourself'
	Fieldwork	Plan and commence interviewing, visits to relevant locations, and targeted research for Assignment 2
Week 7: 15 July - 19 July	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss: Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 10 'Leads, closes and that big lump in the middle' Laskas, Jeanne Marie (2012) "Guns 'R Us." GQ, September 2012, http://www.gq.com/story/gun-shopping-gq-september-2012 Clayton CHAPTER 3 'Step-by-Step Process for a Feature' (see Moodle Week 7 folder) 'Slum Housing' and 'Football Injuries' story (see Moodle Week 7 folder. Students should also access examples of their chosen feature genres in the GENRE LIBRARY on the Moodle course site.
	Lecture	**'Get some narrative into it'** Essential storytelling techniques to enhance reader engagement
	Tutorial	GROUP ACTIVITY In the class, students and tutors "road test" your feature for style, structure and substance
Week 8: 22 July - 26 July	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read, watch and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 11 'Wordcraft"

		'A Game of Shark and Minnow' http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/index.html
	Lecture	**'Get some media into it'** In addtion to crafting fine prose, today's news media content creators curate the reader experience with slideshows, multi-media storytelling, visual and interactive features, and data visualizations
	Tutorial	GROUP ACTIVITY Multimedia essentials, copyright and permissions **IN-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 5 (200-500 Words)** : Discuss how you will use multimedia in your story.
Week 9: 29 July - 2 August	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS: Read and prepare to discuss Ricketson & Graham CHAPTER 12 'Editing your story and getting published' Cohen, Roger (2015) "Charlie Hebdo's Multi-Million-Dollar Pile of Tragedy Money." Vanity Fair, August 2015. http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/07/charlie-hebdo-money-in-france
	Lecture	**Masters of Style in Writing and Editing** From leads to transitions, and quotations to persuasive conclusions
	Tutorial	Tutorial GROUP ACTIVITY Test your skills as an editor and proof-reader by running your eye over drafts of previous students' stories. Then read a fellow student's story draft and share your suggested improvements with fellow students and the class.
Week 10: 5 August - 9 August	Homework	BEFORE COMING TO CLASS **READ** *Newsworthy* website at www.newsworthy.org.au Roethel, Kathryn (2010) The Science (Not Art) of the Magazine Pitch, The Future of Freelance

		conference, Stanford University June 18-19, 2010. http://freelance.stanford.edu/reports/pitch/
		Week 10 Moodle readings folder: Pitch examples
		BRING TO CLASS: Five (5) copies of your 500-word story pitch. A pitch is a message to an editor that flags a story idea, and argues for your story's novelty, significance and appeal to the publication or program's target audience. Context should be explained by reference to previously published news media reports, articles and books, while novelty is established by highlights from your own reporting and interviewing.
	Lecture	**'Don't sell your soul, sell your story!'—The keys to successful pitching** How do aspiring feature writers convince editors to support their projects? This class explores the secrets of the successful "pitch".
	Tutorial	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY (PRESENTATIONS) Pitch your story to the Digital Editor of *Newsworthy* and get feedback from students and tutors before submitting their final pitch. Joining us in class will be Connie Levett, Foundation Editor of *Newsworthy*. INSTRUCTIONS: Each student comes to class ready to present their two-minute verbal story pitch. Ensure that you briefly answer the following questions: 1. What is your 1,500-word feature article (Assignment 2) about? 2. What genre have you written it in? 3. Who did you interview and what were their best quotes? 4. What does your story say or do that hasn't been said or done before by others? **IN-CLASS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION 6 (300 - 500 words) REVISE AND SUBMIT YOUR FINAL PITCH:** Before the end of Week Ten revise your pitch based on class, editor and tutor feedback, and include the 500 word revised written pitch as one of the pieces of work included in your Assignment Three (Portfolio) submission.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

All students must purchase the following textbook which is set reading in most weeks of this course:

Ricketson, M. & Graham C. (2017) *Writing Feature Stories: How to research and write articles from listicles to longform.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

This text is available at the University bookstore for purchase.

Recommended Resources

UNSW LIBRARY SERVICES

All Masters students are entitled to a consultation with one of the efficient and helpful RESEARCH LIBRARIANS at the UNSW Library on the main campus. Students of MDIA5006 are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to take advantage of this services. Students who have NOT sought and undergone a research consultation are missing an important opportunity to score higher grades in this research and writing course.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Enrolment in UNSW's PELE PROGRAM and range of free English conversation classes is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for students from English as a Second Language backgrounds.

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feeback is invited via the myExperience survey in the second half of term. Feedback from previous years has contributed to changes in curriculum and activities, and is an important part of the development and improvement of courses.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

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, assessment tasks 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.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

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/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

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.

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 (http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/). 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.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.
http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

Phone

https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/

Image Credit

The Beach. Photo credit: Christopher Kremmer 2017

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