ENGL3006 - Writing the Self
Course Outline

Course Coordinator
Dr Keri Glastonbury

Semester
Semester 1 - 2010

Unit Weighting
10

Teaching Methods
Seminar

Brief Course Description
Examines the theory and practice of autobiography through a study of techniques of writing the self, integrating literary analysis and creative writing in an exploration of the role of memory and imagination in reconstructing and shaping the past.

Contact Hours
Seminar for 2 Hours per Week  for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
ENGL3006: Writing the Self course readings. This is compulsory and must be purchased from UPrint (Level 1, Shortland Building) prior to the first class.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate
(1) a broad understanding of issues related to the shaping of the past in literature
(2) a detailed understanding of techniques involved in the construction of the self through memory and narrative
(3) core skills in written and oral communication, in textual analysis and in creative practice.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 1 - 2010

CTS Download Date: 8/2/10
Course Content
This course will explore the processes involved in writing about the self, integrating analysis of the autobiographical techniques of major writers with a practical understanding of the resources of the writer through workshop exercises and assignments. Particular attention will be paid to:
- The literary tradition of the autobiographical act
- The creation of self and identity in and through narrative
- The fictions that inform "autobiographical truth"
- The nature and role of memory in the structuring of experience
- The motives for memoir-writing

Assessment Items

| Essays / Written Assignments | 750-word discussion paper (15%) |
| Essays / Written Assignments | 750-word writing assignment (15%) |
| Essays / Written Assignments | 3000-word essay or 3000-word creative writing assignment or equivalent (70%) |
| Other: (please specify)      | Students must submit all assessment items in order to complete the course. |

Assumed Knowledge
20 units of English at 1000 level

Callaghan Campus Timetable
ENGL3006
Writing the Self
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 - 2010
Seminar Wednesday 9:00 - 11:00 [MCG28C]
or Wednesday 13:00 - 15:00 [MC132]

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;
b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;
c) reusing one's own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);
d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;
e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and
f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.
g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.
Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person’s ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Turnitin is an electronic text matching system. During assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or

- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).

- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS

Students can access the University’s policy at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM

All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in Late Penalty (under student) at the link above.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:

- applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

- whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS
University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au. As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability.

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

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<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>Dean of Students Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/</a></td>
<td>The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In doing this they provide information and advice and help students resolve problems of an academic nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/</a></td>
<td>Phone:02 4921 5806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/</a></td>
<td>Fax: 02 4921 7151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Dean-Of-Students@newcastle.edu.au">Dean-Of-Students@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards</td>
<td>University Complaints Managers Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html">www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html</a></td>
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</table>
This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

**Online Tutorial Registration:**

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html)

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

**Studentmail and Blackboard:** Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Important Additional Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
Assessment Questions:

a. 750 word writing assignment (15%) Due Wednesday April 14.

Questions (chose one):

- Make a personal zine, autobiographical comic or blog of your life. Pay particular attention to the materiality, aesthetic and idiomatic qualities of the medium. (If you are submitting a blog please provide me with both the URL and a hardcopy print out).

- Find a photograph of your parents/guardians (or either parent/guardian) taken before you were born and reflect on your encounter with this image in writing. Please include a scan or photocopy of the photograph with the piece.

- Choose one or two family photographs or self portraits from your childhood and include reproductions in your piece. What went on outside the frame and what telling signs can you read into the photographs that others can’t? What can you see (&/or what remains invisible) with hindsight? Question and interrogate the image(s) within the text.

2) 750 word discussion paper (15%) Due Wednesday May 5.

Question:

- Paul Auster sees ‘the act of writing as an act of memory’ (The Invention of Solitude). Discuss in relation to either: The Invention of Solitude (Auster) or ‘Relics’ (Berry).

3) 3000 word essay responding to one of the essay topics listed in the critical sections OR 3000 word creative writing assignment or equivalent (70%). Due Monday May 31st.

If you chose the critical option please answer one of the following questions:

- Written after his mother's death, Roland Barthes’ Camera Lucida is as much a reflection on death as it is on photography. Discuss.

- Examine the relationship between father and son in Paul Auster’s 'Portrait of an Invisible Man', from The Invention of Solitude &/or mother and daughter in A. M. Homes’ ‘The Mistress’s Daughter’. Discuss with reference to the particular tension between the objective and subjective self when writing about a parent.

- In what ways have autobiography, memoir and life writing proliferated beyond the boundaries of literary genres in contemporary DIY cultures? Discuss in relation to zines you have read. (NB: There is a community zine library at the Octapod and a zine shop called Bird In the Hand http://zineshop.com.au/about at 100 King St, Newcastle).

- Discuss the genre of the autobiographical graphic novel with reference to Marjane Satrapi’s Persepolis and Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home in terms of the writing and illustration of subversive personal and cultural histories.

- Discuss Vanessa Berry’s use of writing from everyday life in Strawberry Hills Forever.

- How does Jim Carroll exploit the diary form in The Basketball Diaries? What familiar adolescent narratives are at play? In what ways is the book also a memoir of a city and an era?

- ‘The advantage of autobiography as a historical genre is that it brings the past ‘up close and personal’.’ Penny van Toorn.

Discuss in relation to Indigenous life-writing in Australia.

- In an essay on Sylvia Plath, Seamus Heany writes that ‘the poet’s need [is] to get beyond ego in order to become the voice of more than autobiography. At the level of poetic speech, when this happens, sound and meaning rise like a tide out of language to carry individual utterance away upon a current stronger and deeper than the individual could have anticipated’.
Discuss with reference to Sylvia Plath's *Ariel*.

- 'We might expect if the death is sudden to feel shock. We do not expect this shock to be obliterative, dislocating to both body and mind. We might expect that we will be prostrate, inconsolable, crazy with loss. We do not expect to be literally crazy, cool customers who believe their husband is about to return and need his shoes'. Joan Didion

What is the ‘magical thinking’ Didion is referring to in the title of her book? How does Didion negotiate the contradictions of her grief using the cool ‘reportorial’ eye of personal journalism? How is she both mourner and reporter?

If you chose the creative option then you may submit a 3000 word creative work in any of the genres and forms that we have discussed in the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17/03/09</td>
<td>Parents / Psychodynamics. ‘The Invisible Man’, Paul Auster</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24/03/09</td>
<td>Parents / Psychodynamics 2. <em>The Mistress’s Daughter</em>, A.M. Homes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2-9 April</td>
<td>Easter / Mid-semester break</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Screening: <em>Persepolis</em>. Writing Assignment Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>21/04/09</td>
<td>Relics. <em>Strawberry Hills Forever</em>, Vanessa Berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>19/05/09</td>
<td>Grief. <em>The Year of Magical Thinking</em>, Joan Didion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>26/05/09</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>31/05/09</td>
<td>Final creative work due Monday 31st May.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 1: Introduction: Genre

Reading:

Week 2: Memory / Photographs

Readings:
Cindy Sherman. 'A Cindy Book'.

Creative Exercise:
- Bring some family photographs to class and be prepared to do some amateur psychoanalysis in groups. Write a short piece about a particular family photograph, while reflecting on the nature of photography and families more generally. (All weekly creative exercises should be no more than 2 A4 pages).

Week 3: Parents / Psychodynamics

Reading:
Paul Auster. ‘The Invisible Man’ from The Invention of Solitude

Creative Exercise:
- Write a piece reflecting on your relationship with your father (or a father figure).

Week 4: Parents / Psychodynamics

Readings:

Creative Exercise:
- Write a piece reflecting on your relationship with your mother (or a mother figure).

Week 5: Contemporary Forms (zines).

Reading:
You, Luke You (extract)
Anna Poletti. ‘Life Writing in Zines: Memory, Public Spaces and Intimacy’.

Screening:
100 dollars and a t-shirt: a documentary about zines in the Northwest.

Creative Exercise:
- Write a ‘Dear You’ letter (bring it to class in an envelope or paper bag to ‘trade’).

Week 6: Contemporary Forms (graphic novels)

Readings:
Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis (extract)
Alison Bechdel, Fun Home (extract)
Screening:
Persepolis

Creative Exercise:
- Draw a 5 panel comic about 5 years ago. For ideas see: http://comicrehab.wordpress.com/

Week 7: Relics

Reading:
Vanessa Berry. Strawberry Hills Forever (extract)

Creative Exercise
- Write a story about a teenage friendship.

Week 8: Diaries

Readings:
Jim Carroll. The Basketball Diaries (extract)
Sei Shonogan. The Pillowbook of Sei Shonogan

Creative Exercise:
- If you can find a teenage diary and you are happy to read from it, bring it into class; otherwise keep a ‘pillow-book’ for the week before class.

Week 9: Indigenous Life-writing

Reading:
Judi Wicks. ‘Never really heard of it’: the certificate of exemption and lost identity.

Screening:
Remembering Country (2000)

Creative Exercise:
- Write a short piece exploring a piece of missing history or identity in your family. If the questions can’t be answered, speculate.

Week 10: Confessional Poetry and Poetics

Reading:
Sylvia Plath from Ariel.

Creative Exercise:
- Re-write a poem in response to one of Sylvia Plath’s confessional poems.

Week 11: Grief

Reading:
Joan Didion. The Year of Magical Thinking (excerpt)

Creative Exercise:
- Chose a quote or short passage from The Year of Magical Thinking which resonates with you and put it at the top of your own reflective piece on grief/loss, letting it prompt your writing.

Week 12 Project Presentations
Recommended Reading


