

SOCA6330: Writing the Field of Equity

Online

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

Course Description Within professional and institutional equity diversity and inclusion writing is a key tool for producing effective change. However, though clear and effective communication is expected, rarely is the construction of equity, produced through the dominant conventions of writing, called into question. Drawing on critical theory and Indigenous methodologies, the students will be introduced to notions of storywork and writing as a deeply political process that reveals and masks important dimensions of equity, diversity and inclusion. The course aims to enhance students' understanding of the craft and social practices of researching, evaluating and writing across equity, diversity and inclusion contexts. It will provide students with a strong foundation for practicing the various forms of writing that are used in equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and implementation, and to develop this foundation within a strong ethical framing, underpinned by social justice methodologies.

Assumed Knowledge Undergraduate degree majoring in Social Science or related discipline or recognised prior learning or experience from relevant fields of practice.

Contact Hours **Online**
Online Activity
Online
1 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1
Participation in Canvas discussions and self-directed learning.

Unit Weighting Workload 10
Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Dr Matt Lumb Matt.Lumb@newcastle.edu.au Consultation: by appointment arranged via email
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences Social Sciences Building Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	This course examines: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Author situatedness and reflexivity; objectivity and subjectivity across different writing practices; ethics in writing.2. The construction and representation of groups associated with EDI through writing.3. Methods for inclusive writing for furthering equity, diversity and inclusion.4. Practical challenges and opportunities in advocating and representing others through writing.
Course Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appraise the challenges of writing in equity strategies and implementation, advocacy and research.2. Analyse the ways that social hierarchies, differences and inequalities are represented in written form in institutional, organisational and professional contexts, and how these enable and constrain different approaches to equity policy and practice.3. Identify and present equity case studies through a variety of formats, including posters, written and oral form.4. Design equity strategies using different modes of understanding of in-depth case studies and examine the implications of these for theory, policy and practice.
Course Materials	See the course website on Canvas for further details about readings and other learning materials.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Assessment Due
1	26 February	<p>The power and the personal in writing</p> <p>This week introduces the course, a context in which we will enter a sustained interrogation of the power and politics of writing and authorship. In this course we will consider why it is that we engage in writing, who is considered legitimate in terms of authorship, and how projects and people both constitute and/or are constituted by writing equity and social justice. We will consider together how academic writing can be considered a creative process, indeed a 'method of inquiry', in which we locate ourselves in our work, as a means of ethical exploration and inspiration. Drawing on critical, feminist and sociological histories of thought, we will consider, for example, the auto/biography of the question, and how authors might 'orchestrate the voices' and diverse perspectives of participants and communities within fields of equity and social justice.</p>	
2	4 March	<p>The messiness of writing</p> <p>When we read books, research reports, policy documents and journal articles writing can appear as a careful polished process effortlessly produced by talented writers. However these final products hide from readers all of the trials, frustrations, half scribbled notes and abandoned drafts that authors explored along the way. In this week, we explore this 'messiness' to provide deeper insight into the challenge of writing in the service of equity and social justice. We consider different ways to approach writing in equity and social justice. This week explores methods for writing abstracts and its value. We will also explore how to 'make time' for writing.</p>	
3	11 March	<p>A question of writing</p> <p>In this week we will look at how questions guide inquiry and how this often dictates who or what gets read, what gets written about, and by whom. We also ask what the consequences might be for equity and social justice through this dynamic. The week will explore how reading is an integral part of writing and we will discuss the challenges and opportunities of 'reading with a purpose'. This notion of which questions and problems are paid attention to and why, continues our discussion earlier in the course regarding the author's position / positionality – what are the consequences for equity and inclusion if the questions we hold, and the curiosities driving our projects, are derived often unconsciously from our social milieu? This week will also engage with some practical challenges when researching and writing the field of equity, including searching for academic papers and the trap of trying to do 'too much' in one piece of work.</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Due date: Monday 11 March</p>
4	18 March	<p>Form and content as inseparable</p> <p>This week reinforces the idea that 'form' (how we write) and 'content' (what we write) are inseparable when it comes to writing the field of equity and social justice. We will also explore how writing conventions that might seem neutral or well accepted,</p>	

		<p>'natural' even, are deeply shaped by the relations of power in each institutional and/or cultural context. The week will see us question why writing as a method is so often disconnected from discussions to do with methodology. We will examine multiple pieces of writing about equity, diversity and inclusion that differ across fields, and we will come to better understand these differences. In doing so, we will explore how this dynamic clearly has consequences for where a piece of writing might be acceptable for publication. This week will help students to understand the many types of research and publication that are constructing the field of equity, and we will look at how underlying every project are important commitments (implicit and explicit), and different ideas about 'rigour'.</p>	
5	25 March	<p>The construction of knowledge through writing: part 1</p> <p>In this week, we begin exploring the role of writing in the construction of knowledge. Writing is a process of recording that is central to claims of knowledge. As such, writing performs an important role in what has been called 'powerful' knowledge – the ability to generalise and synthesis 'principles' and 'laws' that apply broadly to a phenomenon. This process also places considerable power in writing and the author. This is important, as writing sets the stage for what we can 'know' about equity and social justice.</p>	
6	1 April	<p>The construction of knowledge through writing: part 2</p> <p>In this week, we continue to focus on knowledge. We consider challenging terrain for understanding who is able to make knowledge claims in relation to equity and social justice. We explore issues related to Indigenous knowledges and the way that colonial knowledges have displaced many other forms of knowing. We consider important movements, such as decolonisation and data sovereignty and how these contest and reshape knowledge claims in social justice movements.</p>	<p>Annotated bibliography</p> <p>Due date: Friday 5 April</p>
7	8 April	<p>The relations (of power) between reader, writer and written</p> <p>This week delves deeper into the idea of writing and reading as social practices; and part of a struggle over what is and can be meant by terms such as 'equity' and 'inclusion' in each context. We begin by considering why it is that writers construct readers in certain ways, arguably taking in and reproducing assumptions from the surrounding conditions. We then ask what responsibility the author might have to the reader in terms of making more explicit their own perspectives and commitments. Part of the responsibility we explore in this week takes account of the relations (of power) between writer and reader, in that readers commonly view writers as holding a powerful and knowledgeable position, with writers and teachers often reinforcing and/or sharing this view. Finally, the week takes account of how reading reconstructs a text and so we examine how there is no automatic transmission of meaning between writer and reader, again with consequences for equity and inclusion across institutional contexts.</p>	
Mid Semester Break (Mon 15 Apr – Fri 26 Apr)			
8	29 April	<p>Writing with care</p> <p>In this week we begin to explore specific ethical challenges and orientations related to writing and authorship. It is common to hear</p>	

		<p>about an author's ethical commitments, particularly when it comes to writing about equity and social justice problems, initiatives, even social movements. When different ethical orientations are brought into the practice of writing though – whether this be about social inequalities, and/or individuals or groups - numerous challenges emerge. For example, a common call to adopt an 'ethics of care' is made in arenas of equity and social justice; yet how are authors able to navigate normative judgments in writing practices such as what forms of carefulness will be desired by those being written, or written about, particularly if these representations are being made from a physical and/or social distance. This week raises questions of hierarchy, democracy and responsibility in relation to writing.</p>	
9	6 May	<p>Feminist epistemologies and approaches to writing</p> <p>This week brings an explicitly feminist politics to considerations of power, knowledge and inequality as they relate to writing and authorship in the fields of equity and social justice. Feminist theorisations and critiques have consistently challenged historically privileged frameworks that facilitate taken-for-granted writing practices which reconstruct gendered, racialised and classed divisions. This process of making legitimate and illegitimate certain knowledges and writing practices tends to exclude subjugated voices and perspectives, with clear implications for how representations emerge of and within fields of equity and social justice. This week foregrounds feminist epistemologies to explore and navigate how writers and writing processes - embedded as they are within structures of exclusion - need to acknowledge a politics of who is recognised as having the authority to engage in formal knowledge-formation.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Due date: Monday 6 May</p>
10	13 May	<p>Social media and other mediums</p> <p>In this week, we explore the importance of various contemporary forms of communication that shift the goalposts when we think about writing. For example, the explosion in new media and its role in conveying social justice messages has become central for 'getting the word out' – whether through the shortform of character-limited platforms, through to blogs and websites producing enormous volumes of texts on any and every topic. How do we approach these domains and understand the power of words and writing – especially when we see such how platforms can invite denigrative and toxic practices such as 'trolling'? Beyond this, we consider some of the other notable formats that have arrived in recent years that help to shape equity and social justice as a campaign, practice and theory.</p>	
11	20 May	<p>The political landscape of writing for publication</p> <p>In this week we take specific account of the politics of publication. We return to the idea of 'the field' to think about how writers position their work in relation to other material through publication, and how authors might attempt to 'make an impact' through persuasive language tools and strategic dissemination. We will interrogate the landscape of academic journals to consider the ugly and joyful aspects to publication in that context. We will consider the notion of 'impact' when it comes to publication in different contexts, bringing in the question of what counts as success when it comes to authorship in different forms. Specifically, we will look at strategies</p>	

		for compelling communication of equity and inclusion related writing, including the role of metaphor.	
12	27 May	<p>The consequences for equity and advocacy</p> <p>This final week of the course returns to and extends some of the key issues and debates we have encountered throughout the semester. A focus for the week will be reflecting on why we write, how this relates to our social location, and what this might mean for projects of equity and inclusion. This week we will also look at how certain approaches to writing engage with idea of the future and social change. We will look at creative and/or 'alternative' approaches to writing the field of equity and inclusion. We will consider ideas such as anticipation and hope in relation to reading and writing. The week will conclude by acknowledging practical challenges and opportunities that come with representing and advocating through writing.</p>	
13	3 June	No class	<p>Essay</p> <p>Due date</p> <p>Friday 7 June</p>
Semester 1 ends Friday 7 June			

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 4 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Abstract	Monday 11 March 11:59 PM	Individual	10%	1, 3
2	Annotated Bibliography	Friday 5 April 11:59 PM	Individual	20%	1, 2, 3
3	Presentation	Monday 6 May 11.59pm	Individual	25%	1, 2, 3
4	Essay or Report	Friday 7 June 11:59 PM	Individual	45%	1, 2, 3, 4

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Abstract

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	Writing an abstract is a tool for exploring an equity and social justice issue in a particular context.
Weighting	10%
Length	250-500 words
Due Date	Monday 11 March 11:59 PM
Submission Method	Online in Canvas
Assessment Criteria	See details provided online in Canvas
Return Method	Online in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online via feedback and summative mark on Canvas

Assessment 2 - Annotated Bibliography

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	Through engaging with a small volume of published material, students will describe the different ways equity and social justice issues are written and represented across different disciplinary formats.
Weighting	20%
Length	1000-1250 words
Due Date	Friday 5 April 11:59 PM
Submission Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online through Turnitin and a summative mark on Canvas

Assessment 3 - Presentation

Assessment Type	Presentation
Description	15 minute presentation submitted as video recording on Canvas with power-point slides. Students select an 'equity group' and describe how this category or group is being constructed and represented through writing. A brief analysis of the potential consequences is developed and an account of how these constructions and representations could be navigated differently through writing processes and practices is detailed.
Weighting	25%
Length	15 minutes, 5-10 slides
Due Date	Monday 6 May 11.59pm
Submission Method	Online via Canvas website
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Not returned
Feedback Provided	Online feedback and summative mark provided on the course website in Canvas

Assessment 4 - Essay or Report

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	This major essay is an opportunity for students to bring together and demonstrate their learning throughout the semester. In this assessment, students develop a sustained argument in essay form that responds to one of a group of questions drawn from course material.
Weighting	45%
Length	3500 words
Due Date	Friday 7 June 11:59 PM
Submission Method	Turnitin
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online feedback through Turnitin and summative mark on Canvas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development

		of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:

<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/no-room-for/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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