

ENGL2101: Writing Short Fiction

Online

Semester 1 - 2025



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

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.

OVERVIEW

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Course Description | Short fiction is often the first challenge in the creative writer's career and has become a vital component of major writing programs across the world. This course offers a practice-led approach to understanding and applying the techniques used to create short stories. Both the work of Australian and international writers, as well as the original writing of students, will be used to explore this foundational literary form. |
| Academic Progress Requirements | Nil |
| Contact Hours | Online Lectorial Online 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1 |
| 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

www.newcastle.edu.au

CRICOS Provider 00109J

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator **Online**
Dr Michael Sala
Michael.Sala@newcastle.edu.au
(02) 4921 8811
Consultation: Consultations available via email.

Teaching Staff Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.

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SYLLABUS

Course Content The course will cover the key aspects of short fiction including:

- different narrative modes
- concept development
- characterisation
- perspective
- plot and story structure
- line and structural editing
- genre

Course Learning Outcomes **On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Identify key writing elements used in short fiction.
2. Explain the techniques used by fiction writers.
3. Apply editorial processes to the development of written work.
4. Create works of short fiction that reflect an understanding of writing craft.

Course Materials All course materials available on the Canvas website.

SCHEDULE

| Week | Week Begins | Topic | Learning Activity | Assessment Due |
|------|-------------|---|---|----------------|
| 1 | 24 Feb | Structure 1—Structural fundamentals of the short story | 'Geometry Can Fail Us'—Leigh Alison Wilson, 'Oliver's Evolution'—John Updike | |
| 2 | 3 Mar | Structure 2—Foreground and background | 'The Paring Knife'—Michael Oppenheimer, Haruki Murakami. 'The Second Bakery Attack' | |
| 3 | 10 Mar | Structure 3: Transitions—Transitions through time and space | Peter Dickison. 'Eye into Eye' | |

| | | | | |
|---------------|--------|--|--|---|
| 4 | 17 Mar | Third Person 1—Objective third person | Robert Penn Warren. 'Christmas Gift' | |
| 5 | 24 Mar | Third Person 2—Subjective: One vantage point | A.S. Patric. 'Beckett & Son.' | |
| 6 | 31 Mar | Third Person 3—Subjective: Multiple vantage points | Lawrence Sargent Hall. 'The Ledge.' | |
| 7 | 7 Apr | First Person 1—Unreliable narration. | Ellen Van Neerven. 'Sound' | Short Creative Assignment due: Friday 11 th April 11:59pm |
| Recess | | | | |
| Recess | | | | |
| 8 | 28 Apr | First person 2—Intimacy | Denis Johnson. 'Two Men' | |
| 9 | 5 May | First Person 3—Voice and style | Gish Jen. 'Who's Irish' | |
| 10 | 12 May | A Sense of Play 1—The metafictional story | Ryan O'Neill. '17 Rules for a Short Story' | |
| 11 | 19 May | A Sense of Play 2—Third person omniscient | Tobias Wolf. 'Bullet in the Brain.' | |
| 12 | 26 May | A Sense of Play 3—Second person | Ilse Aichinger. 'Story in a Mirror.' | |
| 13 | 2 Jun | | | Long Creative Assessment due: Friday 6 th June 11:59pm. |
| Exams | | | | All quizzes close: We recommend that quizzes are completed in their relevant week but all quizzes will remain open until Friday 13 th June 11:59pm. No extensions are possible for quizzes beyond this date. |
| Exams | | | | |

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

| | Assessment Name | Due Date | Involvement | Weighting | Learning Outcomes |
|---|---------------------------|--|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Short Creative Assignment | Friday 11 th April 11:59pm | Individual | 30% | 2, 3, 4 |
| 2 | Long Creative Assignment | Friday 6 th June 11:59pm | Individual | 50% | 2, 3, 4 |
| 3 | Quizzes | We recommend that quizzes are completed in their relevant week but all quizzes will remain open until Friday 13 th June 11:59pm. No extensions are possible for quizzes beyond this date. | Individual | 20% (10 x 2%) | 1, 3 |

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 - Short Creative Assignment

Assessment Type Professional Task

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Description | Write a single short story that demonstrates your growing understanding of the form. This story may be the development of one of the creative prompts you have written and posted as part of the course. Try to capture some aspect of change, whether it occurs within a character or within the reader's understanding of that character. |
| Weighting | 30% |
| Length | 1000 words (+/-10%) |
| Due Date | Friday 11 th April 11:59pm |
| Submission Method | Online |
| Assessment Criteria | See Canvas for rubric. |
| Return Method | Online |
| Feedback Provided | Online - . |
| Opportunity to Reattempt | Students will not be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment. |

Assessment 2 - Long Creative Assignment

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Assessment Type | Professional Task |
| Description | Write a single short story that demonstrates your growing understanding of the form. This story may be the development of one of the creative prompts you wrote and posted as part of the course—but it must not have been submitted as an assessed assignment previously. (For example in Assessment 1). This story can also be an entirely new work. |
| Weighting | 50% |
| Length | 2000 words (+/-10%) |
| Due Date | Friday 6 th June 11:59pm |
| Submission Method | Online |
| Assessment Criteria | See Canvas for rubric. |
| Return Method | Online |
| Feedback Provided | Online - . |
| Opportunity to Reattempt | Students will not be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment. |

Assessment 3 - Quizzes

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Assessment Type | Quiz |
| Description | 11 knowledge consolidation quizzes that will aim to consolidate your understanding of writing craft within the context of the weekly topics and readings. While there are 11 quizzes, only the top 10 quizzes will be counted for assessment. |
| Weighting | 20% (10 x 2%) |
| Length | Approximately 30 mins each - 11 x Multiple choice quizzes, ten questions per quiz. |
| Due Date | Friday 13 th June 11:59pm |
| Submission Method | Online |
| Assessment Criteria | Multiple choice quiz - correct answers. |
| Return Method | Online |
| Feedback Provided | Online |
| Opportunity to Reattempt | Students will not be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment. |

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 | Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and |

| | | |
|-------|-----------|--|
| | (C) | 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.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision.

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.

Learning Analytics

The University uses an evidence-based approach to enhancing student learning and delivering support. Our careful analysis of data through learning analytics informs decision making processes related to student learning, academic outcomes, and support services. Learning analytics may be used to identify targeted individual opportunities for additional support services or interventions.

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 Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy

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.

Please refer to the [Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy](#)

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](#).

Use of generative artificial intelligence in course assessments

It is critical that any work submitted for assessment is your own original work. Before using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Microsoft Copilot, etc) in any assessable work you must ensure that such use is in line with the requirements for the course and expectations of your Course Coordinator

Misuse of AI tools may be considered a breach of the [University's Student Conduct Rule](#) and could result in disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence detection software may be used to review any work you submit. If you have used AI in any way other than has been expressly permitted by your course coordinator, you may be engaging in academic misconduct and be subject to penalties.

For information, refer to:

- [Generative AI Tools](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)

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/respect-at-uni/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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