

# English 252: Introduction to Creative Writing



**Semester 1, 2017**  
**University of Auckland**  
**Convenor: AP Selina Tusitala Marsh**  
**s.marsh@auckland.ac.nz**

*You ask whether your verses are any good. You ask me. You have asked others before this. You send them to magazines. You compare them with other poems, and you are upset when certain editors reject your work. Now (since you have said you want my advice) I beg you to stop doing that sort of thing. You are looking outside, and that is what you should most avoid right now. No one can advise or help you - no one. There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself. Find out the reason that commands you to write; see whether it has spread its roots into the very depths of your heart; confess to yourself whether you would have to die if you were forbidden to write. This most of all: ask yourself in the most silent hour of your night: must I write? Dig into yourself for a deep answer. And if this answer rings out in assent, if you meet this solemn question with a strong, simple "I must," then build your life in accordance with this necessity; your whole life, even into its humblest and most indifferent hour, must become a sign and witness to this impulse.*

(Rainer Maria Rilke 'Letters to a Young Poet')

## **English 252: Introduction to Creative Writing Course Pack**

Syllabus	3
Workshop Participation	4
Portfolios A & B	5
Writer's Workbook	8
Canvas/Email/Extension Policy	11
Student Support	13
<b>Lecture &amp; Exercise Schedule</b>	<b>16-18</b>
Creative Non Fiction	19
Poetry	24
Multimedia	31
Short Fiction	36
Template for Exercises	44

Convener: Selina Tusitala Marsh, English Department, Rm 647, Arts 1. Office hours by appointment. Email: [s.marsh@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:s.marsh@auckland.ac.nz)

Lecturers: Paula Morris

Guests: Lisa Samuels, Frankie McMillan (awarded at the University of Auckland Residency at the Michael King Writers' Centre)

Tutors:

Ruby Porter ([rpor694@aucklanduni.ac.nz](mailto:rpor694@aucklanduni.ac.nz))

Michele Leggott ([m.leggott@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:m.leggott@auckland.ac.nz))

Lecture: Wed 3-5pm, 303/102 (Science/Maths/Physics), Room 102

Workshops: sign up through SSO and check venue

Workshop 1: Thurs 11-12 (Arts1, 314)

Workshop 2: Fri 4-5 (Arts1, 314)

Workshop 3: Thurs 4-5	(Arts1, 302)
Workshop 4: Fri 9-10	(Arts1, 314)
Workshop 5: Fri 11-12	(Arts1, 302)
Workshop 6: Fri 1-2	(Arts1, 314)

Please note: Extra office hours will be run for Friday workshops cancelled due to University closure on Good Friday.

## **SYLLABUS**

So, you wanna write...better? This course offers you a taster, a smorgasbord of four writing genres in the belief that different forms of writing are instructive for all writing practice. We will cover Creative Non Fiction, Poetry, Multimedia, and Short Fiction. Classes are based on three activities:

- exploration
- examination
- expression

in other words:

- reading
- thinking and talking
- writing and re-writing

To this end, in our **2 hour lectures** you will examine a genre and its numerous forms, discuss various techniques and approaches, read and/or watch a stimulating piece on the genre, respond to learnings with an exercise to be further developed both in your own time and in the peer reviewed context offered in workshops.

In order to engage fully with the material and each other, please prepare for class by doing the allocated reading and exercises BEFORE classes. Supplemental materials may be given out in class and/or posted on CANVAS.

## **ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**

This is a 100% internally assessed course – there is NO EXAM. There is ONE FINAL HAND IN at the end of semester. Your Final Grade is based on the end of term submission of **Portfolio A (40%)**, **Portfolio B (40%)**, and your semester-long **Workshop Participation (20%)**.

<b>WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION = 20%</b>
-------------------------------------

There are 10 one-hour workshops, each worth 2%, totalling a fifth of your final grade.

When you sign up for 252 you are implicitly agreeing to make your work available for critique – otherwise you would write privately in your own space. Sharing, showing, and telling are key to creating a culture of free-flowing, reciprocal feedback. Creative practice pedagogies commonly emphasize **process-oriented formative feedback** (feedback as you go along, informing draft writing and enabling progressive improvements during creation) over product-oriented summative feedback (feedback given after the completed, final product has been handed in with little opportunity for creative response or enhancement).

To this end, we place an emphasis on feedback throughout the semester and with one final hand in date you will have ample opportunity to continue to work on your writing pieces throughout the term. You will receive feedback that is vocal (responses from your tutor and peers to the reading out loud of your written work in workshops) and written (on drafts returned from your tutor and your peers). This is crucial for a rich engagement with this course. *Please see your tutor if you have any issues that might prevent engagement of this nature.*

A typical workshop might run as follows:

A genre-specific exercise is set for the workshop where you are asked to respond to a writing prompt in the workshop. You will read out your piece to the class. You will receive comments on it as per the GIG guide below. You will be asked to work on the piece, in light of the feedback, and bring a hardcopy draft of 100 words in length of polished, typed up writing to hand into your tutor in the next workshop. **USE THE TEMPLATE AT THE END OF THIS COURSEPACK for your set draft exercise.** This piece of draft writing will be date stamped upon hand in and returned with written feedback from your tutor in the following workshop. **KEEP YOUR DATE-STAMPED DRAFTS IN A SAFE PLACE** – they are worth marks! **You will be required to include ALL date-stamped drafts in your Final submission** (see Portfolios A & B).

Your classmates depend on your instructive feedback, just as you depend on theirs. Giving feedback is as instructive as receiving it, so, **DO THE EXERCISES, DO THE READING, COME PREPARED TO GIVE AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK.**

An important aspect of participation is being willing and prepared to constructively critique your classmates' writing, and to receive constructive criticism of your own work. This is one way in which we develop editorial skills as writers.

Some find it helpful to use the GIG guide: Say something good, something to improve on, and how to go on:

**G**ood

**I**mprovement

**G**o on – how to go on (next step / feed-forward)

When the workshop is reading student writing, you should work hard to help identify *the effects* of that writing and to *suggest alternatives*. The better you can identify what someone else is writing, the better you can identify how writing works in general. This skill will also help your own writing. Consider:

- what are the work's strengths? Why?
- what areas might the work be improved? How?
- what are some experiments or exercises that might open up the work?

Your tutor will provide further guidelines for workshop considerations appropriate to each genre.

**Your ten weeks of workshop participation (20%) is worth half of one of your Portfolios.** It is important to be on time, be prepared for your workshops and pay your tutor the courtesy of an email regarding any impending absences. It is your responsibility to catch up on work in missed tutorials and make arrangements with your tutor should your absence be acceptable to them (ie, illness, accident, unforeseen personal circumstances). The key is to **COMMUNICATE** with your tutor – they are there to help.

#### **UPDATED FOR 252 COURSEPACK**

#### **PORTFOLIOS A & B (Total 80%)**

This is your **Final Submission** and, with the exception of Multimedia records uploaded on Canvas, formal pieces must be printed out with barcoded cover sheets attached and uploaded via Canvas. There are 2 parts to your Final Submission.

**Portfolio A (40%):** You must choose between **EITHER** a 1,500 word piece of Creative Non Fiction (worth 30%) **OR** 1,500 words or a sequence of up to 6 poems (worth 30%). You must also submit the 4 date-stamped 100 word drafts plus your revisions in response using the template supplied at the back of this coursepack for both Creative Non Fiction and Poetry (worth 2.5% each, totalling 10%). Do not submit both Creative Non Fiction and Poetry – only one (the first to be read) will be graded. So, **EITHER**

- **Final Submission: Creative Non Fiction (1500 words), plus**

**2 Creative Non Fiction date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response and 2 Poetry date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response**

**Or**

- **Final Submission: Poetry (1500 words or a sequence of up to 6 poems), plus 2 Creative Non Fiction date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response and 2 Poetry date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response**

**Portfolio B (40%):** You must choose between **EITHER** a piece/s of Short Fiction, 1,500 words in total (30%) **OR** produce a Multimedia piece (1,500 words in total) (30%). You must also submit the 4 date-stamped 100 word drafts plus your revisions in response using the template supplied at the back of this coursepack for both Multimedia and Fiction (worth 2.5% each, totalling 10%). Do not submit both Multimedia and Fiction – only one (the first to be read) will be graded. So, **EITHER**

- **Final Submission: Multimedia + Letter (1,500 words), plus 2 Multimedia date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response and 2 Short Fiction date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response**

**Or**

- **Final Submission: Short Fiction (1500 words in total), plus 2 Multimedia date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response and 2 Short Fiction date-stamped drafts plus your revisions in response**

**DUE MONDAY 12 JUNE 3PM**

**NB:** Extensions are beyond your tutor's control and must be submitted to the Head of Disciplinary Area for approval. Such extensions are therefore, not guaranteed, even with documentation. *Unexcused late work will not be marked.* See Departmental Extension Policy on page 11.

### **EXPLANATION OF PORTFOLIO WRITING SUBMISSIONS**

Writing Submissions showcase the endpoint of your reading, thinking and writing concerning a specific genre.

### 1) Creative Non Fiction



Word count: 1,500. Complete one Creative Non Fiction exercise in the coursepack to Final Submission standard.

### 2) Poetry



Word count: 1,500 total. This word count can be divided amongst as many poems as you wish (for eg, one long poem, or up to a sequence of 6 poems. These may be in different lengths, and must evidence at least **2 different styles of poetry**, for example, a free verse poem and a sonnet; a spoken word poem and a sequence of haiku (at least 5).

### 3) Multimedia



Word count: 1,500. Bring 1 of the 7 assignments in the Multimedia section of this coursepack to final submission standard. The word count may be combined with your alternative media however you wish and includes your mandatory Letter (exegesis) explaining its transaesthetic qualities (see Letter example). Scores for performances, scripts, planning notes, storyboards, may all be included in the word count.

You will **not** need to physically submit the actual item.

You will need to upload visual records of your piece to Canvas for assessment. Please submit the Letter to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Reception, along with uploading it to Canvas.

You may be invited to showcase your piece in workshops. The final lecture features our popular Multimedia Exhibition and you will be invited to bring your piece to display.

### 4) Short Fiction



Word count: 1,500. To be divided however you wish, ie, 1 long story, or 2 shorter stories, a sequence of flash fictions etc.

## IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All University assignments now require barcoded coversheets when submitted. Instructions on how to generate a coversheet can be found under 'Resources' in Canvas for 252. Please **hand in and collect your assignments at the level 3 reception, Arts1 Building**. The department cannot accept assignments without this barcoded coversheet.

## **FINAL WEEK**

Multimedia Exhibition: Due to popular demand, this lecture has been designed to showcase students' Multimedia submissions. It is a chance to display your work. On a folded A4 sheet of paper (your display placard) you will write a brief description of what you are able to exhibit (not all MM submissions will be exhibitable, ie, live performance, but it will have been recorded in some way, shape or form). On the other side of your paper you will 'tweet' (under 140 characters) your concept in a way that hooks in viewers.

## **The Habit of Creative Writing**

<b>The 11 week WRITER'S WORKBOOK Challenge!</b>
---

We believe in the value of a **Workbook**. We challenge you to keep one for the duration of this course and (almost) guarantee that you will be richly (figuratively) rewarded for it!

Your Workbook must be brought to all lectures and workshops as you will be called upon from time to time to share your latest musings, notes, scribbles, drawings, ideas, and mindmaps in lectures and in workshops. Some students may find this challenging, but it has proven to be a popular component in lectures and workshops. Students often end up taking more than the 45 seconds of show and tell time (they flip through some pages on the Document Camera). We work to create a fun and safe atmosphere for all. *Please see your tutor if you are particularly anxious about this component.*

A Workbook might be a 1B5 exercise book, a flip file, a journal, or an expensive Moleskine -- whatever you can keep most draft work, exercises, all notations, miscellanea, musings, doodlings, experimentations, observations, pasted in material of interest, diagrams, etcetera. Even if you do your primary writing on a laptop -- as I do -- this will become a valuable resource for you in terms of collecting physical inspiration in one place and being able to peruse through it regularly.

This material should be added to and worked on regularly over our semester together. This Workbook evidences your engagement with the course, to your tutor, your peers, and your self.



There is no assessment attached to the Workbook but it **may be taken into consideration for entry into Writing Poetry (343) and Writing Creative Prose (344).**

Keep in mind, on average, a 15 point undergraduate course = 10 hours per week of work for an average pass. You have 3 contact hours in lectures and workshops, leaving you 7 hours of reading, writing, and thinking to put into your Workbook.

### **MORE ON KEEPING A WRITER'S WORKBOOK**

Your Writer's Workbook is a 'work' book. It is an organic journal where you will collect and record all your workings, all exercises, all draft work, all experiments, all imaginings, all craft-related thoughts, all creative musings, all recordings and responses to your environment. It is to be a busy hive of imaginative creativity for the next 11 weeks and should be portable and accompany you everywhere. We reiterate: you need to bring this to lectures and workshops. We believe that workbooking encourages a culture of observation, critique, playful musings and is core to ongoing creative writing practice. Subsequently no two WW&Ps will be the same, and everyone is interested in the creative practice of others.

### **Common Questions about the Writer's Workbook:**

*But what do I put in it?*

Ideally, the Workbook is a repository for 'life' as you are attuned to it. Record sources of inspiration such as, but not limited to:

- quotes from books
- graffiti under a bridge
- overheard conversations on the bus
- cultural news
- urgent self-generated words
- catchy or thought provoking phrases
- newspaper titles
- ideas for a short story
- character observations
- a line that drops into your head
- an interesting turn of phrase you read
- authors and book titles
- intriguing sentences
- interesting language
- diagrams for plot structure
- appealing colours, textiles and movements

- dreams and synchronous moments
- diagrams and drawings

Write down, record and observe anything that might be used for your creative writing.

*What if I write on a laptop?*

Expand your practice. Print it out (and its various drafts – use track changes), paste it in or clip it into a binder if you like. Learn to work on paper and on screen. You can't stick an interesting fortune cookie message on your screen, but you can do it on the page, block it out, comment in the margin, and 'mess around' with it.

*What if I'm not into scrapbooking?*

The Writer's Workbook is not a scrapbook – it does not have to be aesthetically pleasing. It is an open, loosely organised canvas for your critical and creative writings, responses and musings. By all means stick in pictures, images, textures (sand/velvet/glass), and materials (bus tickets/leaflets/stones) that evoke ideas, notions, senses, affective centres, but it IS NOT a diary of your life. It is a recording of your sensory gathering of the world around you – what you see, hear, READ, understand, don't understand, taste, and touch. It is to be mined for writing ideas and forms; it is to be the 'sounding board' for various techniques, structures, plot devices and so forth.

*What if I'm not arty?*

The desired aesthetic for the Writer's Workbook is one that evokes a busy, active mind - often times, it's not a pretty sight. That being said, it is your workbook to customize according to your taste – make it yours.

*What if I am doing it wrong or get behind?*

Your tutor will request to see your Workbook and will give you feedback.

*What if I'm disorganised?*

Get organised over the next 11 weeks. Give your inner writer a break and create a rich, stimulating, organised place to call 'home'. Find a system that works for you. Even if you tend to write and record on Starbucks serviettes, you can find ways to attach them to your Workbook.

*What are the deadlines and time management?*

There is one final, immovable deadline for this course – the last day of lectures. It is **strongly advised** that you work on and complete exercises for all of the four genres *as we move through them in the course* and work on them in workshops.

We will spend approximately 3 weeks on each genre. You should aim to have your final submission final draft completed before we begin the next genre. TIME is the best editor. Leaving your work to rest and marinate enables you to

override familiarity and approach it with fresh eyes. We recommend this as a practice.

*What are they good for?*

You, your practice as a writer, and should you want to pursue creative writing further at Stage 3 and MA level, your workbook *may be used towards eligibility assessment*. Workbooking is a creative writing practice encouraged at this University.

### **Canvas/Email/Extension Policy**

This coursepack is posted on CANVAS under Resources for you to download and/or print and bring to class. It is also available for purchase at UBS. It is required reading and, like the your Workbook, should be brought to all lectures and workshops. This coursepack and any handouts given out in class or posted on Canvas are crucial for successful participation and for pursuing your writing assignments. You are responsible for retaining your coursepack, handouts, and any assignments distributed via Canvas and/or in lecture and/or in workshops. Access to email and to Canvas are requisite for the course.

### **Expectations/Technology/Courtesy/Extensions**

Students can expect three kinds of learning experience in this class.

A two hour 'lectorial'. The first half will focus on aspects of genre and technique. The second half will include in-class exercises designed to get students writing – solo and with classmates – by focusing on particular inspirations and generative exercises.

Please note that workshops, held for an hour per week from weeks 2 - 11, will consist of smaller groups (approx. 20-25 students). These workshops are shaped by the expertise and creative bent of your tutors and your particular class culture.

Tutors will help students compose and revise in different genres; you may also write and/or critique in pairs or small groups. The freedom to individuate workshops exercises may be modified) is important for the health and inspiration of this kind of creative course. *Unless otherwise stated, the exercises in this coursepack are suggested activities for your own experimentations. The set exercises in workshops should be the beginning rather than the culmination of your own explorations.*

Your writing time. This class is designed for self-motivated students who can take assignments and explanations into their own writing spaces and create and revise with the techniques on offer and with their own ideas. As the workshops individuate from the lecture, so each student individuates. It is crucial for you to

take responsibility for your creativity and productivity. Regularly feed your Workbook. Read books in multiple genres and mixed genres; attend writing events (LOUNGE; book launches, mini writing festivals) and writing-related activities. Read your own writing aloud to yourself and to friends as you revise. These and other techniques will help you become a keen and ready writer.

Some of you will bring ongoing projects into 252. You may want to continue developing a manuscript or an idea. This is fine, however, please note: ***only work produced within the course semester may be submitted for marking.***

### **Technology and Courtesy**

When it functions correctly, email is an instantaneous communication device. This feature does not mean that the email recipient can or must instantly reply. Your teachers for this course will ordinarily be able to read a message from you within 48 hours and reply within 72. Occasionally we may be unable to respond that swiftly, and frequently we may reply sooner. We will extend the same reply time-line courtesy to all students.

Please do not use iPods, cell phones, pagers, or any other such devices during class time. Please do not Facebook in class. If you have an emergency situation that requires you to be contactable on a given day, please let your teacher(s) know before class begins so that we can be prepared for the possibility of a momentary interruption.

During the lectures, each of you is as available for regard as is your lecturer (i.e., we CAN see you). Once the class is underway, be courteous and help make the lecture space a rich field for learning: pay attention, write down relevant terms and ideas, write down your questions so that you can ask them, don't engage in unrelated & prolonged conversations with seatmates, etc. During workshops, you are expected to engage actively with the writing and reading assignments and with discussion.

### **Departmental policy on Extensions and Late Work**

#### **LATE WORK WITHOUT AN EXTENSION WILL NOT BE MARKED**

English requires the timely submission of all coursework.

If you are unable to hand in an assignment by the due date, you must put your case for an extension to the convenor; if an extension is granted, you must attach to your submitted coursework EITHER an Extension Request Form bearing the new submission date and signature of the staff member, OR a document such as an email from the staff member. Extensions will only be granted for compelling reasons, such as illness, or other unforeseen emergencies, and a Doctor's certificate (or equivalent) must be provided to the staff member concerned. An extension must be requested in advance of the due date for the assignment,

unless there is a genuine cause preventing this, in which case the extension should be sought as soon as is practicable after the due date. Any work handed in late without an extension will not be marked.

What this means: Essays (without approved extensions) recorded as 'received' after the due date will be designated 'late' and will not be marked.

The only way to ensure your essay is recorded as 'received' on the due date is to submit the essay by 3pm that day. The office closes shortly afterwards.

## **SUPPORT**

### **Disabilities Accommodation Statement**

If you have a condition that impairs your ability to satisfy course criteria, please meet with the convenor and with your tutor to discuss feasible instructional accommodation. Accommodation can be provided only for a documented disability. Please tell your convenor about such circumstances by the second week of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability is diagnosed.

Contact Disability Services for more information:

<http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/about/eo-equal-opportunities/eo-disability-services>

or 373 7599 ext 88808.

### **Student Support Service Health and Counselling**

If you need support in any way, shape or form, you'll find support and care here:

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/student-health-counselling.html>

### **Staff Student Consultative Committee**

The English Department maintains an active SSCC, with 2-3 meetings per semester. At the first lecture, 2 students will be asked to volunteer to represent their ENGL 252 peers to the SSCC.

### **Required Information from The University of Auckland**

#### **1. The University's Statement on Plagiarism.**

The University of Auckland will not tolerate cheating, or assisting others to cheat, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student's work, reflecting his or her learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the

world-wide web. A student's assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection mechanisms. Upon reasonable request, students may be required to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review. For more detailed information, see the University's guidelines on the conduct of Coursework at [www.auckland.ac.nz/uoahome/about/teaching-learning/policies-procedures](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoahome/about/teaching-learning/policies-procedures)

## 2. Complaint Procedures

In the first instance, students or the class representative should take any concerns they have with their course delivery or assessment to the lecturer or tutor or convener concerned. Students or staff may approach the Mediator's Office or the Student Advocacy Network at any time for assistance. In the event that the matter is not resolved satisfactorily at an informal level, students or the class representative should approach the Head of Department with a formal statement of their complaint. For more detailed information, see the University guidelines regarding Student Learning and Grievance procedures at: [www.auckland.ac.nz/uoahome/about/teaching-learning/policies-procedures](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoahome/about/teaching-learning/policies-procedures) AUSA also offers advice on grievance and harassment issues. See the AUSA website's 'Need Help?' section for further information.

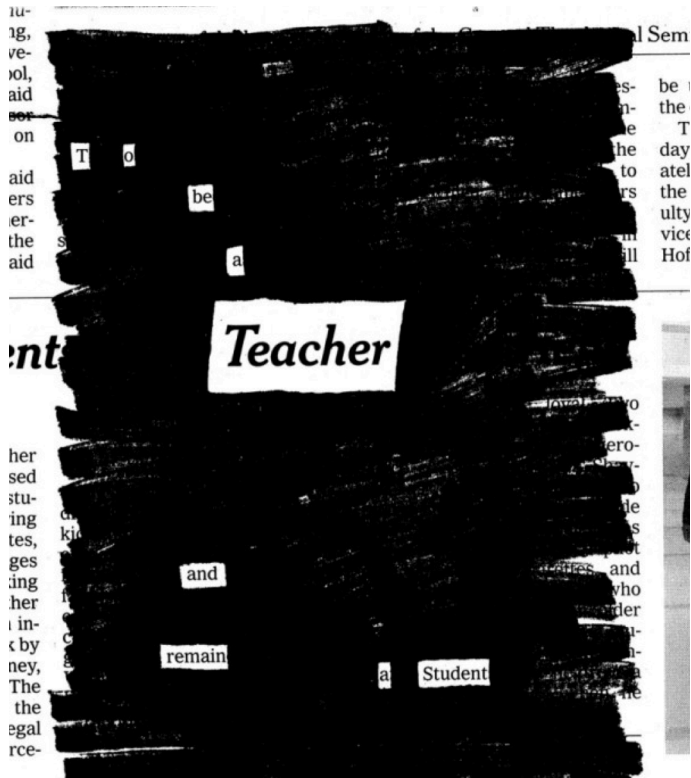
## 3. Other sources of information and assistance.

Guides to Library sources for all undergraduate papers in English are available from the Learn home page: follow the links from Resources By Subject / Arts / English. Announcements and Resources for this paper are regularly posted on CANVAS. The University's policy is that all communication with students is via their university email address—please check your university email address regularly.

\* \* \*

*Some writers confuse authenticity, which they ought always to aim at, with originality, which they should never bother about.* (W.H. Auden)

[<http://austinkleon.com/> see June 14, 2015]



All readings set for lectures will either be in this coursebook, posted on Canvas or given out in lectures. In cases of absence, it is your responsibility to contact your tutor or fellow classmates to update yourself. This schedule is subject to moderate change. You are responsible for noting any changes made during class and/or posted on Canvas.



**LECTURE AND  
EXERCISE SCHEDULE****CONVENOR:**  
**Selina Tusitala Marsh**  
**Room 647, Arts 1****ENGLISH 252:  
INTRODUCTION TO  
CREATIVE WRITING  
SCHEDULE SEM 1  
2017****TIME:**  
**WED 3-5pm****PLACE:**  
**303/102****Room 102**

Week	Date (lectures in red)	Topic	Lecturer
1	6 Mar - 8 Mar	So you wanna write...right? Magic formula: T + S + M = W Course overview, expectations & assessment  Writing	Selina Tusitala Marsh
2	13 Mar - 15 Mar	<b>Creative Non Fiction</b>  <b>WS 1:</b> CNF EX 1 handed out	Paula  <b>1<sup>ST</sup> week of Workshops (10 in total)</b>
3	20 Mar - 22 Mar	<b>Creative Non Fiction</b>  <b>WS 2:</b> CNF EX 1 handed in CNF EX 2 handed out	Paula
4	27 Mar - 29 Mar  29 Mar LOUNGE READING # 54, 5.30pm, Black Friars...	<b>Creative Non Fiction</b>  <b>WS 3:</b> CNF EX 1 returned CNF EX 2 handed in	Paula
5	3 Apr - 5 Apr	<b>Poetry</b>  <b>WS 4:</b> CNF EX 2 returned P EX 1 handed out	Selina

		FRI TUTS: P EX 1&2 hand out	
<b>6</b>	10 Apr - 12 Apr  12 Apr LOUNGE READING # 55, 5.30pm  <b>MID SEM BREAK</b> <b>EASTER: GOOD</b> <b>FRIDAY NO</b> <b>WORKSHOPS</b> 14 Apr - 29 Apr (see extra office hours as arranged with tutor)	<b>Poetry</b>  <b>WS 5:</b> P EX 1 handed in P EX 2 handed out	Guest: Michael King Writers' Centre Writer in Residence: Frankie McMillan  & Selina
<b>7</b>	1 May - 3 May	<b>Poetry</b>  <b>WS 6:</b>  P EX 1 returned P EX 2 handed in  FRI TUTS: P EX 1&2 hand in  MM EX 1 handed out	
<b>8</b>	8 May - 10 May	<b>Multimedia</b>  <b>WS 7:</b> P EX 2 returned  FRI TUTS: P EX 1&2 returned  MM EX 1 handed in MM EX 2 handed out	Selina
<b>9</b>	15 May - 17 May	<b>Multimedia</b>	Guest: Lisa Samuels and

		<b>WS 8:</b>  MM EX 1 returned MM EX 2 handed in  SF EX 1 handed out	Window Exhibition
<b>10</b>	22 May - 24 May	<b>Short Fiction</b>  <b>WS 9:</b>  MM EX 2 returned  SF EX 1 handed in SF EX 2 handed out	Paula
<b>11</b>	29 May - 31 May  31 May LOUNGE READING # 56, 5.30pm	<b>Short Fiction</b>  <b>WS 10 (FINAL):</b>  SF EX 1 returned SF EX 2 handed in	Paula
<b>12</b>	5 June - 7 June  <b>DUE MON 12 JUNE, 3PM</b>  <b>PORTFOLIO A:</b>  <b>CNF FINAL OR POETRY FINAL + 2 CNF DATE STAMPED DRAFTS &amp; 2 REVISIONS; AND 2 POETRY DATE</b>	<b>Short Fiction</b>  Multimedia Exhibition Evaluations Future options in Creative Writing  SF EX 2 returned in lectures	Paula  Selina

**STAMPED DRAFTS &  
2 REVISIONS**

**PORTFOLIO B: MM OR  
SHORT FICTION  
FINAL + 2 MM DATE-  
STAMPED DRAFTS &  
2 REVISIONS AND 2  
SF DATE-STAMPED  
DRAFTS & 2  
REVISIONS**

**Note:** 'DRAFTS' = your date-stamped draft returned in class + your revision done in your own time in response to your returned draft.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course students will:

- be familiar with the broad technical terrain of 4 genres of writing (Poetry, Multimedia, Creative Non Fiction, Short Fiction)
- be able to apply and experiment with techniques specific to each genre
- will gain an appreciation of how each genre might inform the other
- keep a high-level Writer's Workbook
- give and receive constructive criticism based on the GIG model



**CREATIVE NON FICTION: True Stories, Well Told**

*Tell all the Truth but tell it Slant –  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bring for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise  
As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind –*

(Emily Dickinson)

This section of the course is an overview of the currents within contemporary creative nonfiction, from the personal essay to nature, travel, political and science writing; from its roots in New Journalism to its myriad short-form possibilities. Many of the techniques you'll be exploring relate to fiction as well (narrative structure, characterisation, etc).

In class we'll study the Truman Capote excerpt (from *In Cold Blood*) included in this coursebook, as well as selected pieces from your required text, the most recent edition of *Tell You What*. You should bring this book and your coursebook to all three CNF lectorials (March 15, 22 and 29).

**Required Text:**

*Tell You What: Creative New Zealand Nonfiction 2017*, eds Jolisa Gracewood, Susanna Andrew. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2016.

Excerpted from *The David Foster Wallace Reader*, a syllabus from one of David Foster Wallace's fiction seminars.

Pomona College / English 183D Spring, 2008

Wednesdays, 7:00–10:00, Crookshank 207

Inst: David Wallace

### Description of Class

English 183D is a workshop course in creative nonfiction, which term denotes a broad category of prose works such as personal essays and memoirs, profiles, nature and travel writing, narrative essays, observational or descriptive essays, general-interest technical writing, argumentative or idea-based essays, general-interest criticism, literary journalism, and so on. The term's constituent words suggest a conceptual axis on which these sorts of prose works lie. As nonfiction, the works are connected to actual states of affairs in the world, are "true" to some reliable extent. If, for example, a certain event is alleged to have occurred, it must really have occurred; if a proposition is asserted, the reader expects some proof of (or argument for) its accuracy. At the same time, the adjective creative signifies that some goal(s) other than sheer truthfulness motivates the writer and informs her work. This creative goal, broadly stated, may be to interest readers, or to instruct them, or to entertain them, to move or persuade, to edify, to redeem, to amuse, to get readers to look more closely at or think more deeply about something that's worth their attention. . . or some combination(s) of these. Creative also suggests that this kind of nonfiction tends to bear traces of its own artifice; the essay's author usually wants us to see and understand her as the text's maker. This does not, however, mean that an essayist's main goal is simply to "share" or "express herself" or whatever feel-good term you might have got taught in high school. In the grown-up world, creative nonfiction is not expressive writing but rather communicative writing. And an axiom of communicative writing is that the reader does not automatically care about you (the writer), nor does she find you fascinating as a person, nor does she feel a deep natural interest in the same things that interest you. The reader, in fact, will feel about you, your subject, and your essay only what your written words themselves induce her to feel. An advantage of the workshop format is that it will allow you to hear what twelve reasonably intelligent adults have been induced to think and feel about each essay you write for the course.

[http://www.salon.com/2014/11/10/david\\_foster\\_wallaces\\_mind\\_blowing\\_creative\\_nonfiction\\_syllabus\\_this\\_does\\_not\\_mean\\_an\\_essayist%E2%80%99s\\_goal\\_is\\_to\\_share\\_or\\_express\\_herself\\_or\\_whatever\\_feel\\_good\\_term\\_you\\_got\\_taught\\_in\\_h/](http://www.salon.com/2014/11/10/david_foster_wallaces_mind_blowing_creative_nonfiction_syllabus_this_does_not_mean_an_essayist%E2%80%99s_goal_is_to_share_or_express_herself_or_whatever_feel_good_term_you_got_taught_in_h/)

**Adam Dudding's Recommended Readings (stolen from email comms between Adam and myself (Selina) but he can't help but write energetically, casually yet so informatively, that is tone, is in itself, quite instructive - thanks Adam! Btw, when 'Adam' seems to refer to himself in third person, that's actually my voice mucking around in there.**

1: 'The Killing of Rosemaree Kurth'

Feature article for the Sunday Star-Times about a terrible murder in Taranaki. My small attempt at an *In Cold Blood* narrative, though I ended up making all sorts of compromises on that front, because I'm not Truman Capote. 3400w but a brisk read.

2: 'The Funeral'

Chapter from my memoir-in-progress [now published as *My Father's Island*]. This is definitely CNF rather than journalism-with-extra-adjectives, but not as racy as the murder story. 4500w

Some of Adam's fave CNF pieces [change of pov, Selina's voice]:

\* *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote. The story of a terrible meaningless American murder in the 1950s. Incredible book that changed non-fiction narrative writing forever - an awesome feat of both journalism and of imagination. This is the CNF book par excellence, though I suspect it wasn't called that at the time. Controversial because of its huge tracts of dialogue that Capote claimed to have recalled verbatim, but which he probably actually made up.

\* *HHhH* by Laurent Binet. Account of famous wartime events in Czechoslovakia, through the eyes of the self-absorbed French narrator struggling to write the book itself. It's wanky, clever, and quite brilliant.

\* *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010) by Rebecca Skloot. American science/ethics story about the woman whose cervical cancer cells were grown into billions more cells for biological research. Great story - and lovely writing and intelligent reflective passages lift it way above most pop-science books.

\* *And When Did You Last See Your Father* (1993) by Blake Morrison. Vivid account by son of the life and lingering death of his father, a GP in a Yorkshire village. Wonderful poetic writing full of human universals captured in the highly specific. I'll be happy if my book turns out to be half the book this one is.

\* Janet Frame autobiography trilogy: it's true and it's beautifully and cleverly written, so that probably makes it CNF. Perhaps.

\* Ian Wedde's recent childhood memoir, *The Grasscatcher*. [added by Selina: Albert Wendt's *Out of the Vaiepe, the Deadwater: A Writer's Early Life*.]

\* *The Scientists*, by Marco Roth. Daddy-memoir by super-brainy New York intellectual. Genius-level writing, though he mishandles the supposed suspense over how his father really died, so you guess the ending way too soon.

\* *Epilogue*, by Will Boast. Misery memoir of English-born American dude whose mother, then brother, then father all died while he was young. Very adventurous with form, including a chapter that fictionalises a wishful alternative reality (it's a short story about the night his brother died in a car crash, except he reworks it so the crash never happens).

\* *Gifted*, by Patrick Evans. NZ academic/writer novelises the story of Janet Frame hanging out in Frank Sargeson's hut while writing *Owls Do Cry*. Technically may not be CNF, as it's called a "novel", but I think it's of interest when considering the limits of CNF- how much can you make up yet still call it non-fiction; and conversely, how much true life can you nick for your story, yet still call it "fiction". [TAKE OUT ALERT!]

Some journalism that might be considered CFN:

[www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/](http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/)

Fancy NY Times story about a mountain accident, with groundbreaking multimedia content. The writing is overblown in the US journalism mode, so this is of interest mainly cos of the multimedia expansion of the CNF genre.

\* [lostplane.co.nz](http://lostplane.co.nz) - NZ lookalike of the NY Times snowfall project, telling the tale of a plane that went missing during a trans-Tasman flight in the 1930s or thereabouts, and recent attempts to find the wreckage by NZ searchers.

There are many examples of lovely long-form journalism that is probably CNF, including much of what Steve Braunias writes, as well as a lot of the grandiose US-based "new journalism" from Tom Wolfe onwards.

Exercises?

I have some prompts that were used in a memoir-writing class I attended last year - pretty simple stuff like asking people to write for 15 minutes in the first person about "my birth"; "earliest memory"; "a special place"; "a departure" and so on. There are also zillions of decent-looking prompts online such as ...

\* <http://www.jessicakluthe.com/blog/writing-prompts-for-creative-non-fiction-writers/>

\* <http://www.jessicakluthe.com/blog/part-2-writing-prompts-for-creative-non-fiction-writers/>

\* <http://digitalwriting101.net/content/creative-non-fiction-writing-exercises/>

\* <http://tellingthetruths.blogspot.co.nz/p/creative-nonfiction-writing-exercises.html>

\* <https://jtermwriting.wordpress.com/in-class-exercises/>

\* [http://www.writingforward.com/writing\\_exercises/creative-writing-exercises/101-creative-writing-exercises-report-it#more-12146](http://www.writingforward.com/writing_exercises/creative-writing-exercises/101-creative-writing-exercises-report-it#more-12146)



## **Creative Non Fiction glossary**

### Point of view / Persona

The personal essay of creative nonfiction is not an academic essay, or the kind of 'personal essay' students overseas have to include in college applications.

Creative nonfiction is subjective, unlike traditional journalism. Your point of view as an author – informed by experience, fact, observation, conjecture, personality, predilections – is at play in the piece. The writer is often a spectator or participant, and conveying a particular persona. As in fiction, point of view is never neutral.

### Fact

Tales are drawn from life – fact and actual events – not the imagination. The 'creative' element here is not invention; it's the artistry applied to telling the story, including evoking characters, shaping scenes and incorporating detail and dialogue.

### Ethics

Issues of ethics arise when facts cannot be verified, long non-taped conversations are recalled in perfect detail, and imagination fills in memory gaps – or is employed to make a story more dramatic. Fabrication and exaggeration often bring the genre into disrepute. The creative nonfiction writer is held to the same ethical standards as a journalist, and cannot make things up.

### Structure

Everything you need to know about structure in creative nonfiction can be learned from John McPhee in the *New Yorker*:

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/14/structure>

### The Five Rs

According to Lee Gutkind, these are: reportage, reflection, research, real life and high-quality prose ('riting').

## **Useful Books**

*True Stories, Well Told*, eds, Lee Gutkind and Hattie Fletcher, 2014.

*Tell It Slant: Creating, Refining, and Publishing Creative Nonfiction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola, 2012.

*The Art of the Essay*, ed. Philip Lopate, 1995.

*The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, ed. Lee Gutkind, 1997.

## Cheek

The crash comes  
and I fly from the top bunk  
  
along the hallway to the lounge  
my feet not feeling the floor  
  
and there they are  
my father's hand  
  
on my mother's white  
throat. Call the police  
  
like soprano  
me slow dancing  
  
toward the receiver  
my father's hand stretched out  
  
clasping me like you clasp the cheek  
of an irresistible child  
  
pulling me across the carpet  
like a cutie.



Tusiata Avia is an acclaimed poet, performer and children's writer. Her solo stage show *Wild Days Under My Skin*, premiered in Dunedin in 2012, has since been performed throughout NZ and overseas. Her first collection, also titled *Wild Days Under*

*My Skin*, was published in 2014. In 2015 she held the Fulbright-CNZ Pacific Writer's Residency at the University of Hawai'i. *Blindfold*, her second book of poetry, was published in 2019.



Phantom Billstickers – as seen around the country on walls, posts, and fences!

## POETRY

Recommended Reading:

GENERAL

- *99 Ways Into New Zealand Poetry* (eds Paula Green and Harry Ricketts)
- *New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre* ([www.nzpec.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.nzpec.auckland.ac.nz))
- *Poetry Archive* ([www.poetryarchive.org/](http://www.poetryarchive.org/))

FOR CLASS

Interview with David Eggleton:

<http://nzpoetryshelf.com/2015/03/23/poetry-shelf-interviews-david-eggleton-poetry-is-a-kind-of-verbal-tic-it-runs-in-parallel-with-consciousness/comment-page-1/#comment-442>

On CANVAS

- Michele Leggott, 'Wild Light', [http://www.nzpec.auckland.ac.nz/sounds/leggott\\_Wild\\_Light\\_Mix.mp3](http://www.nzpec.auckland.ac.nz/sounds/leggott_Wild_Light_Mix.mp3)  
[local, personal, universal, external sound]
- Sam Hunt, 'Sara', <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/sam-hunt>  
[repetition, rhythm, chant, irregular rhyme, internal sound]

- Glen Colquhoun, 'To A Woman Who Fainted Recently At A Poetry Reading' <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/bnzp/2002/colquhoun.htm> [see Multimedia Ex. 1]
- Tusiata Avia, 'Pa'ustina', <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Ba31Spo-t1-body-d17.html> [see Poetry Ex. 5]
- Austin Kleon, TEDX talk, 'Steal Like An Artist' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4byZp9PvAs>

### **Select Poetry Glossary**

Ambiguity - deliberately created doubt about meaning; more than one meaning

Polysemy - multiple meaning: not the same thing as ambiguity

Short lines: focus on images or precise events

Long lines : that tumble energetically over one another, robust stanzas that sound and look like verbal brocade

Wheelspinning: repetitions of image types, can dilute and reduce the potency of one or two that are really amazing

## **'The word as a tool' by Glenn Colquhoun**

Language is as full of tools as the inside of a hardware store.

**Nouns** are everything you can make something out of, four-by-twos, six-by-twos, three-by-one-and-a-halves, weatherboards, ceiling battens, PVC, Gib-board, aluminium windows, bricks, doors, tiles, carpet, concrete reinforcing rods and all types of spouting.

**Articles** are builders' pencils, used for making marks, drawing arrows, stirring tea or placing behind an ear when you're working.

It is no coincidence that **commas** come in the shape of chisels perfect for breaking up that overlong sentence with too many words which no one can stop because one thought leads into another and then into another again until you have forgotten how it all started anyway and now it won't fit into the back of the ute.

**Verbs** are Eastwing hammers, 20-ounce, full metal shaft, comfortable plastic composite handles with a non-slip grip and claw head. Ideal for putting some whack into a sentence. They come in black and blue and have a good feel hung from a leather pouch firm against your thigh.

**Rhyme** is the ratchet on a socket, two steps forward and one step back. Use it to draw words as tight as wire against their fenceposts.

**Ellipses** are screwdriver sets—Philips, slotheads, Allen keys in a full range of sizes. They can be used to increase the torque inside a poem.

**Rhythm** is a tape measure, one of those ones that rolls up into a case, or a ruler that folds out and then folds out again so you can lay it down beside a sentence and mark off the metres.

**Conjunctions** are all screws (roundheads, countersunk, self-tappers), nails (flatheads, jolts, galvanised and bright), clouts, staples, PVA glue or Polyfilla and whatever else you use to cover up the gaps between words.

**Alliteration / Consonance / Assonance** are grades of sandpaper—for obtaining that extra-smooth finish. The trick is to make everyone think you haven't used them.

**Similes and Metaphors** are rolled-up sets of plans carried underneath your armpit or in the back seat of the truck that someone else has spilt their coffee on. A place where what you are putting together has already been put together, or if that doesn't make sense, it's what you meant when you always said after taking the nail off your thumb with a blunt hammer that the mongrel bled like a stuck pig.

[Sport 25: Spring 2000, Glenn Colquhoun — *An Explanation of Poetry to My Father*,  
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Ba25Spo-t1-body-d1.html>]

The exercises below are meant to provide you with various experiments for trying different poetic styles.

### **Poetry generating tip**

Write as much as possible in order to have a rich verbal field for making selections when you are composing and revising your poems. Effective poems are very often the result of using only about 20-40% of the words out of the first moments of composing. Such composing can be the result of a long sit-down writing event or of multiple notes made at multiple times in your Writer's Workbook.

### **Writing ecology tip**

When you find you cannot use a line or phrase or stanza you are fond of, because it just doesn't work for that poem, clip it out and put it into a jar or other container. After a while, your word jar will fill up and become a source of useable inspiration, a kind of writing ecology of poetic recycling.

### **Poetry Exercise 1** (Poetry à la Austin Kleon – see pg 15 for eg)

Grab a newspaper page. Take a black vivid and begin blacking out lines that have no appeal to you, or conversely, keep words that do appeal to you. Edit until you have an evocative run on effect of lines. The shorter the better. Everything else should be blacked out. You might want to circle words in pencil first, or use an overhead transparency.

Idea: We can excavate a poem from the language around us.

### **Poetry Exercise 2**

Metaphor pairs. Take a sheet of paper and write two columns of words, primarily nouns (though a few adjectives and verbs will work, NO conjunctions, adverbs, articles, or prepositions for now). Write quickly and try to think of weird, complex words. Each column should have at least 10 words in it.

Then, exchange sheets with another writer (or do this on your own). Draw lines that join two words you see as juxtaposing (being in an unexpected relation to) each other. You may find only one or two metaphor-making pairs from the lists.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

clay	red
blister	sister
hardware	alabaster
simple	weary
dynamo	tease
tangent	harbinger

roof  
book  
adamant

bird  
dress  
entrance

Take back your word lists and experiment with different metaphor-making pairs and with various linking words to help your metaphor word-pairs work in a line. For example, 'weary roof' and 'red tangent' are metaphors and 'the bird of entrance' uses a metaphor pair (from the right hand column) with linking words.

Then write a line in which you use one of your discovered metaphors. For example, 'I wore my dress of clay with a gentle right of way', or 'The bird of entrance sang my book into the garden'.

Idea: We can construct interesting metaphors by taking two unlike nouns, descriptors, or short phrases and jamming them together to create an 'unnatural' confluence of language. Such an exercise helps us turn language away from normative experience, syntax, and logic toward creating what we don't yet know.

### **Poetry Exercise 3**

Mimic Formal constraint / procedure. Choose a formal procedure to follow, whether you copy exactly the form of a poem you particularly admire or write a sonnet, villanelle, sestina, and so on. If you choose to copy the style of a poem that is not in a known procedural form, make sure you count the syllables and figure out the line placements as you proceed.

Idea: Like learning to plié changes your leg muscles for dance, copying a language motion changes your writing muscles – in this case, it's a bit like neural net re-wiring.

### **Poetry Exercise 4** (Burroway 311)

Eat a meal blindfolded. Write a poem in which you describe it literally only in terms of taste and smell.

Idea: To push writing beyond sight and sound.

### **Poetry Exercise 5** (Luka Lesson, over Chinese takeaways in K-Rd)

My Life As A Projector. Choose an object, any object. Make it tell the story of your life. Do not mention the thing itself.

Idea: Metaphors make language real, push them to see what it can reveal.

### **Poetry Exercise 6** (*The Exercise Book*, 42-43)

Writing between the lines. Take a poem you admire. Type out the first 6 lines in triple space. Under each line write your own response keeping some element of the line you like. You might respond to its subject, syntax, tone, rhythm, rhyme. You might like its language, or the understated way it deals with big topics, or the way it uses objects to tell a story, evoke an emotion. Then remove the original 6 lines and use what you have to begin your own poem.

Idea: Learn how to steal like an artist.

### **Poetry Exercise 7**

Make a list of ten images of things you have seen in the last 24 hours. Use all of them in a poem.

Idea: [fill in the blank]

### **Poetry Exercise 8**

Write a poem in two sections about two completely different things. Have the title link both items.

Idea: [fill in the blank]

### **Poetry Exercise 9**

Make a list of seven words that have the same vowel sounds (like bee, treat, pepperoni, eagle) and use them in a repetitive way throughout a poem.

Idea: [fill in the blank]

### **Poetry Exercise 10**

Grab the closest book. Go to page 29. Write down 10 words that catch your eye. Use 7 of words in a poem. Have 4 of them appear at the end of a line.

Idea: [fill in the blank]

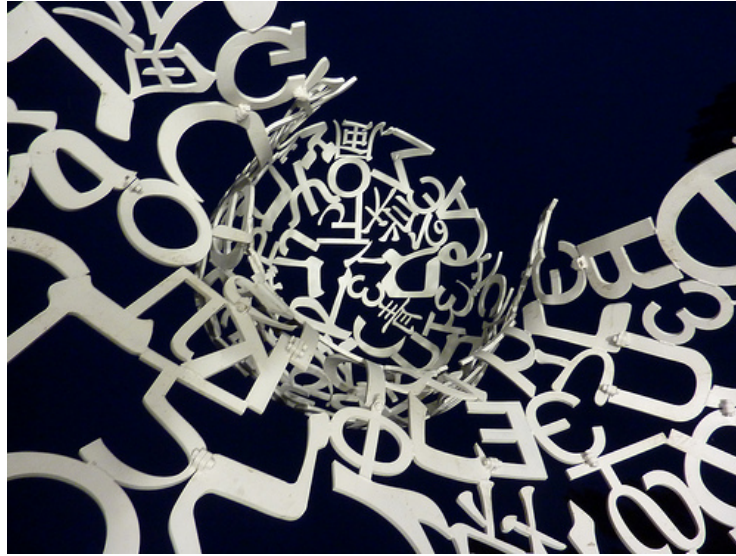
**Poetry Exercise 11**

Write a poem that is really a love letter to an old flame. To ensure it doesn't slip into sappy, make sure one or more of these words are in the poem: dung beetle, politician, nuclear, exoskeleton, oceanography, pompadour, toilet.

Idea: [fill in the blank]

(Writing Prompts 7-11 by Kelli Russell Agodon – [www.agodon.com](http://www.agodon.com))





## **MULTIMEDIA**

The term denotes writing that includes at least one other form of ‘media’: images, soundtrack, movement, performance. The first multimedia works in English were medieval illuminated manuscripts (abbreviated as ‘mss’) that began appearing in the 1300s. Earlier illuminated mss were in Latin and French.

It is important for student writers to familiarise themselves with the possibilities of contemporary multimedia for the simple reason that we are living in a long era of increasing numbers of media approaches. Film, television, and recorded music have changed the ways that people receive images, words, and sounds. Relatively recently, our long media era has given rise to a digital age. Concomitantly, the way people read ‘signs’ has been undergoing even more change.

Even if you eventually find yourself relatively uninterested in pursuing new media approaches in writing, it is crucial that you get some sense of what is happening online (for example, by exploring some of the websites listed below). Many literary magazines are solely on the web, and readers scan the web for what is happening in the writing world.

Some interesting web sites:

Alt-X [www.altx.com](http://www.altx.com)

Aotearoa Digital Arts [www.aotearoadigitalarts.org.nz/about](http://www.aotearoadigitalarts.org.nz/about)

Electronic Literature Organization [www.directory.eliterature.org](http://www.directory.eliterature.org)

InfLect [www.ce.canberra.edu.au/inflect](http://www.ce.canberra.edu.au/inflect)

NZEPC [www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz)

Auckland window [www.window.auckland.ac.nz/](http://www.window.auckland.ac.nz/)

Pennsound [www.pennsound.org](http://www.pennsound.org)

Poems That Go [www.poemsthatgo.com](http://www.poemsthatgo.com)

Ubuweb [www.ubuweb.com](http://www.ubuweb.com)

But, to emphasize: multimedia does not mean only digital creative writing. It simply means writing with at least one other form of media. See below for your writing options.

### **Multimedia Exercise 1 (Jen Crawford)**

Identify a non-writing skill you have. It doesn't have to be a so-called 'creative' skill: it could be public speaking, computing, geometry, etc. Consider how you could create an intersection between this skill and your writing. Write some clear notes explaining some of the possibilities.

Idea: Here again we are working on expanding our ranges of syntax, representation, and connectivity. The patterns of sewing are very different from the patterns of drama: imagining them together will change the way you think about scene transitions, for example.

### **Multimedia Exercise 2**

Bring in a map of a location that is significant in your life. It may be a map that is narrow in scope (the printed layout of a museum you often visit, or a beach area map) or one that covers a large area (a map of New Zealand or of your home region or of another country where you have spent a good deal of time).

Annotate that map in one of three ways: by writing commentary on relatively small pieces of paper and attaching those pieces of paper to the map itself (use stickers, glue, etc); by composing a brief rough 'book' in which you correlate areas on the map with words you have composed; by writing directly on the map itself (this option will require a map with adequate surface area to accommodate a fair amount of text).

Idea: making geography present and intimate for ourselves and others. We are all located in geography – all our learning and experiences and observed events and people – sometimes expansively and sometimes narrowly. Consider, for example, the way that animism sees living qualities in all aspects and objects of earth, and compare that to the way that spaces and places hold thoughts and experiences for us.

### **Assignment Options**

Create a written text and interlink that text with another form of media. A minimum of 500 words (up to 1500 words) is required to fulfil this assignment, no matter how you combine those words with your other chosen media.

#### **1. WORD AND IMAGE.**

Intersect words with visual media.

DO NOT CREATE A SIMPLE COLLAGE ON A LARGE POSTER PAPER FOR THIS SEGMENT OF YOUR PORTFOLIO. If you do so, it will not be awarded credit.

Examples of successful word and image options:

Picture books for grown-ups - write fairy tales, guidelines for living, allegorical fables, created histories of various areas or persons. Draw images that accompany and illustrate your tales.

Handmade/artist's books - create your own short book using printing press or drawing and writing by hand. Learn how to bind chapbooks with needle and thread, etc.

Storycloths or clothpoems - write and revise a creative piece (you want to choose your words carefully so you don't have to pick out threads later!) and sew it into a piece of cloth.

Annotated found images - take x-rays, photographs, maps, newspaper images and create wildly imaginative annotations on their significance.

## **2. EKPHRASIS/COMICS.**

Words and visual art.

This alternative is for the artists among the writers (for example, Elam students). Original drawings or art work with writing that explores the themes of the art work, or art that explores the themes of the writing.

For those interested in graphic novels, a short 'comic' with original visuals and writing.

Or for non-artists interested in comics/graphic novels: a comic script giving instructions for visual presentation to an artist. (For example, Alan Moore's script for Big Numbers, <[fourcolorheroes.home.insightbb.com/bn3script.html](http://fourcolorheroes.home.insightbb.com/bn3script.html)>)

## **3. SOUND/TALK PIECE.**

Recorded sound production or performance of a written piece (not necessarily involving music). Submit a CD/MP3 plus written text and instructions for performance.

## **4. CREATIVE BLOG.**

Words in the Electronic medium.

Submit a blogsite. This is for students who are already conversant with the blogging medium or who might already have a blogsite. Students will need to

show evidence of new blogsite posting and comments on other postings. Possibly include here fan fic (world building).

Check your particular project with your tutor, if you intend to take up this option.

#### **\* 5. PUBLIC THEATRE.**

Score a public event or events and perform at least one of them. Submit the written instructions and documentation of the event, or make arrangements for assessment of the performance.

Examples of successful public theatre:

Mask walk. Make an original mask and walk in some public place(s) with the mask on. Make notes on the experience. For this students would need a mask walk buddy and some hand-held tape-recorder. Photographing or video recording the mask walk is also a possibility.

A performance piece similar to Spencer Tunick's event, in which he organized several hundred people to stand naked on a glacier to publicise global warming. \*

See Fluxus Performance Workbook examples. \*

#### **\* 6. PUBLIC POETRY/CONCRETE PERFORMANCE WORK.**

Word installations in public places (For example, Jenny Holzer, Martin Firrell (see <[www.martinfirrell.com](http://www.martinfirrell.com)>), 'guerilla poetry', chalked interiors, stone poems in Mt. Eden crater, etc). \*

#### **7. MULTIMEDIA DOCUMENTARY.**

Interview a person or group of persons and provide photos of their faces, relevant objects and landscapes/urbanscapes, or draw diagrams illustrating histories or events or instructions for performances they carry out. See the histories plus photos done by Glenn Busch, for example. Recordings and edited transcript should be provided.

#### **\* NOTE FOR OPTIONS 5 AND 6:**

You may submit concepts for installation or performance without actually installing and performing, IF the concept is of a scale that makes realisation impossible at this stage AND your written concept/score/instructions/rationale are of interest as creative works in and of themselves (see Fluxus examples) AND you also submit a smaller scale, realised (performed/installed) concept.

NOTE ON ASSESSMENT:

You are responsible for making the appropriate arrangements for your work to be assessed – whether this involves recording your work in a suitable medium, or arranging an assessment performance/viewing time with your tutor (we will be delighted to attend).

**NOTE ON COLLABORATION:**

You are welcome to collaborate with other students and non-students. Please add documentation that explains the extent of your contribution to the collaboration.

**Multimedia Letter Sample:**

Dear [insert your tutor's name],

Please find enclosed my box of new grass shoots, accompanied photos of growth stage, my original haiku, and the website address to my blog 'Seeds'. I have taken my paper copy of my haiku (following the Japanese inclusion of a 'kigo') on spring blossoms, shredded each line into its syllabic parts (5, 7, 5) and planted it throughout this container of soil. I have then sown grass seeds in the shape of letters that spell its title 'Seed' and taken photos of its growth process every 5 days (the photos have been taken over a 6 week period, from germination to full growth).

I have posted these photos on my blog once a week, please see the attached and dated comments.

The haiku addresses the inevitability of growth, whether for 'good' or 'bad', and I was interested in how, likewise, language 'grows' – both positive and negative language. I chose grass because, in urban spaces, it is desirable but only if under control. This is much like our conventional approach to language, which is valued only if, like the cherry blossom, it conforms to a conventional or a traditional aesthetic of beauty. But uncontrollable language (aka Goldsmith or Found Poetry) is like uncontrollable grass.

Patches of this grass have since been replanted in 3 different public areas (corresponding to the 3 lines in Haiku) to continue its fight for subversive growth (see additional photos of conventionally un-grassed locations – the Tepid Bars, Princess Wharf Gates, a downtown escalator – note also photos of people's reactions). Herein lies the transaesthetic quality of my submission – a conventional haiku has been 'grown' in unconventional spaces. (270 words).

Best,  
Ann X Ample



### **SHORT PROSE FICTION – Paula Morris**

In this section of the course we'll explore the engines of fiction – conflict and desire – and its key elements: point of view, narrative structure, characterisation, dialogue and setting.

Writing fiction involves art and craft – your imagination, your experience of the world, your mastery of aspects of technique – applied to the creation of characters and stories.

“I have always regarded fiction as an essentially rhetorical art – that is to say, the novelist or short story-writer persuades us to share a certain view of the world for the duration of the reading experience, effecting, when successful, that rapt immersion in an imagined reality that Van Gogh caught so well in his painting ‘The Novel Reader’. Even novelists who, for their own artistic purposes, deliberately break that spell have to cast it first.”

David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*

“Fiction is both artifice and verisimilitude, and ... there is nothing difficult in holding together these two possibilities.”

James Wood, *How Fiction Works*

“In great fiction, the dream engages us heart and soul; we not only respond to imaginary things – sights, sounds, smells – as though they were real, we respond to fictional problems as though they were real ... Whatever the genre may be, fiction does its work by creating a dream in the reader’s mind.”

John Gardner, *The Art of Fiction*

“I like stories because they leave the writer no place to hide. There's no yakking your way out of trouble; I'm going to be reaching the last page in a matter of minutes, and if you've got nothing to say I'm going to know it. I like stories because they're usually set in the present or in living memory; the genre seems to resist the historical impulse that makes so many contemporary novels feel fugitive or cadaverous. I like stories because it takes the best kind of talent to invent fresh characters and situations while telling the same story over and over. All fiction writers suffer from the condition of having nothing new to say, but story writers are the ones most abjectly prone to this condition. There is, again, no hiding. The craftiest old dogs, like [Alice] Munro and William Trevor, don't even try.”

Jonathan Franzen

## **Fiction glossary**

### **Point of View**

The perspective from which a story is told. It may be first person (I/we); second person (you); or third person (he-she/they). Third person has the facility to zoom – in and out – from an omniscient to a close or limited point of view. Point of view in fiction gives us access to consciousness, the great gift and constraint of the genre. David Lodge calls point of view the most important decision a fiction writer must make.

### **Narrative Structure**

The design of a story or novel, determining scene selection and placement, and the story's dramatic shape and chronology, fuelled by conflict and desire, informed by point of view.

### **Character**

The imaginary but three-dimensional figures that people fiction. Confronted with conflict and desire, their actions – and inaction – make stories happen. The way they're presented on the page is informed by point of view.

### **Setting**

The times and places in which the story occurs, ranging from era to hour of the day, from planet to room in the house. All of these can serve a dramatic function, and intensify the conflict in a story. The inclusion and evocation of settings are informed by point of view.

### **Dialogue**

The things that are said – and not said – by characters in conversation with each other, to intensify conflict and move the story forward, among other things. The inclusion and selection of dialogue, which may be rendered in scene or summary, are informed by point of view.



**Useful Books**

David Lodge: The Art of Fiction

James Wood: How Fiction Works

Francine Prose: Reading Like a Writer

**Reading**

You need to read these stories BEFORE each class and bring this coursebook with you to class for close reading and discussion.

**For the first fiction class:**

‘Three Princesses’ by Paula Morris

**For the second fiction class:**

‘Suddenly a Knock at the Door’ by Etgar Keret

**For the third fiction class:**

‘Sea Oak’ by George Saunders

**EXTRAS****Untitled: A Bad Story**

**(written by Paula Morris so you don’t have to write it yourself)**

As I walked down the street, thinking to myself, it was sunny. Looking back on that day now, I remember that it was sunny all day, not only when I was walking down the street. It’s only now that I realize, looking back, that I am no longer the person I once was then, in the past.

I won’t tell you where this street is, or when this walking took place, because let’s face it: all streets are more or less the same everywhere in the world. I walked past generic bars, houses, petrol stations, schools and airports. I rode around for a while on a bus, thinking meaningful and symbolic thoughts, and



looking out the window. I looked at my reflection in the window and noticed that I was 26 with brown hair and a chiselled jaw. I decided to call petrol stations 'gas stations' because that's what they are in the US, where I may or may not live. I began every sentence with an 'I.'

After some time passed, I saw my girlfriend walking towards me. She was 25 and, as the sun shone down on us both, her hair was brown as well. Galloping towards me, she rested on a bench.

'Hi,' I said, greeting her. 'As you know, it's your birthday.'

'And tomorrow, John, is our anniversary,' she replied silkily, quiveringly and possibly a little sadly as well. It was hard for me to tell, with so much going on at the same time in her tone of voice. 'John, we've been together for two years, and in three months' time we're getting married.'

'Fo' sho',' I ventured, agreeing with her in a colloquial way, because that's how people actually speak.

'And, John, we're rilly, rilly heppy,' she said in her New Zealand accent. I, of course, don't have any accent of any kind.

'There's no conflict in our relationship at all,' we said at the same time. I watched while she looked up at the sun, then down at her feet, then at me, while crooking her left elbow. Then suddenly she looked over her shoulder. Her name was Jane. I could have mentioned that earlier, but I didn't, to keep the reader in suspense for no reason.

'Our relationship is as sunny as today,' I offered. Even then, when I was so much younger than I am today, the symbolism of the moment bore down on me

like the hot rays of the sun. I looked at her and noticed the brown of her hair. I looked up and noticed the blue sky. It was a metaphor, filled with meaning.

We smiled at each other as we walked on together, talking in detail about her father's recent suicide, her mother's on-going trial, and the tragically fatal car accident yesterday that killed her sister and maimed her brother.

'See you later, John!' she said beguilingly as we parted on the corner and walked off in different directions. "All our friends will be at the party.'

'Yeah, see you, Jenny,' I replied smilingly. I know I said her name was Jane earlier but I couldn't be bothered checking this story for consistency.

'Yeah, bye,' she said, as the drama drained from the narrative.

'Bye, Jenny,' I reiterated in case the reader needed to hear her name again, as I stood there, the scene fizzling out around me.

Some time passed. Forget about the party – it has no bearing on anything. I just mentioned it because it happened in real life. My fiancée Jeanette and I went to Paris on holiday, and saw the things that all people see in Paris, like the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre and people in berets carrying baguettes while riding bicycles along cobbled streets.

'This is so French!' we cried simultaneously, and I thought to myself that all clichés and stereotypes were true, and very useful when writing a story.

We stopped some people walking in a park. When I tell you that they were wearing T-shirts, you'll know at once that they were young people. No further description is required.

‘To get to Montmartre, you should take the metro and then walk up some very steep stairs to atop the hill, betwixt some trees. Once you’re there, walk around and see all the artists painting. And why not stop for a glass of absinthe in a café?’ they said in French.

I furrowed my brow, gave them a blank stare and acted out a few other clichés. Unfortunately I couldn’t understand what they were saying at all, because I don’t speak French. Looking back now, from the perspective of the mental institution where I’m writing this, I realise that the end was nigh for Jenna and me. Is that why I murdered her? Or did she even truly exist? Did we even go to France? I’m so unreliable a narrator, I can’t be trusted. Maybe she was just a ghost, or else one of my many personalities. That’s something for the reader to work out, or not, after this story’s surprise ending, when we discover all these events may have taken place in a parallel universe.

‘Ring! Ring!’

Suddenly his alarm goes off and even more suddenly he wakes up, changing point of view. Maybe this was all a dream. Or maybe he’s dead. Who knows? Not the reader. That’s OK: the author is being subtle. If people don’t get it, it’s because they don’t appreciate experimental fiction, and accept that the writer of this story is the new Beckett. Or is it Becket? Our writer doesn’t have time to look up the spelling of the names of famous people, places, trademarks, etc.

‘Wake up, John,” says Frank, a new character. He may be a cyborg, or maybe the Lion of Azeroth. Let’s call him the Leopard of Azeran to make it seem original. Suddenly he raises an eyebrow as he rests his chin on his fist and

crosses his right leg over his left knee. He (John, not Frank the Leopard of Azeran) makes a crying face because of all the pronoun confusion.

Now and only now does he know what the change in point of view and tense in this story implies. A twist ending. We're in close third person now, so the twist should be revealed if the point-of-view character knows it. But why do that when we could just end with enigmatic dialogue rather than emotional/dramatic resolution?

'This ends here,' he shouts. 'Roarrrrrr!'

**The Seven Deadly Sins of Writing Short Stories by Paula Morris, with thanks to Stephen Minot: Three Genres, University of Auckland, 2015**

1. My Cool Yet Derivative Idea

A world in another time/place/sphere has lots of cool aspects involving technology (robots, zyborgs, interplanetary battles) or fantasy (knights, magic, vampires, quests). By the time you explain it all, the story is over and nothing original has happened.

2. Adolescence is Hard

Someone breaks up with someone or says something really mean. Maybe there's shopping and coffee. Characters have long phone conversations and send misspelled texts. Nothing original happens.

2. Marriage is Hard

Like 'Adolescence is Hard,' but everyone is older. Someone breaks up with someone or says something really mean. Characters have long car conversations and discover someone is cheating on someone else. Nothing original happens.

4. My Weird Dream

Strange things happen that make no sense, and then you wake up and realise IT WAS ALL A DREAM. This is a gimmick, especially the surprise ending, and not original.

5. Mental Asylum

Creepy things happen, possibly in the nineteenth-century, in a mental asylum, and then the reader realises that THE NARRATOR IS THE MENTAL ONE. This is a gimmick, especially the surprise ending, and not original.

6. European Movie

A person wanders around – or rides on a bus – having feelings and deep thoughts, and it's all very subtle and lyrical, with added imagery and symbolism, so subtle that nobody could ever understand it. This is a cop-out.

7. A Writer Writes

A writer wanders around unsure of what to write because everything has been done before and some people said some mean things about his/her work, and it's all very arch and knowing, with thinly veiled portraits of teachers, classmates and/or famous writers. This is a cop-out, and not original.

*Not to be reprinted without permission, excerpts by Lisa Samuels (2009), Selina Tusitala Marsh (2010-), Stuart Hoar (2011), Paula Morris (2015-). Images Flickr via CANVAS.*

Your Name Here  
English 252 / 2017  
Workshop Day and Time  
Tutor Name  
Date You're Submitting This  
Exercise # CNF 1 / CNF 2 / 3 etc

[TEMPLATE FOR EXERCISES]

### CENTRED TITLE

Use a clear font and not a cute one. Twelve-point type, and double-spaced text for prose; the latter is not required in poetry. Clear margins.

At the end of each prose exercise, note the word count. Do not add anything to exercises, e.g. explanations, apologies, prologues. Do not forget the essential information in the top-left corner.

Your exercises will be date-stamped and returned to you for inclusion in your portfolios. Do not drop them in the bath. They're an important part of your grade.

The brief for exercises happens in your tutorials, so it's essential that you attend and participate.

Word count: 100