**ENGLISH 263/354**

**Writing Selves**

**Revised Syllabus**



**Semester One**

**2017**

**English, Drama and Writing Studies**

**University of Auckland**

**Teaching staff**

Anna Boswell (convenor) [a.boswell@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.boswell@auckland.ac.nz)

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or by appointment

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Stephen Turner [sf.turner@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:sf.turner@auckland.ac.nz)

**Course description:**

ENGLISH 263/354 throws the terms ‘self’ and ‘writing’ into question. Working with an expanded understanding of the forms and modes that writing may take, and drawing on social semiotic concerns, the course critically explores changing conceptions of the self and examines what ideas of personhood presuppose and entail. Among other things, we consider:

* the cultural distinctiveness and embeddedness of self-writing practices (e.g. biography/autobiography, memoir, self-portraiture, tattoo);
* socially and historically specific notions of identity, subjectivity and authorship;
* boundaries and slippages between species and categories (e.g. people, animals, places, genres);
* questions of gender, sexuality and reproduction;
* modelling, distortion, mutability and virtuality;
* the role of digital technologies, programming, sites and locations in the construction of written selves.

Films and critical and creative readings form the basis for lectures and tutorials. These set texts will be supplemented with materials dealing with a diverse range of objects – from selfies to sexbots to SMS-capable plants. Methodologically, the course seeks to apply concerns drawn from set texts to new objects of inquiry in order to problematise the self-writing practices with which we engage and within which we are immersed. Coursework will invite you to consider writing as a matter of relations that are social, environmental and technological, and to extend your critical-creative skills in reading and composition.

**Competencies:**

By the end of the course, you should have improved:

* your awareness of what writing and selves ‘are’ and the forms and modes they may take;
* your ability to see self-writing practices as material and situated;
* your ability to read and respond to a range of challenging academic and non-academic texts;
* your ability to mobilise a technical and theoretical vocabulary;
* your creative-critical and compositional skills;
* your ability to analyse and problematise objects of inquiry in nuanced and reflexive ways.

**Teaching Format:**

Lectures: Weeks 1-12

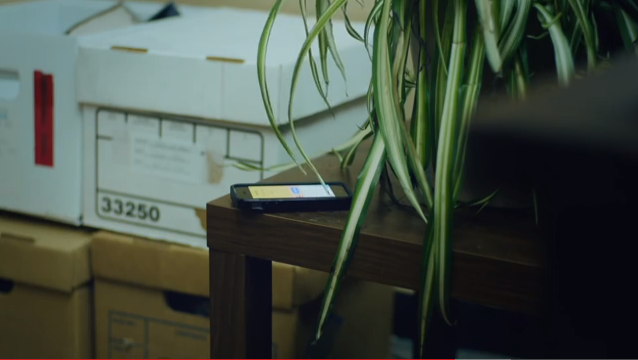
Thursday 12-2pm, 260-051 (Owen G Glenn, Room 051)

Tutorials: Weeks 2-11

Check SSO for times and locations

**Workload:**

As per Faculty of Arts guidelines, the workload for ENGLISH 263/354 should average 10 hours per week over the course of the semester.



**Syllabus**

**Classes, readings and assessments**

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| **Week 1:**  **9 March: What is a self?**  Reading: Hito Steyerl, ‘A Thing Like You and Me’  James Franco, ‘The Meanings of the Selfie’ |
| **Week 2:**  **16 March: NO LECTURE [Tertiary Education Union industrial strike, 10am-2pm]** |
| **Week 3:**  **23 March: Curation, fashioning, data**  Reading: Kenneth Goldsmith, ‘The Inventory and the Ambient’  Selina Tusitala Marsh, selected poems  Laura Bennett, ‘The First-Person Industrial Complex’  Gay Hawkins, from *The Ethics of Waste* |
| **Week 4:**  **30 March: Beyond humanism**  Viewing: *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (dir. Werner Herzog)  Reading: Thierry Lenain, ‘What is a monkey painting?’  Paul Carter, from *Parrot* |
| **Week 5:**  **6 April: The humanimal**  Reading: Donna Haraway, ‘Speculative Fabulations for Technoculture’s Generations’  Isabella Rossellini, from *Green Porno*  Judith Halberstam, from *The Queer Art of Failure* |
| **Week 6:**  **10 April: Writing Activity One due by 4pm [20%]**  **13 April: NO LECTURE – UNIVERSITY CLOSED DUE TO CYCLONE WARNING** |
| **Mid-semester break: 14 April – 29 April** |
| **Week 7:**  **4 May: iPeople**  Viewing: *Catfish* (dirs. Henry Joost & Ariel Schulman)  *Her* (dir. Spike Jonze)  Reading: Natascha Sadr Haghighian, ‘Parallax’ |
| **Week 8:**  **11 May: Plasticity**  Reading: Beatriz Preciado, from *Testo Junkie*  Catherine Malabou, excerpt from *Ontology of the Accident*  Susan M. Schultz, excerpt from *Dementia Blog* |
| **Week 9:**  **18 May: Otherkin feat. Prosthesis (with Stephen Turner)**  Reading: Vilém Flusser, ‘The Emergence of the Vampyroteuthis’  Antti Salminen, ‘Parasites—Fragments of the Non-human’  Ann Shelton & Stephen Turner, *Wastelands* |
| **Week 10:**  **22 May: Writing Activity Two due by 4pm [30%]**  **25 May: Living/memory**  Reading: Lisa Samuels, ‘Flag Day’  A. W. & Pritika Lal, ‘U of I: The University as I Experience You’  Kathleen Stewart, ‘Atmospheric Attunements’  Stephen Muecke, ‘The Fall: Fictocritical Writing’ |
| **Week 11:**  **1 June: Self + place / final assignment overview**  Reading: Philip Armstrong, ‘On Tenuous Grounds’  Ani Mikaere, ‘Some Implications of a Māori Worldview’  Peter Brunt, ‘The Portrait, the Pe’a and the Room’ |
| **Week 12:**  **8 June: Targeted learning session**  **9 June: Critical Essay due by 4pm [50%]** |

**Attendance and participation**

Lectures and tutorials will focus on developing contexts for understanding and framing the assigned readings and films, and developing strategies for applying these concepts to other objects of inquiry. The classes are also designed to help guide you in composing the writing activities and essay. You MUST ensure that you read the assigned texts and view any assigned films before your weekly tutorial.

**Attendance at lectures and tutorials is essential. Tutorial attendance and participation will be noted and may be a factor in determining your final grade.**

**Canvas and student email as course resources**

The university’s Canvas electronic course assistance website is the location for all electronic communication within the course. On the Canvas website for ENGLISH 263/354 you will find electronic copies of the course outline, assignments, and links to course readings and supplementary materials. All course announcements will be posted on the Canvas course website and will also be sent to your university email address.

**It is your responsibility to check the Canvas course website and your university email account in order to keep up with developments in the course.**

Please ensure that any redirection or forwarding order from your student email address to your personal email address is up-to-date and correct. Contact the Canvas Help Desk or Arts IT for advice about redirecting messages sent to your university student email address to another email address.

**Coursework format**

Unless otherwise specified, you are expected to submit your coursework in a standard academic format:

* typed or word-processed
* 12-point easy-to-read font (e.g. Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, Arial)
* 1.15 or 1.5 line spacing
* 1” (2.5cm) margins (left, right, top, bottom)
* indented or block paragraph format
* numbered pages
* name, course number and date at top left- or right-hand corner of page 1
* title centered at top of page 1
* Chicago referencing
* barcoded cover sheet

The instructions and assessment criteria for each piece of coursework will be posted on Canvas prior to the due date.

**Extension policy**

Please note the English, Drama and Writing Studies extension policy for all undergraduate courses:

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| If you are unable to hand in your assignment by the due date, you must seek an extension via a face-to-face meeting with the tutor or lecturer concerned; an Extension Request Form, specifying the new submission date and signed by the staff member, or an email statement from your tutor granting the extension must be attached to the submitted essay. 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. Extensions will not be granted for reasons of time management, which is your responsibility. Any work handed in late without an extension will not be marked and will be awarded a “0”. |

**Submitting assignments**

All coursework should be submitted in hard copy format (complete with a barcoded coversheet) to the reception desk on level 3 of Arts 1 **by 4pm** on the due date. All coursework must ALSO be submitted electronically to Canvas **by 4pm** on the due date in order to receive a grade.

This course aims to assist in improving your creative-critical and analytical skills so you will receive written feedback on your writing activities and essays.

**It is your responsibility to retrieve your marked work from your tutor or from the reception desk on level 3 of Arts 1. If you fail to collect your marked work in a timely manner, your tutor is under no obligation to continue supplying you with written feedback for subsequent coursework.**

**Plagiarism**

The University of Auckland does not tolerate cheating or plagiarism or assisting others to cheat or plagiarise, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student’s own written work, reflecting his or her ideas and learning. Where other sources are used, as they should be used in academic writing, those sources must be properly acknowledged and cited. Referencing outside sources applies to all printed and digital materials, including the internet.

The working definition of plagiarism in this course is using the written work of others and presenting it as your own without explicitly acknowledging or referencing where the work originally appeared. It is plagiarism not to acknowledge using, paraphrasing, or directly copying from books, articles, webpages or other students’ work. Wherever you are using the writing or ideas of other people (whether published or unpublished), those ideas or writings must be properly acknowledged and cited. In academic writing, acknowledgement usually takes the form of endnotes or in-text parenthetical references to the materials used plus a bibliography. For more detailed information, see the university’s guidelines on the conduct of coursework at:

<http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/home/about/teaching-learning/policies-procedures>

**Except when this is explicitly sanctioned in the assessment rubric, work in ENGLISH 263/354 that is shown to be plagiarised will receive a zero grade and may lead to disciplinary action. Please note that you will not receive credit for duplicating coursework that you have completed for this (or for any other) course.**