

CMN116 Playing with Words: an Introduction to Creative Writing Craft

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay
UniSC Fraser Coast

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course introduces you to a variety of creative writing skills and consists of a series of exercises and activities designed to develop essential aspects of the creative writer's craft with a foundation in theory. A selection of readings in a range of approaches, styles and techniques will serve as models of good writing and help you reflect on your writing practice.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Asynchronous online delivery of learning material.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Synchronous and scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Asynchronous online delivery of learning material.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Synchronous online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Course Topics:

- Epistolary forms of Writing
 - Diary/Journal
 - Letters and Correspondence
 - Speech/Monologue
- Prose forms of Writing
 - Journalistic Narratives
 - Prose Fiction
 - Creative Non-fiction
- Performative forms of Writing
 - Scriptwriting
 - Illustrative narratives
 - Poetry
- Narrative Techniques: Diction, Syntax, Sentence Structure, Figurative Language
- Narrative Elements: Setting, Character, Imagery, Plot
- Critical Analysis and Reflection

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	Education for Sustainable Development Goals
1 Demonstrate knowledge of a range of foundational narrative techniques and forms used in creative writing practice	Knowledgeable	4.1.1
2 Create creative writing artefacts in alignment with publishing industry standards of professional presentation and communication	Empowered	17.3.1
3 Demonstrate the ability to create and critically reflect on creative writing in relation to theoretical concepts and/or societal contexts	Creative and critical thinker	17.2.3
4 Analyse creative writing texts using scholarly conventions, critical thinking and the application of theory to practice	Creative and critical thinker	4.1.1

* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	

CODE	COMPETENCY
4.1.1	The learner understands the important role of education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (formal, non-formal and informal learning) as main drivers of sustainable development, for improving people's lives and in achieving the SDGs
17.3.1	The learner is able to become a change agent to realize the SDGs and to take on their role as an active, critical and global and sustainability citizen.
17.2.3	The learner is able to take ownership of the SDGs.

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

You are expected to have established reading and writing skills. English language basics are not taught in this course except as elements of narrative style

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will receive informal feedback on their weekly workshop activities.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	Creative Artefact: 800 words; plus Critical response: 250 words.	Week 5	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check and in class
All	2	Essay	Individual	30%	1000 words essay + 3 minute group presentation	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	40%	Creative Response: 800 words plus a Critical analysis: 250 words. Or Critical Analysis: 1000 words.	Week 12	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Creative Artefact

GOAL:	This task will develop your writing skills and narrative knowledge in a written form of narration. This task will introduce critically analysis skills, develop creative practice and support understanding of publishing industry standards.																			
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece																			
FORMAT:	<p>Formal Submission (two parts):</p> <p>1. Write an 800 word scene/scenario/short story in your chosen epistolary form. The work must be proofread, edited and presented to professional industry standards (20%).</p> <p>2. Write a 250 word critical response analysing the specific conventions of the form used, focus on the impact/effect these craft choices made on the overall aesthetic of the piece – employ at least 1 critical source and 1 example from the readings to substantiate claims (10%).</p>																			
CRITERIA:	<table><tr><th>No.</th><th></th><th>Learning Outcome assessed</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Demonstrating basic competence in narrative forms</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Demonstrating basic competence in narrative techniques</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Creating artefacts in alignment with publishing industry standards of professional presentation and communication</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Demonstrating basic ability to reflect on creative writing practice in relation to theoretical concepts and/or societal contexts</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Analysing creative writing texts using scholarly conventions and basic critical thinking</td><td>4</td></tr></table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrating basic competence in narrative forms	1	2	Demonstrating basic competence in narrative techniques	1	3	Creating artefacts in alignment with publishing industry standards of professional presentation and communication	2	4	Demonstrating basic ability to reflect on creative writing practice in relation to theoretical concepts and/or societal contexts	3	5	Analysing creative writing texts using scholarly conventions and basic critical thinking	4	
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GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Information literacy																			

All - Assessment Task 2: Critical Analysis of a creative artefact

GOAL:	<p>This assessment has two parts.</p> <p>1. In preparation for the essay, you will undertake a group activity in-class. Your group will select a reading, then analyse and discuss, before sharing key themes of your group discussion with the rest of the class - 3 mins (10%).</p> <p>2. The goal of the essay task, informed by part one, is to give you an opportunity to develop your academic writing skills and to present knowledge in an essay format. This task will see you critically analyse a selected course reading and apply academic writing standards, develop research skills, presented in the essay form (20%).</p>																			
PRODUCT:	Essay																			
FORMAT:	<p>Standard Academic format:</p> <p>Write a 1000 word critical analysis, identifying and analysing a range of narrative elements, including genre, conventions, character, setting, plot and structure and the impact/effect these have for the reader. Make use of evidence from the text, critical sources, and other readings to substantiate claims.</p> <p>In-class preparatory exercise culminating in concise group oral presentation (3 mins)</p>																			
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GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Information literacy																			

All - Assessment Task 3: Creative Artefact or Critical Analysis

GOAL:	<p>This task will develop your writing skills and narrative knowledge in a written form of narration.</p> <p>This task will introduce critically analysis skills, develop creative practice and support understanding of publishing industry standards.</p> <p>This task also supports your engagement with the activities related to the course, the work of your peers, and your understanding of key course concepts.</p>				
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece				
FORMAT:	<p>For Formal Submission you are required to submit a combination of: 1.+ 3. OR 2. + 3. as outlined below.</p> <p>1a. Write a a creative piece in your chosen form. The work must be proofread, edited and presented to professional presented. You will construct and polish an 800-word creative piece (20%); and</p> <p>1b. Write a 250 word critical response to your piece that analyses conventions of the form used and manipulated – focusing on the impact/effect these crafting choices made on the overall aesthetic of the piece (bring in at least 1 critical source and 1 example from the readings to substantiate claims) (10%).</p> <p>2. Write a 1000 word critical analysis, identifying and analysing a range of narrative elements, including genre, conventions, character, setting, plot and structure and the impact/effect these have for the reader. Make use of evidence from the text, critical sources, and other readings to substantiate claims (30%).</p> <p>3. In the workshops (Wks 2-11) you will undertake a series of written activities that will contribute to the development of your assessments and writing communication skills. This part of Task 3 accounts for your engagement with the activities, with the work of your peers, and your understanding of key course concepts as demonstrated in class (10%).</p>				
CRITERIA:	No.				Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrating developed competence in narrative forms			1
	2	Demonstrating developed competence in narrative techniques			1
	3	Creating artefacts in alignment with publishing industry standards of professional presentation and communication			2
	4	Demonstrating developed ability to reflect on creative writing practice in relation to theoretical concepts and/or societal contexts			3
	5	Analysing creative writing texts using scholarly conventions and developed critical thinking			4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy				

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Recommended	Shelley Davidow,Paul Williams	2016	Playing With Words	n/a	Red Globe Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct.

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquiries contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au