



Research Into Writing

BA (Hons) Creative Writing

BA (Hons) English with Creative Writing

AME_5_RIW

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

Department of Culture, Writing and
Performance

2011-2012

Level 5

Year 2, Semester 1

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1. MODULE DETAILS

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| Module Title: | Research for Writing |
| Module Level: | 5 |
| Module Reference Number: | AME_5_RIW |
| Credit Value: | 20 |
| Student Study Hours: | 200 |
| Contact Hours: | 48 |
| Private Study Hours: | 152 |
| Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable): | None |
| Co-requisite Modules (If applicable): | None |
| Course(s): | |
| Year and Semester | Second Year , First Semester |
| Module Coordinator: | Emma Brooker |
| MC Contact Details | brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk |
| Contact Details (If applicable): | Dr Karlien Van Den Beukel karlien.vandenbeukel@lsbu.ac.uk |
| Subject Area: | Creative Writing |
| Summary of Assessment Method: | Assessment 1 Original piece of prose, fiction or non-fiction, developed from research project (1,500 – 3,000 words, 75%) Due in week 12 (Dec 16 th) Assessment 2 Critical Analysis examining the relationship between source material and original prose (2,000 words 25%) Due in week 13 (Jan 13 th) |

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

Students undertake an independent research project in which they access material from a library, archive or permanent collection to develop and produce a piece of original prose, either fiction or non-fiction and an accompanying reflective essay on the relationship between the source material and the writing produced.

Potential research sources are extensive. A student might, for example, draw on documents or artefacts in one of the following; a local history archive, specialist libraries such as The Women's Library, The Wellcome Library, national museums such as Tate, The V&A Museum, The Natural History Museum.

Early in the module, students propose a research project, identifying their source material and explaining how they plan to access and draw on this to produce an original piece of writing. Students are encouraged to experiment with form and structure and to consider incorporating source material in their own writing. In their reflective essay students will chart the relationship between the source material and the development and realisation of their own piece of writing.

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

This module aims to:

- Introduce students to a variety of publicly accessible museums, archives and resources which could be used as source material for writing projects
- Outline an understanding of different approaches to researching and developing ideas from such source material
- Encourage students to experiment in their approach to structuring their creative writing and consider incorporating source material as part of this process

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate an awareness of the range of publicly accessible archives and collections and objects and documents they hold
- Show an understanding of how such sources might be used to develop creative writing projects
- Show an understanding of different ways of structuring fictional and non-fictional material

4.2 Intellectual Skills

- Demonstrate an ability to produce an original prose piece derived from a structured research project research, which demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure
- Display an autonomous and professional approach to research and writing

4.3 Practical Skills

- Demonstrate an ability to give and receive constructive criticism in a workshop setting
- Indicate he/she has an ability to edit, rewrite and improve his/her own work
- Show an ability to plan and carry out a research project

4.4 Transferable Skills

- Offer constructive insights into professional work
- Demonstrate written communication skills through writing exercises
- Students will be developing and refining core professional skills during this unit, and beginning to produce a body of work that can form part of a portfolio for employment purposes. The Research into Writing unit supports the development of key skills in the areas of research, structure and the ability to critique peers' written work, fundamental techniques

necessary to professions such as researching, copywriting and script-editing.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

The pass mark for this module is 40% overall.

Assessment 1

- Original piece of prose, fiction or non-fiction, developed from research project (1,500 – 3,000 words, 75%), due Week 12 (December 16th)

Assessment 2

Critical Analysis (2,000 words 25%) examining the relationship between source material and original prose submitted, due Week 13 (January 13th)

6. [FEEDBACK](#)

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Portfolios will be returned with feedback and a percentage grade between 0% and 100%. The grade remains provisional until confirmed by the July Examination Board.

7. [INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT](#)

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

This module is based on a combination of informative seminars on different aspects of fiction and on practical workshops. Students will have an opportunity to critique and evaluate a range of fictions by a variety of authors and also to present their own fiction for group discussion and evaluation.

We will cover the following subject areas;

Archives and museums

Source material

Historical and life-writing

Developing a research project

Research into writing

Fiction and non-fiction treatments

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

Most classes will commence with an informal discussion of a given topic. Some time will then be given to writing exercises or to the setting of assignments. This will be followed by a group discussion of students' work.

This module will use a range of teaching and learning methods, summarised below:

7.3 Seminars - Seminars are a place for learning through the discussion and analysis of texts, which enable students to explore key issues in detail.

7.4 Blackboard - This Unit Guide is also available online through Blackboard. To access Blackboard you will need a University IT account. To find out how to activate your IT account and use Blackboard, go to the New Student Checklist at www.lsbu.ac.uk.

7.5 Self managed study - It is essential for the successful completion of this unit that all students acknowledge the responsibility they have for their self-managed learning. Students will be given independent reading, research and other seminar preparation each week. You should aim to spend about 5-6 hours a week reading and preparing for this module. **You should always read the core texts and any other material that is given out by the lecturer.** You should also try to seek out secondary works on the core texts and issues and build a foundation of material on which your written work can be based.

7.6. Employability - Students will be developing and refining core professional skills during this unit, and beginning to produce a body of work that can form part of a portfolio for employment purposes. The Research into Writing unit supports the development of key skills in the areas of research, structure and the ability to critique peers' written work, fundamental techniques necessary to professions such as researching, copywriting and script-editing.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Week One September 30th

Introduction - The module guide and assessment.

Range of potential sources - What sources, private and public, do you already use? What sources could you use to develop prose fiction and/or non-fiction? Think about the full range of potential source materials, from family letters and diaries, to official documents through to sound archive material and objects in museums. What practical, creative and/or ethical problems or dilemmas might you encounter in working with archive material.

Writing exercises – based on images and artefacts to be found in London's museums and galleries.

Institutional contexts - National archives, museums and collections; what do they represent in terms of cultural identity and national heritage – for example the Imperial War Museum and the Jewish Museum in London.

Think about the narratives these historic collections project and how as a writer you might work with or against the grain of these.

Briefing for next week's visit to Sir John Soane's Museum

This is a unique and fascinating museum in which art and artefacts collected by the 18th Century architect John Soane are displayed pretty much as he arranged them in his house in central London.

The number of visitors admitted at any one time is restricted and members of the public have to queue for entry.

We are able to enter as a group and will be given an 10 minute introductory talk by one of the museum's curators and then be free to explore the building and collections. The donation requested for group entrants is £3.50 each. **Please ensure that you bring change and leave a donation so the museum can continue its wonderful work!**

Please note which group you are going in with. We have entries booked for 10am then 11.30am.

There is no cloakroom so please bring as little with you as possible. Photography and filming are not allowed in the museum.

Week Two October 7th – Museum visit

Visit to Sir John Soane's Museum,
13 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
WC2A 3BP (nearest tube Holborn)

There are two group entries to The Sir John Soane Museum.

Group One - 10am.

Group Two 11.30 am

Assignment – You are asked to draw on this visit to produce an original piece of prose to share at next week. You might take a particular object, room or personality associated with the house and its history. You are free to choose whether you write fiction or non-fiction.

Have fun with this assignment, think about all the possibilities that working in this way opens up, and produce a piece of prose of at least 500 words to read in small groups at next week's class.

There are three other museums in the area which give vivid insights into life in late 18th century London. If you choose to, you are welcome to base your writing assignment for this week on artefacts or aspects of any of the museums listed below.

Extend your visit

On the opposite side of the square is the equally extraordinary Hunterian Museum which contains medical specimens including the skeleton of Charles Byrne, the 'Irish Giant'. Please take the opportunity to go across and visit, (unless you are particularly squeamish). Entry is free.

Hunterian Museum
The Royal College of Surgeons
34-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
Please note that on the opposite side of the square at

Also within walking distance and well worth a visit

Foundling Museum
40 Brunswick Square
WC10
Student entry £5

And

Dr Johnson's House
17 Gough Square
EC4
Student entry £3.50

Homework – complete the assignment outlined above and bring a piece of at least 500 words to share at next week's class.

Week Three – October 14th museum assignments

Presentation - of writing produced following last week's museum visit. Please bring a least 500 words to share in small groups and then read to the whole class if you wish.

Your project - We will discuss whether you want to continue building on this initial project for your assessed piece of work or what other sources you might draw on. What writing form is best suited to your central idea and creative aims?

The fields of writing open to you for this module's assessment are fiction – either contemporary or historical, and creative non-fiction in the form of life writing/biography, documentary, travel writing, history or the essay.

The most important thing is to identify your subject, focus and the ideas and themes you wish to explore. For this module you are encouraged to cross boundaries and combine writing forms, even including images – if that is the best way of realising your creative ideas and intentions.

Biography - Reading and discussion of extracts from *Orlando* and *Georgiana*. Discussion of different approaches to biography and the boundaries between fact/fiction.

Screening – extract from film adaptation of *Orlando*.

Writing exercise -. Think of an individual, real or imagined, who may well feature in your project for this unit. How might you portray or present them? How might you develop or integrate this into a larger project?

Homework

1) Project proposal. Please write a 500 word proposal outlining your central idea, sources, research plan and chosen writing approach for the project you want to submit for this module's assessment.

2) Read the opening extracts from the following novels, *Tipping the Velvet*, *Wolf Hall* and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet*. How do the respective authors, Sarah Waters, Hilary Mantel and David Mitchell seek to engage their readers with their chosen historical periods?

How is the past located and presented within these texts? Make notes on the different ways in which fiction can exploit historical material. What expectations do you as a reader bring to historical fiction? To what extent are writers of fiction constrained or liberated by historical settings?

Week Four - October 21st - The Uses of History 1

Project proposals – Bring a hard copy of your project proposal which you will share and discuss with students and tutor. You will get feedback and suggestions on how to frame, research and realise your idea.

Discussion of novel extract readings set for homework; *Tipping the Velvet*, *Wolf Hall* and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet*. How do the respective authors, Sarah Waters, Hilary Mantel and David Mitchell seek to engage their readers with their chosen historical periods?

How is the past located and presented within these texts? Make notes on the different ways in which fiction can exploit historical material. What expectations do you as a reader bring to historical fiction? To what extent are writers of fiction constrained or liberated by historical settings?

Screening – extract from *Shooting the Past* by Stephen Poliakoff, a TV drama centred on the threatened future of a photographic library. What does the archive mean to us culturally, ideas about evidence and verification, 'ownership' of the past, use of photos within the dramatic narrative.

Week Five – October 28th Self directed study

Research and writing - Use this week to research, develop and start writing your proposed project for this module's assessment. You will present your project and read an extract to the group in week seven or eight.

Homework – Readings – further consideration of the uses of historical sources and settings. Falsification and ‘authenticity’. Consider how Peter Ackroyd’s *Chatterton* and Kate Summerscale’s *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* handle their historical material. How does their approach differ to the novels we discussed in week four?

Week Six – November 4th The Uses of History 2, Critical Analysis

Discussion – of readings set for homework. Further consideration of the uses of historical sources and settings. Falsification and ‘authenticity’. Consider how Peter Ackroyd’s *Chatterton* and Kate Summerscale’s *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* handle their historical material. How does their approach differ to the novels we discussed in week four?

Critical Analysis – Reflect on the relationship between source material and original prose in your own and fellow students’ projects. How has the source material shaped and informed your writing and how have you refashioned or recast your sources through the writing process? What creative possibilities and difficulties does this relationship present? Start planning your CA and compile your bibliography.

Presentations - You will be allocated a presentation slot for week seven or eight.

Week Seven – November 11th – Presentations 1

Presentation of your project from which you will read an extract. You will outline the concept, sources, research process and chosen writing form/s.

Tutorial list – Put your name down for a tutorial over the coming weeks

Tutorial preparation -You must email work you want feedback on **by midday the day BEFORE** your tutorial. Please send work as attachment AND email your text to brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk

Week Eight – November 18th Presentations 2

Presentation of your project from which you will read an extract. You will outline the concept, sources, research process and chosen writing form/s.

Tutorial list – Put your name down for a tutorial over the coming weeks

Tutorial preparation -You must email work you want feedback on **by midday the day BEFORE** your tutorial. Please send work as attachment AND email your text to brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk

Week Nine – November 25th - tutorials

Tutorials – Opportunity to get tutor’s feedback on your project and Critical Analysis. Please bring hard copy of work you want feedback on to your tutorial.

Tutorial preparation -You MUST email work you want feedback on by midday the day BEFORE your tutorial. Please send work as attachment AND email your text to brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk

Week Ten – December 2nd - tutorials

Tutorials – Opportunity to get tutor's feedback on your project and Critical Analysis. Please bring hard copy of work you want feedback on to your tutorial.

Tutorial preparation -You MUST email work you want feedback on by midday the day BEFORE your tutorial. Please send work as attachment AND email your text to brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk

Week Eleven – December 9th - tutorials

Tutorials – Opportunity to get tutor's feedback on your project and Critical Analysis. Please bring hard copy of work you want feedback on to your tutorial.

Tutorial preparation -You MUST email work you want feedback on by midday the day BEFORE your tutorial. Please send work as attachment AND email your text to brookeek@lsbu.ac.uk

Week Twelve – December 16th – no class

Deadline for handing in Assessment 1

Week 13 – January 13th – no class

Deadline for handing in Assessment 2

10.0 [Learning Resources](#)

10.1 Core Materials

Ackroyd, Peter (1987) *Chatterton*. London: Penguin

Byatt, A. S. (2000) *Possession*. London: Penguin

Forman, Amanda (1998) *Georgiana*. London: Harper Collins

Hoffman, Ann (2003) *Research for Writers*. London: A.C. Black [808.02 HOF]

Mantel, Hilary (2008) *Wolf Hall*. London: Fourth Estate

Mitchell, David (2010) *Thousand Suns of Jacob de Zoete*. London: Sceptre

Poliakoff, Stephen (1999) *Shooting the Past*.

- Sebald, W. G. (2002) *Austerlitz*. London: Penguin [833.914 SEB]
- Summerscale, Kate (2009) *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*. London: Bloomsbury
- Waters, Sarah (1999) *Tipping the Velvet*. London: Virago [823.914 WAT]
- Woolf, Virginia (2006) *Orlando: a biography*. London: Wordsworth [823.912 WOO]