



School of English, Journalism  
& European Languages

## Unit Outline

HEA218/318  
Contemporary Fiction  
Semester 2, 2006

[www.utas.edu.au/units/HEA218](http://www.utas.edu.au/units/HEA218)

<b>Convenor:</b>	<b>Dr Narelle Shaw</b> Room: L216 Phone: 6324 3225 Email: N.Shaw@utas.edu.au
<b>Consultation Hours:</b>	Tuesdays 11 am – 12 pm, Wednesdays 12 pm – 1 pm
<b>Unit Description:</b>	The unit affords study of works of fiction dating from the late twentieth century to the present day. It situates prize-winning and popular texts within a range of literary, theoretical, or cultural contexts to deconstruct the phenomenon of the bestseller. Emphasis is placed on the influence of identification, globalization and celebrity on the formation of reading tastes.
<b>Unit Aims and Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the relationship between popular fiction and literature</li><li>• Analyse the phenomenon of the bestseller and the determinants of canonicity</li><li>• Develop an overview of contemporary transformations of the literary field</li></ul>
<b>Learning Outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will consolidate knowledge of English and apply that knowledge in practice</li><li>• Students will communicate across a range of contexts</li><li>• Students will develop advanced competencies in information literacy</li></ul>
<b>Required Texts:</b>	JM Coetzee, <i>Foe</i> (Penguin, 2001). AS Byatt, <i>Possession</i> (Vintage, 2002). Tom Clancy, <i>Clear and Present Danger</i> (Penguin, 1990). Helen Fielding, <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i> (Pan Macmillan, 1997). DBC Pierre, <i>Vernon God Little</i> (Faber, 2003). Dan Brown, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> (Corgi, 2003).
<b>Recommended Text:</b>	Barnet and Cain, <i>A Short Guide to Writing about Literature</i> (Pearson, 2006).
<b>When Taught:</b>	Seminars: Alternate Mondays 4.10-5 (LTN A023 and CC B.159); Fridays 9-11 (LTN A023 and CC A.119)
<b>Assessment:</b>	3,000-word essay (60%), 2-hr exam (40%)

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week beginning	Topic	Monday 4.10 pm – 5.00 pm	Friday 9.00 am - 10.50 am
17 Jul		Orientation	
24 Jul	JM Coetzee, <i>Foe</i>	About JM Coetzee	Nobel Prize, <i>Foe</i> , Literary Prizes
31 Jul	JM Coetzee, <i>Foe</i>		<i>Foe</i> and the Canon
7 Aug	Tom Clancy, <i>Clear and Present Danger</i>	About Tom Clancy	Bestseller, Techno-Thriller: <i>Clear and Present Danger</i> Popular Fiction vs Literature,
14 Aug	Tom Clancy, <i>Clear and Present Danger</i>		<i>Clear and Present Danger</i> , Americanization, globalization
21 Aug	A.S. Byatt, <i>Possession</i>	About A.S. Byatt	Screening of <i>Possession</i>
28 Aug	A.S. Byatt, <i>Possession</i>		Booker Prize Winner and Bestseller: <i>Possession</i> , Fiction and the Film Industry, Romance, Postmodernism, Historical Fiction
<b>SEMESTER BREAK: 4 - 8 SEPTEMBER</b>			
11 Sep	Helen Fielding, <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i>	About Helen Fielding	Bestseller, Chick-lit: <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i> , Feminism, Romance
18 Sep	Helen Fielding, <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i>		<i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i> : Jane Austen and Popular Culture
25 Sep	DBC Pierre, <i>Vernon God Little</i>	About DBC Pierre	Booker Prize Winner, Whitbread Best First Novel Prize Winner <i>Vernon God Little</i> , the Booker Controversy
2 Oct	DBC Pierre, <i>Vernon God Little</i>		<i>Vernon God Little</i> : Comedy. Satire, Language
9 Oct	Dan Brown, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i>	About Dan Brown	Bestseller, Conspiracy Theory Thriller: <i>The Da Vinci Code</i>
16 Oct	Dan Brown, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i>		<i>The Da Vinci Code</i> Phenomenon: International Stage, "Historical Fiction"
<b>STUDY PERIOD: 23 - 27 OCTOBER</b>			
<b>EXAMINATION PERIOD: 28 OCTOBER - 14 NOVEMBER</b>			

## ASSIGNMENT

### ESSAY

**Length:** 3000 words (including quotations)

**Value:** 60%

**Topic:** To be advised

**Due:** Friday, 6 October

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Effectiveness of introduction
2. Relevance and coherence of argument
3. Effectiveness of conclusion
4. Scope of textual referencing
5. Use of critics
6. Attention to expression, spelling, proof-reading, and MLA Style

As preparation for writing your essay, read the following sections from Barnet and Cain's *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*: "Organizing the Material", "Communicating Judgments", "Review: How to Write an Effective Essay" (65-71), "What is Interpretation" (97-108), and "Style and Format" (275-297).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Submission of Assignments

Students are required to submit a signed cover sheet with every assignment. This includes a declaration that all material submitted is their own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others and that they have read the University statement on Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism) on the University website at [www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism](http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism) or in the Student Information Handbook. Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office. All written assignments must be submitted in hard-copy (not by email or other electronic means) and placed in the essay box at the School office on or before 5pm on the due date. Students are required to keep copies of all submitted assignments. Assignments will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted.

### Late Assignments

Late submissions will be penalized as follows: 5% of the available marks for the first day, and then 2% per working day thereafter. Late work will be accepted without penalty if accompanied by a medical certificate for the relevant period or a letter from a counsellor in the case of a serious non-medical reason.

### Difficulties with your Studies

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you should raise these with your lecturer and/or one of the following Student Services staff as soon as possible:

- Learning Skills Adviser
- Student Counsellor
- Careers Adviser
- Disability Adviser

### University Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

**“Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>”

**The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.**

### Assignment Presentation

The English discipline uses MLA Style, which is characterized by in-text referencing and a list of works cited. See the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed. Ed. Joseph Gibaldi (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003).

### Marking Scale

The following distribution of marks and grades is applied in assessing your work:

- High Distinction (HD)—80-100%
- Distinction (DN)—70-79%
- Credit (CR)—60-69%
- Pass (PP)—50-59%
- Fail (NN)—0-49%

All marks are subject to moderation.

### Assessment Criteria

The following criteria apply to assessment of the essay:

- Effectiveness of introduction
- Relevance and coherence of argument
- Effectiveness of conclusion
- Scope of textual referencing
- Use of critics
- Attention to expression, spelling, proof-reading and stylesheet.