



School of English, Journalism
& European Languages

Unit Outline

HEA255/355
Confessionalism
Semester 1, 2007

Web link: Vista; www.utas.edu.au/units/HEA255

Convenor:	Dr Narelle Shaw Room: L216, Arts Building Phone: 6324 3225 Email: N.Shaw@utas.edu.au
Consultation Hours:	Tuesdays 11 am – 12 noon, Thursdays 2 pm – 3 pm (or by appointment)
Unit Description:	Critics argued that Robert Lowell's <i>Life Studies</i> set a precedent for confessional poetry in 1959. Its publication coincided with America's emerging interest in self-analysis. The unit assesses both the critical response to <i>Life Studies</i> and Lowell's influence upon the sensationalized literary couple Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes, Tasmania's own Margaret Scott, and brooding English poet and historian Geoffrey Hill. The unit analyses critical overviews of Confessionalism and investigates links with Romanticism, Modernism and Beat.
Unit Aims and Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discuss set texts with particular attention to the representation of private and public concerns.2. Demonstrate knowledge of Rosenthal's review of <i>Life Studies</i> and critical appraisals of Confessionalism.3. Identify the principles of Romanticism, Modernism and New Criticism, and Beat.4. Evaluate the extent to which Confessionalism constitutes a radical new poetics.
Learning Outcomes:	Students taking this unit will: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. consolidate knowledge of English and apply that knowledge in practice;2. communicate across a range of contexts;3. develop advanced competencies in information literacy and identify critical issues in the discipline; and4. demonstrate awareness of the international influence of

	literary texts and theory.
Required Texts: See note below	Robert Lowell, <i>Life Studies and For the Union Dead</i> (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000). Sylvia Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i> (London: Faber, 1999). Ted Hughes, <i>Birthday Letters</i> (London: Faber, 1998). Margaret Scott, selected poems and essays from various collections (e-reserve) Geoffrey Hill, <i>Mercian Hymns, Collected Poems</i> (London: Penguin, 1985).
Recommended Texts: See note below	Unit <i>Reader</i> (e-reserve)
When Taught:	Lectures: Thursday 12 noon -1.50 pm (LTN A023 & CCC A119) Tutorials: 3.10 pm – 4 pm, weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (LTN A023 & CCC B159)
Assessment:	3000-word essay worth 50% Examination (2-hour, closed book) worth 50%

Note on texts:

Set texts are held on Reserve in the LTN Library and the CCC Resource Room.

The following poems and essays by Margaret Scott are available on e-reserve:

“New Songs for Mariana” (from *Visited*)

“Housework” and “Elegies” (from *The Black Swans*)

“Alma Mater” and “Masks and Wings” (from *Changing Countries*)

These core works will be supplemented from a list of others drawn from Scott’s various collections, which are held on Library Reserve.

Items constituting the unit Reader are available on e-reserve. They may be accessed through the unit’s WebCT/Vista site or through the Library catalogue.

Details of recommended readings (designated **R**) are given in the Topic Reading Lists, distributed separately.

RELATION OF ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Both essay and exam will assess learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week	Week beginning	Topic
1	26 Feb	<i>Life Studies</i> and Confessionalism
2	5 Mar	(Cont.)
3	12 Mar	(Cont.)
4	19 Mar	(Cont.)
5	26 Mar	<i>The Bell Jar</i> : "a kind of shut box and mirror-looking narcissistic experience" or "generally relevant" art?
6	2 Apr	(Cont.)
EASTER BREAK 5-11 APRIL		
7	16 Apr	<i>Birthday Letters</i> and the Plath-Hughes Marriage
8	23 Apr	(Cont.)
9	30 Apr	(Cont.)
10	7 May	Margaret Scott: "Masks and Wings"
11	14 May	(Cont.)
12	21 May	"Giving a form to oneself": Hill and the <i>Mercian Hymns</i>
13	28 May	(Cont.)
STUDY WEEK 4-8 JUNE		
8 June: deadline for accepting extended work in the unit		
EXAMINATION PERIOD 9-26 JUNE		

ASSESSMENT

<p>Task description</p>	<p>Write a 3,000 word essay on ONE (1) of the following topics:</p> <p>Topic 1: It's said that in confessional poetry the private is a metaphor for the public. Discuss the extent to which Lowell comes across as a representative sufferer in <i>Life Studies</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 2: How does the confessionalism of Plath's novel <i>The Bell Jar</i> publicly erode the idea of the private home as the locus of freedom in 1950s America?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 3: To what extent does Hughes's verse novel <i>Birthday Letters</i> represent "a total self-examination and self accusation, a total confession"?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 4: At the end of the 1950s, in "Skunk Hour", the last poem in <i>Life Studies</i>, Lowell talks of the loss of "the hierarchic privacy/of Queen Victoria's century." To what extent can it be argued that Margaret Scott reflects on the same loss in her writing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 5: "Forty years ago I would dismiss, without chance of appeal, any proposal that poetry and self-therapy were interinvolved. At sixty-eight I know better: the survival across fifty years of my ability to write has kept me from despair, from a total collapse of self-being. This is not to say that I understand the proper function of a poem to be the simple retailing of its author's rehabilitation and relapse. Spinning out your nervous breakdown in the form of limp verses is an insult to your own intelligence as much as to those who may read you. I am thinking much more of the doing, the making, of good work as being in itself a form of secular salvation."</p> <p>While disparaging confessional writing, Hill paradoxically enables us to recognize <i>Mercian Hymns</i> as a confessional sequence. Explain how.</p>
<p>Dates due</p>	<p>Topic 1 – 23 Mar 07 Topic 2 – 13 Apr 07 Topic 3 – 4 May 07 Topic 4 – 18 May 07 Topic 5 – 1 Jun 07</p>
<p>Links to learning outcomes</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>
<p>Assessment criteria applying to all essay options</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, MLA Style

<p>Assessment criteria/ guidelines</p>	<p>An essay will pass if it presents a coherent argument that addresses the essay question, shows evidence of close reading of the text/s and demonstrates some engagement with issues raised in the lectures. A mark of 58-59 is a clear message to the student. It is deliberately less than a credit but says that the student could achieve a credit with more work and/or attention to detail.</p> <p>An essay is likely to receive a credit or higher if, in addition to the criteria for a pass, it presents: a clear and original approach in the construction of the argument; a range of research which extends beyond lecture material and references; a clear and engaging style of writing.</p> <p>A high distinction signals only the most outstanding work, in terms of both substance and presentation. The student must have gone beyond lecture material and provided original insights into the subject.</p> <p>Essays are failed in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is clear evidence of plagiarism; • there is not enough written text; • the essay cannot be understood by the marker because of the standard of expression; and/or • the discussion is irrelevant to the subject of the essay.
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<p>Final exam</p>	
<p>Description/conditions</p>	<p>2 hour closed-book examination</p>
<p>Links to learning outcomes</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4</p>
<p>Assessment criteria/ guidelines</p>	<p>Same guidelines as for essay, except in the case of academic referencing standards, which don't apply to exam essays.</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>The final exam is conducted by the University Registrar in the formal examination period. See: http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations_and_results/</p>

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 or in the Student Information Handbook.

Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office or the School website. **Assignments submitted without a signed cover sheet will not be marked.** Students who submit assignments without a signed cover sheet will be contacted once via their UTAS email address; in such instances the cover sheet must be completed within two weeks of the due date.

All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy (not by email) 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 submitted on time will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once on time assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted. All marked assignments will be returned in tutorials unless otherwise advised.

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
- Disability Adviser
- Careers Adviser
- Student Counsellor

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). For a brief introduction, refer to http://www.utas.edu.au/english/english1/mla_citation_syst.doc, MLA Citations System: A Brief Guide.

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.

IT Support

Learning online—for online learning and Vista support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>
Information Technology Services—for general IT Support (includes link to UTAS download website)
<http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>

Library Services—for information literacy support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>
Help Desk (email HelpDesk@utas.edu.au or 6226 1818, within University 1818)