



Faculty of Arts

HEA293/393

American Nature Writing

Distance Education

Unit Outline

Semester 2 2007

Dr Narelle Shaw

Contact details

Unit coordinator/lecturer

Unit coordinator/lecturer:	Dr Narelle Shaw
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Room number	L216, Faculty of Arts Building
Consultation hours:	Tuesdays 11-12, Thursdays 2-3

Distance education office

This office will be able to help with general inquiries about distance education (such as those related to study schools and assignment submission).

Staff:	Kassandra Jones and Vicki Simm
e-mail:	DistanceEd.Arts@utas.edu.au
Phone:	+61 3 6324 3663 or 1800 671 526 (toll free)
Fax:	+61 3 6324 3652
Postal address:	Locked Bag 1340C, Dist Ed, Faculty of Arts, TAS 7250
Location:	Launceston Campus, Faculty of Arts, Room L107 (Ground Floor)
Website:	http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/distance_education/

Online unit URL

Log-in to WebCT/Vista at <http://www.utas.edu.au/courseonline/> and then select [HEA293/393 American Nature Writing](#) in the Course List.

You can contact your unit coordinator/lecturer and other students using the Discussions and Mails tools in this online unit.

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Unit Summary

Unit Code	HEA293/393
Unit Title	American Nature Writing
Unit Description	Traces the development of nature writing (fiction and non-fiction), through texts written by North American writers, from the 19 th century to the present, such as Henry David Thoreau, Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Terry Tempest Williams, and Barbara Kingsolver. Students are introduced to eco-critical theoretical frameworks that include eco-feminist, weak and strong anthropocentrism, and deep ecologist ways of interpreting 'natural' and cultural texts.
Special Notes	n/a
Teaching Staff	Dr Narelle Shaw
Campus and mode	H, L, W, I, N—External
Unit Weight	12.5%
Teaching Pattern	Distance Education
Pre and Corequisites	Prerequisite 25% at Level 100 in English
Mutual Exclusions	Not applicable
Assessment	3000 word-essay (40%), 2 hour exam (60%)
Required texts	Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> , ed. Stephen Fender (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999). Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998). Edward Abbey, <i>Desert Solitaire</i> (New York: Ballantyne Books, 1971). Terry Tempest Williams, <i>Refuge</i> (Vintage, 1992). Barbara Kingsolver, <i>Prodigal Summer</i> (London: Faber, 2001). J.A. Cuddon, <i>The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory</i> , 4 th ed. (London: Penguin, 1999).
Courses	R3A

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate, through close reading and critical discussion, soundly-based, independent evaluations of American Nature Writing; and
2. Show, in the completion of written assignments, that you have consolidated and extended the literary research and writing skills, which you developed in previous literary units.

These learning outcomes guide the assessment for this unit.

Graduate attributes

In your work for this unit you will develop knowledge and skills — or 'attributes' — applicable in a range of different contexts. These attributes will, by the successful completion of your course at UTAS, become your graduate attributes.

In this unit, you should make progress in developing:

Knowledge: Students will consolidate knowledge of English and apply that knowledge in practice (See learning outcomes 1, 2).

Communication skills: Students will communicate across a range of contexts (See learning outcomes 1, 2).

Problem-solving skills: Students will develop advanced competencies in information literacy and identify critical issues in the discipline (See learning outcomes 1, 2).

Global perspective: Students will demonstrate awareness of the international influence of literary texts and theory (See learning outcomes 1, 2).

Prior knowledge &/or skills

Skills of close reading, critical thinking and textual analysis developed at 100 level English.

Learning resources required

Required texts

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. Stephen Fender (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).
Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998).
Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire* (New York: Ballantyne Books, 1971).
Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge* (Vintage, 1992).
Barbara Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer* (London: Faber, 2001).

J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin, 1999).

Study Booklet (on-line)

Other publications and resources

MLA Citation System – A Brief Guide - <http://www.utas.edu.au/english/english1/referencing.htm>

Flexible library services

The Library offers a range of services if you are unable to visit the Library in person and if you meet certain criteria. See <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libserv/rls/rls.html>.

Technical requirements

Access to the online unit in WebCT Vista is required.. For information about online study, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>.

Accessing WebCT Vista off campus

For information and help with setting up a computer and web browser to access online resources in WebCT Vista when off campus, see <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/vista.htm>.

Need new software?

If you require software to access certain file types provided in your WebCT Vista unit, see <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/software.htm>.

About downloading and installing

The files you can access at download sites such as the UConnect download site (above) are software installers. These files need to be copied onto a computer and then run to install the software.

To obtain a copy of the installation software, you can:

1. Copy the file directly to a computer using a network Internet connection. If you are copying files to a home computer, you will need to use an Internet Service Provider (ISP) for this; or
2. Copy the files to a computer on campus that has a CD burner and burn the files to CD. The files can then be taken home and copied to the home computer from the CD. If you would like assistance with this, contact the UTAS Service Desk at <http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>.

Accessing WebCT Vista on campus

WebCT Vista can be accessed on the Library computers and in computer labs. See <http://www.utas.edu.au/elearning/labs.html>.

You can also access the University network and WebCT Vista via a laptop computer. See <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/uana.htm>.

Accessing files in your WebCT Vista unit

A variety of file types may be provided in your online unit. For information to help you with accessing different file types such as MP3 audio files, see http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/flexarts/module_intro.html.

Getting help

For technical information and help, contact the UTAS Service Desk at <http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>

Details of teaching arrangements

Discussions

In this unit, you are able to communicate with other students and your lecturer via WebCT/Vista Discussions. These discussions will provide a forum for you to ask questions, present your views and receive timely feedback. You will be able to contribute to Discussions topics weekly at times that are convenient for you. Specific questions for discussion are contained in the study chapters. You may also wish to discuss aspects of your reading and note taking.

How to use WebCT/Vista Discussions

For comprehensive information on accessing and using the WebCT/Vista Discussions tool, browse the help resources at Vista@UTAS Support. http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/Vista_Support.htm

Useful files on Discussions at Vista@UTAS Support include:

[Using the discussion tool \[Word, 66 kb \]](#) Step-by-step guide
(http://www.otl.utas.edu.au/content/using_discus_stepguide.doc)

[Using the discussion tool \[Word, 43 kb \]](#) Quick guide
(http://www.otl.utas.edu.au/content/using_discus_quick.doc)

[Using the discussion tool \[Flash movie, -\]](#) Demonstration
(http://www.otl.utas.edu.au/content/using_discuss_multi.htm)

If you find that you require further assistance in accessing the Discussions, contact **Help and Support** at Learning Online. <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>

Attaching files to messages

If required, you may attach a Word file (or other file type) with information supporting your message.

Naming files

File names must not contain spaces or symbols. It is safest to use only numbers and letters of the alphabet. Files must have an extension (e.g. .htm .doc .pdf)

For information on using attachments, browse the help resources at Vista@UTAS Support.

http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/Vista_Support.htm

A useful file on attachments at Vista@UTAS Support is:

[Using attachments in mail and discussions \[Word, 455 kb \]](http://www.otl.utas.edu.au/content/attach_email_disc_step.doc) Step-by-step guide
(http://www.otl.utas.edu.au/content/attach_email_disc_step.doc)

Getting started with Discussions

When you access your WebCT Vista unit HEA255/355 Confessionalism, select the Welcome link on the Home Page. Read the message/s that have been posted and post your own reply. You can then begin to work on the study material and post messages on the discussion topics.

General suggestions on participating

The following suggestions will help you get the most out of your Discussions.

- Stay current and timely with your work. Visit Discussion topics regularly and read all new messages. Respond constructively and with substance to messages that have meaning for you.
- **Take risks!** Your participation is the most important aspect of online Discussions. Your responses are not all expected to be 'brilliant'; sometimes you may not understand something under study. Use the Discussions to help you clarify your own understanding.
(Many times other students may have the same questions you have — discussing it will help with everyone's understanding!)
- Try to keep your messages reasonably short (between 100–200 words).
- Be considerate when you comment on someone else's work or posting. The written word is unable to carry the nuances of the spoken word, so be gentle. (For instance, do not use all capitals, as this is considered to be 'shouting' online.)

Messages can be drafted outside of WebCT Vista (using a word processor such as Microsoft Word) and copied and pasted into a message. (This enables you to spell-check your messages, and may save you Internet access costs.)

Weekend Study School

There is no Weekend Study School for this unit.

Unit schedule

Week	Date beginning	Topic	Activities and Assignments
1	16 July 07	Introduction to Nature Writing	
2	23 July 07	Henry David Thoreau	
3	30 July 07	Henry David Thoreau	
4	6 Aug 07	Henry David Thoreau	
5	13 Aug 07	Annie Dillard	
6	20 Aug 07	Annie Dillard	Thoreau essay due: 5pm Monday 20 August
7	27 Aug 07	Edward Abbey	
MID-SEMESTER BREAK 3 SEPT-7 SEPT			
8	10 Sept 07	Edward Abbey	Dillard essay due: 5pm Monday 10 September
9	17 Sept 07	Terry Tempest Williams	
10	24 Sept 07	Terry Tempest Williams	Abbey essay due: 5pm Monday 24 September
11	1 Oct 07	Barbara Kingsolver	
12	8 Oct 07	Barbara Kingsolver	
13	15 Oct 07	Catch up, and review	
STUDY PERIOD 22-26 OCTOBER			
19 October: deadline for accepting all extended work in the unit			
EXAMINATION PERIOD 27 OCTOBER-13 NOVEMBER			

Specific performance requirements

This unit has a weight of 12.5%. As a general guide, you will need to spend an average of 8-10 hours per week on this unit to meet its work requirements. This work includes reading, discussions and assignment work.

Participation in the online Discussions is recommended but voluntary.

Learning expectations and strategies

Expectations

The University is committed to high standards of professional conduct in all activities, and holds its commitment and responsibilities to its students as being of paramount importance. Likewise, it holds expectations about the responsibilities students have as they pursue their studies within the special environment the University offers.

The University's Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning states:

Students are expected to participate actively and positively in the teaching/learning environment. They must attend classes when and as required, strive to maintain steady progress within the subject or unit framework, comply with workload expectations, and submit required work on time.

Learning strategies

If you need assistance in preparing for study please refer to your lecturer. For additional information, see: <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/students/>

Assessment

Assessment schedule

Assessment Task	Date Due	Percent weighting
Assessment Task 1: 3,000 word essay	Various (see over)	40%
Final exam (2 hours)	Scheduled to take place in formal exam period	60%

Assessment details

Assessment task 1	
Task description	<p>Write a 3,000 word essay on ONE (1) of the following topics:</p> <p>Topic 1: Thoreau "Because he knows personally and experimentally that 'in wildness is the preservation of the world,' Thoreau searches single-mindedly for ways in which both literature and society might become more integrally 'wild.'" Discuss with detailed reference to <i>Walden</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 2: Dillard "Although her work often focuses on encounters with the natural world, Dillard's underlying concern is always with the mind, especially with the concept of 'waking up.'" Discuss with detailed reference to <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Topic 3: Abbey The success of <i>Desert Solitaire</i> has been attributed to "the compelling nature of the narrator's character, its embodiment of opposites in tension." Discuss with detailed textual reference.</p>
Task length	3,000 words
Links to learning outcomes	1, 2
Assessment criteria applying to all essay options	<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
Assessment criteria / guidelines	<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.
Dates due	<p>Topic 1 – Monday 20 August, 5pm Topic 2 – Monday 10 September, 5pm Topic 3 – Monday 24 September, 5pm</p>

Final exam	
Description / conditions	2-hour closed-book examination involving 2 essays. Further information available later in the semester.
Links to learning outcomes	1, 2
Assessment criteria / guidelines	Same guidelines as for essay, except in the case of academic referencing standards, which don't apply to exam essays.
Date	The final exam is conducted by the University Registrar in the formal examination period. See: http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations_and_results/

How your final result is determined

To pass this unit you will need to achieve a pass or more (i.e. 50% of the allocated marks) on the in-semester work.

Grades will be awarded based on University guidelines; namely:

Failure	0-49%
Pass	50-59%
Credit	60-69%
Distinction	70-79%
High distinction	80% and above

Submission of assignments

All work submitted for assessment must conform to the requirements of the School of English, Journalism and European Languages. Essays must be submitted on time to avoid penalty. They must be correctly formatted, and referencing must be in accordance with MLA Citation System: A Brief Guide.

Please note that computers are available in the Library and the Faculty of Arts building for typing of essays.

Assignments can be submitted:

- **as a printout** via the Faculty of Arts Distance Education office; or
- **as an electronic file** via the Faculty of Arts Distance Education office.

Submitting assignments as a printout

For information on submitting assignments as printouts, see the green Assignments page in your study package.

Please also ensure that when preparing your essay, you:

- a) leave a margin of at least 3 cm on the left-hand side of the paper for the marker's comments; and
- b) put your name at the top of each page.

A completed 'Assignment Cover Sheet' must be attached to the front of all assignments.

Coversheets and full information are available from the Distance Education Office.

http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/distance_education/assign.html.

(This link also appears in General Information / Assessment in your WebCT Vista course.)

Submitting assignments as an electronic file

By regular email to the Distance Education Office

Assignments for this unit can be submitted by regular email to the Distance Education Office.

Please follow the instructions for doing this at:

http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/distance_education/assign.html

A completed 'Assignment Cover Sheet for Electronic Submission' file **must** be included as an attachment when submitting assignment files.

Penalties

Should you experience difficulty in completing your assignment by the due date, please contact the unit coordinator, prior to the submission date. A late essay without an extension may incur a penalty: 5% of the available marks for the first (working) day assignment is overdue plus 2%

for each (working) day thereafter. A medical certificate or other supporting documentation is required where extensions are requested due to illness or bereavement.

Academic referencing

In your written work you will need to support your ideas by referring to scholarly literature, works of art and/or inventions. It is important that you understand how to correctly refer to the work of others and maintain academic integrity.

Failure to appropriately acknowledge the ideas of others constitutes academic dishonesty (plagiarism), a matter considered by the University of Tasmania as a serious offence.

The appropriate referencing method for this unit is the MLA system, 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).

You can download a detailed explanation of MLA referencing at

<http://www.utas.edu.au/english/english1/referencing.htm>

For further information on presentation of assignments, including referencing methods, see:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/library/assist/gpoa/gpoa.html>

Please read the following statement on plagiarism. Should you require clarification please see your unit coordinator or lecturer.

Plagiarism

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.

For further information on this statement and general referencing guidelines, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/>.

Or follow the link under 'Policy, Procedures and Feedback' on the **Current Students** homepage.

Occupational health and safety (OH&S)

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In addition to specific requirements of this unit you should refer to the University's policy at:

http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf

Further information and assistance

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness that may affect your course of study, you are advised to raise these with your lecturer in the first instance.

A range of University-wide support services are available to you including Teaching and Learning, Student Services, and International Services. Please refer to the **Current Students** homepage at <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/>.

Should you require assistance in accessing the Library visit their website for more information at <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/> or <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/libserv/rls/rls.html>.