COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Blogging and Informal Nonfiction Writing in English	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: lect. Daniel Bogdanovič	

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
1st – BA	Elective

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Tutorials	Spring semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites:	**Additional requirements (if any):**
English language proficiency (B2)	None

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	**150**	**32**	**118**

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed
The aim of the course is to develop participants' general English nonfiction writing skills. To do this, participants will be expected to start and consistently update a personal blog. The public (online) availability of said blog should ensure that students learn ways to inform, persuade and engage with a real (i.e. non-hypothetical) audience, while the required frequent blog updates should constitute an opportunity to consistently practice (and thereby improve) their writing skills. In addition, students will learn to: • distinguish blogging from other contemporary English nonfiction genres, • distinguish between different blogging subgenres, • give, receive and process writing feedback, • meet short deadlines for writing assignments.

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
A general understanding of the language and content of contemporary English-language blogs	Reading assignments, classroom discussion, student blog updates	Portfolio review, writing assignments
Practical skills to start, update, manage and promote a personal blog	Classroom discussion, student blog updates	Portfolio review, writing assignments
General English writing skills that are also applicable to other contexts (e.g. academic, business etc.)	Classroom discussion, student blog updates	Portfolio review, writing assignments

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours						Total contact hours	Self-study hours	Self-study work load and assignments
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement			Assignments
Blogging as a medium. Types of blogs and bloggers. Blogpost language as compared to other registers (academic, journalist, spoken).		3					**3**	**10**	Graham, P., *The Age of the Essay*
Blogpost genres: narrative, autobiographical, reflective, advice, how-to, media review, hobby, persuasive, response.		3					**3**	**10**	Zinsser, W., *On Writing Well*, Chs. 18-19. Various blogposts.
The writing process. Early drafts. Writer's block, writing motivation, draft revision.		3					**3**	**10**	Hacker, D., *The Bedford Handbook*, Ch. 1
Plagiarism vs. due credit. Footnotes and hyperlinks. Sources of evidence. Avoiding misrepresentation.		2					**2**	**9**	Unboxing Politics, *Why Is Plagiarism Wrong?*
Informal nonfiction style and structure. Clarity, conciseness, coherence and cohesion.		3					**3**	**10**	Hacker, D., *The Bedford Handbook*, Chs. 16 and 18 Alexander, S., *Nonfiction Writing Advice* Writing exercises.
Audience engagement. Clickbait, hooks, promotion. Engaging content and structure.		2					**2**	**9**	Silver, N. *Always. Be. Blogging.*
Discussion and evaluation of student writing.		16					**16**	**60**	Student blog updates; informal presentations and peer review of said updates.
Total		**32**					**32**	**118**	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Blog updates/portfolio review	40%	Weekly	Students are expected to publish new posts on their blogs on a regular basis. For a perfect score on this rubric, one must publish at least **14** posts **on different weeks**. For the purposes of this rubric, blogposts must meet minimum eligibility criteria for quality, academic honesty and length, but are otherwise not graded.
Written assignment (mid-term)	30%	Middle of semester	Students will select one of their blogposts to be graded based on content, language use and coherence/cohesion.
Written assignment (end of semester)	30%	End of semester	As above.
Attendance requirements	Compulsory (80%)		Missed tutorials have to be accounted for within two weeks upon agreement with the lecturer.
Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) policy: the use of GAI for written assignments is permitted (though not encouraged) for the purposes of desk research, brainstorming and editing. AI-generated text is not permitted. GAI use must be formally disclosed. Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of all used GAI output; inclusion of "hallucinated" information is tantamount to fraud. Failure to follow these rules will be treated as a breach of VU academic ethics.			

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Required reading				
Alexander, S.	2016	*Nonfiction Writing Advice*		https://slatestarcodex.com/2016/02/20/writing-advice/
Graham, P.	2004	*The Age of the Essay*		https://paulgraham.com/essay.html
Hacker, D.	2023	*The Bedford Handbook*	12th Edition	Bedford/St. Martin's
Silver, N.	2024	*Always. Be. Blogging.*		https://natesilver.net/p/always-be-blogging
Unboxing Politics	2024	*Why Is Plagiarism Wrong?*		https://unboxingpolitics.substack.com/p/why-is-plagiarism-wrong
Zinsser, W.	2006	*On Writing Well*	7th Edition	HarperCollins
Additional reading (selected blogs)				
Alexander, S.	*Slate Star Codex/Astral Codex Ten*		https://slatestarcodex.com, https://astralcodexten.com/	
Defender	*Defender's Corner*		https://defenderofthebasic.substack.com/	
Dynomight	*DYNOMIGHT INTERNET WEBSITE*		https://dynomight.net/	
Hall, C.	*Useful Fictions*		https://usefulfictions.substack.com/	
Mastroianni, A.	*Experimental History*		https://experimental-history.com/	
Kemp, A.	*Goblin Punch*		https://goblinpunch.blogspot.com/	
Yglesias, M.	*Slow Boring*		https://www.slowboring.com/	