

# Transgression Stories

Catherine Gough-Brady

[catherine.gough-brady@rmit.edu.au](mailto:catherine.gough-brady@rmit.edu.au)

Catherine is a sessional teacher and will be checking her email on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Studio times

Wednesday 1.30-4.30pm 13.3.05

Friday 9.30-11.30am 94.4.26



*The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.*

*Oscar Wilde*

## ***What do stories of transgression tell us about our society and ourselves?***

### **Description:**

Stories of transgression form a large part of documentary and fiction content.

Transgression is a key dramatic device, often a key point in the narrative: when the rules are broken, and the consequences follow. The transgression can reveal a flawed character, or an uncontrollable situation. It can even involve a moral dilemma with no right solution. It raises the question of what is 'good' and 'bad'.

We are all familiar with the genre of true crime, but transgression stories can be much more complex than murder. They can be as intimate as a child's view of their heroin-addicted dad through to refugee boys trying to make their way out of Sodom into Europe. They can be as funny as understanding Gogol's Overcoat and as abstract as sonic scraps from the Israeli military. Transgression stories question our moral codes, and our moral codes permeate all parts of our lives.

This is an audio studio and you will learn how to manipulate sound to create space, character, story. The transgression stories you create can be documentary or fiction, or a combination. But, they must be audio.

Obviously enrol in this studio if sound interests you. But you can also do this studio if you are interested in exploring the use of transgression in creative works, the knowledge you gain will apply across the forms.

### **Aims of the Studio:**

- to read/watch/listen to works that explore transgression
- to understand how to be ethical audio creator
- to experiment, by creating audio stories about transgression

### **Studio Learning Approach and Schedule:**

The five contact hours each week will operate flexibly around different learning modes including, but not limited to:

- lecture/seminars discussing key concepts/theories/reading.
- screenings of relevant material
- student presentations of work-in-progress, with verbal feedback from studio leader and peers
- student work sessions focussed on class exercises and/or assessable project briefs

Attendance is required at both sessions. □

## Teaching Activities:

Activities are grouped mostly into two week periods. Please read them carefully so you know what you need to have heard/read before a particular session.

Wk 1	Wed 20 Jul + Fri 22 Jul.
Wk 2	Wed 27 + Fri 29 Jul <b>[Project Brief 1 presentation]</b>

### *True Crime as modern Noir*

**Week 1 session 1.** Introductions. Form into groups for in class assignments. Assign pairs for weekly updates. Talk about the role of the investigator/narrator, and the noir style.

You need to read this short story before the first class to be able to be part of the class:

Read Raymond Chandler's – Goldfish -

[http://ae-lib.org.ua/texts-c/chandler\\_goldfish\\_en.htm](http://ae-lib.org.ua/texts-c/chandler_goldfish_en.htm)

**Week 1 session 2.** Introduction to audio recording equipment H4Ns. Continue work on your scene in your group.

**Week 1 and 2 in class assignment:** pick a scene from Chandler's short story and adapt it into a short piece of radio. Work out how to distinguish internal monologue from dialogue, include atmos tracks and sfx. In the second class of week two present your group's work to class for feedback.

**Week 2 session 1.** In class presentation on your idea to pursue in this unit. Continue work on the scene.

**Week 2 session 2.** Present your scene and talk about your creative decisions and sonic solutions. **Guest Lecture: Brian Morris.**

For the guest lecture you should read this

Intro chapter to Stallybrass and White's *Politics and Poetics of Transgression* [see the google drive for this reading]

Over the next couple of weeks listen/read these:

- Ep 1 and 2 of series 1 of Sarah Koenig's Serial - <https://serialpodcast.org/season-one>
- Ep 1 and 2 of Somebody Knows Something - <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/sks>
- Tim Key and Gogol's Overcoat - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nt3y0>
- Kari Hesthamar's Tim Key and Gogol's Overcoat: Review 2 <http://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/vol1/iss1/13/>

- Kyla Brettle's Affairs of the Mind - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/affairs-of-the-mind>
- Mark Lawson's Serial thrillers: why true crime is popular culture's most wanted <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/dec/12/serial-thrillers-why-true-is-popular-cultures-most-wanted> (you may need to cut and paste some urls into your browser, like this one)

Think about the flawed nature of Noir characters (real and fictional) when you watch these short videos:

- The School of Life's HISTORY OF IDEAS - Failure - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IUj6jyoTlQ>
- The School of Life's Self Sabotage - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni-Gqp9-Has>

Wk 3	Wed 3 Aug + Fri 5 Aug.
Wk 4	Wed 10 Aug Fri 12 Aug [ <b>Project Brief 2 presentation</b> ]

### ***When health and family go wrong – the intimate story***

**Week 3 session 1** – Ethical dealings with subjects. Each group selects one of the listening pieces from this week and explores what ethical and legal dilemmas might arise in making it. Using the two articles as reference points to problems that could or did arise. Also identify the transgressions that are explored in the work.

Read these two before the first class:

- Wanda Bershen's A Question of Ethics: The Relationship between Filmmaker and Subject  
<http://www.documentary.org/feature/question-ethics-relationship-between-filmmaker-and-subject>
- Pat Aufderheide et al's report Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in Their Work  
<http://www.cmsimpact.org/making-your-media-matter/documents/best-practices/honest-truths-documentary-filmmakers-ethical-chall>

**Week 3 session 2** – In the group turn this analysis into an audio essay, using excerpts from the documentary, and your own research. **Guest Lecture: Rebecca Hill.**

**Week 4 session 1** –Present your group's audio essay and answer questions from your colleagues.

**Week 4 session 2** – Present project Brief 2 to the class.

Over the next couple of weeks listen to these, but make sure your group has all heard at least one of them for the in class assignment:

- Joe Richman's Thembi's AIDS Diary - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/thembis-aids-diary>

- Lu Olkowski's Grandpa - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/grandpa>
- Shirley "Star" Diaz and Melissa Allison's Growing Up in the System - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/growing-up-in-the-system>
- Janesse Nieves, Marianne McCune, and Czerina Patel's Heroin - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/heroin>
- Kim Normanton and Nigel Acheson's She's Alright, My Mum Is - <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/shes-alright-my-mum-is>

The audio essay will be based on a form used in video, but without the images. Here are two examples of interesting video essays, notice how different they are. They give you an idea of the range of possibilities.

- Wisecrack Edition's The Philosophy of House of Cards <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2de3LhPxpZU>
- Scout Tafoya's Which Movies Have the Greatest Cinematography? <https://vimeo.com/163008926>

Wk 5	Wed 17 Aug + Fri 19 Aug.
Wk 6	Wed 24 Aug + Fri 26 Aug

### ***War and oppression – using other languages, and shifting the grammar***

**Week 5 session 1.** New groups. Change the group you are in. Time to work with different people in the class. Many stories are not in English. Think about how to create works that use foreign languages, and can be 'understood' by an English speaker. Find a story that involves another language/culture. How will you tell that story? What will the transgression be?

**Week 5 session 2.** Work in your group on that story, recording it, editing it.

**Week 6 session 1.** Choose another group and play your story to them, ask them for feedback, make changes to the story as a result of that feedback.

**Week 6 session 2.** Play the work your group created to the whole class. Talk about your creative decisions, talk about your ethical decisions, talk about changes you made as a result of the feedback.

Over the next couple of weeks listen/read these:

- Jens Jarisch's Children of Sodom and Gomorrah - <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/360/children-of-sodom-and-gomorra/2956122>

- Virginia Marsden's Children of Sodom and Gomorrah: a critical reflection  
-<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=rdr>
- Stephen Schwartz's Sniper -  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/soundmusicword/sniper/4612710>
- Kaye Mortley's Gulpilil -  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/radioeye/gulpilil/3374810>
- John Wynne's Hearing Voices -  
<http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/explore/detail/hearing-voices>

## [Mon 29 Aug – Fri 2 Sept. | Mid-semester break - no classes ]

Wk 7	Wed 7 Sept + <b>[Project Brief 3 due – in class presentations]</b> Fri 9 Sept. <b>[Critiques and Guest Lecture]</b>
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**Week 7 session 1.** Project Brief 3 due – in class presentations

**Week 7 session 2.** Mid-Semester Critiques and Guest Lecture.

No new listenings/readings this week, use the spare time to catch on the ones you have missed during the semester, and to prep for the mid-semester critiques.

Wk 8	Wed 14 Sept + Fri 16 Sep
Wk 9	Wed 21 Sept + Fri 23 Sept

### ***Short works – Transgression can take place quickly***

**Week 8 session 1.** Storytelling – editing. This class will look at storytelling, and at the editing programme you are using.

For the session on storytelling watch/read these

*For everyone*

- Article on Stephen Cleary's What an audience feels  
<http://www.apocalypsefilms.com/stephen-cleary/>
- Ira Glass's Storytelling videos  
<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/about/make-radio>

*For those working in fiction*

- Richard J Hand's The radio drama handbook: audio drama in context and practice, Chapter 4 Writing. It is available to read online via RMIT library.

*For those working in documentary*

- Paddy Bird's This Simple Editing Technique Will Make Your Scenes More Dramatic & Powerful - <http://nofilmschool.com/2015/06/simple-editing-technique-will-make-your-scenes-more-dramatic-powerful>

**Week 8 session 2.** One on one session with tutor about your final works.

**Week 9 session 1.** Exploring the radiosphere 1 – your group needs to find a short audio work to play to the class, and talk about how you think the work was made and what you find interesting. The piece must deal with transgression in some form.

**Week 9 session 2.** Guest lecture. Person tba.

Over the next couple of weeks listen/read these:

- Mad Genius's Someone's Screaming Outside - <https://beta.prx.org/stories/79281>
- Catherine Gough-Brady's The Night Before <https://soundcloud.com/catherine-gough-brady/georgegittos-nightair-cgb>
- Jaye Kranz's The Hiding Place - <https://beta.prx.org/stories/80432>
- Meira Asher's refuse: military.01 - <https://meiraasher.bandcamp.com/track/fearless-radio-refuse-military-01>
- Sam Salem's Too Late Too Far - <https://soundcloud.com/sam-salem/too-late-too-far-2015>

Wk 10	Wed 28 Sept + Fri 30 Sep
Wk 11	Wed 5 Oct + Fri 7 Oct
Wk 12	Wed 12 Oct + Fri 14 Oct

### The Prix Italia winners

- find them and listen to works by the winners. Often prize-winning works will be stories of transgression.

**Week 10 Session 1.** Pitch to class how your final work is going, and received feedback.

**Week 10 session 2.** Exploring the radiosphere 2 – your group needs to find a second short audio work to play to the class, and talk about how you think the work was made and what you find interesting. The piece must deal with transgression in some form. It should have won a prize somewhere.

**Week 11 session 1.** You need to present to those in your group how your final project is going, play them material, and receive, and give, critical feedback that could help develop the work. Don't be scared – play what you have.

**Week 11 session 2.** The final presentation to the other groups. Working out how this will happen and what role you will play. You must be involved.

**Week 12 session 1 and 2.** Working on your final projects. Playing it to the tutor for feedback.

Wk 13	Mon 17 - Fri 21 Oct [ <b>Project Brief 4 Due + Project Brief 5 Due</b> ]
Wk 14	[ <b>Thurs 27 Oct :: Media Program Studio Presentations</b> ]

### **Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria**

You will be assessed on how well you meet the course's learning outcomes and on your development against the program learning outcomes. Assessment may include project work, written reports and presentations.

Feedback will be given on all assessment tasks.

If you have a long term medical condition and/or disability it may be possible to negotiate to vary aspects of the learning or assessment methods. You can contact the program coordinator or the Disability Liaison Unit if you would like to find out more.

Your course assessment conforms to RMIT assessment principles, regulations, policies, procedures and instructions which are available for review online:

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/policies/academic#assessment>

Students will be assessed according to the Learning Outcomes of the Media Course they are enrolled in (see below):

#### **COMM2625 Media 2**

1. Investigate, design and produce media at a basic level
2. Work collaboratively at a basic level
3. Reflect on and evaluate your own and other's creative process
4. Demonstrate basic critical literacies in the media discipline through engagement with relevant theories and frameworks

#### **COMM2627 Media 4**

1. Investigate, design and produce media at an advanced level
2. Work collaboratively at an advanced level
3. Provide reflective evaluations of your own and others creative process at an advanced level



## **Assessment - Project Briefs:**

### Project Brief 1 (no formal grade) – due Week 2

Three ideas for a transgression you would like to explore for your final piece. You need to create the following:

1. One paragraph on three ideas for a transgression story that you would like to explore.
2. List of 6 works (not on the reading list), that you will read/hear to help you explore the ideas of your work.
3. Identify what ethical or legal concerns are raised by the transgression you would like to explore.

The work must be presented to the class and submitted to the assignment google drive.

Students will provide feedback in the class to help you develop the idea, and suggest works you might like to hear/read.

Learning outcomes for assessment are:

Media 2: 1, 4

Media 4: 1

### Project Brief 2 (15%) – due Week 4 (15%)

Create a short audio essay about a radio work that explores transgression. The essay will be assessed on technical competence, creative skill, and the critical ideas in the work. The essay should include excerpts from the work you discuss as well as your analysis. The analysis can be based on conventional essay style, or be more experimental.

The work must be presented to the class and submitted to the assignment google drive.

Duration:

3-4 mins duration (audio).

Learning outcomes for assessment are:

Media 2: 1, 3

Media 4: 1, 3

### Project Brief 3 (25%) – due Week 7 (25%)

Sound as transgression. Create a short work about a sonic transgression. It can be spoken words, loud noises, music, anything that involves a transgression and sound. The work can use archive, interviews, soundscapes. It can be narrative or impressionistic. Documentary and/or fictional. You must consult with the tutor during

class on the idea before starting it. In that consultation you will need to talk about any ethical or legal issues in the work you propose.

The work will be assessed on the technical skills, creative skills, ethical preparation, and clear understanding of the nature of the transgression.

Duration

Audio work duration – 3-4 mins

The work must be presented to the class and submitted to the assignment google drive.

Learning outcomes for assessment are:

Media 2: 1, 2

Media 4: 1, 2

#### Project Brief 4 (40%) – due Week 13 (40%)

Your main project. This audio work returns to your initial moral question from the first assignment. The work explores this question. You must consult with the tutor during class on the idea before starting it. You must submit your ethical/legal report in person to tutor before starting, allow time for questions and tutor's advice. Once the tutor has signed off on your idea you can begin. The work can use archive in which you have gained copyright clearance, interviews, soundscapes. It can be narrative or impressionistic. documentary and/or fictional.

The work will be assessed on the technical skills, creative skills, ethical preparation, and clear understanding of the nature of the transgression.

You cannot use copyrighted audio in this work unless you have copyright clearance, or it is covered by an exception.

Duration

Do not submit a work that exceeds, or is under, the duration limits.

Audio – 6-10 mins

You must submit this online to the google drive. A link to this work must also be included in the studio blog.

Learning outcomes for assessment are:

Media 2: 1, 2

Media 4: 1, 2

#### Reflective Task 5 – due Week 14 (20%).

**Part 1 - Weekly updates on Studio blog and media factory site.** In pairs, create an audio update on the studio for other students to hear. Two people per week, for the 10 weeks. Weeks will be assigned in the first class. These updates are emailed to Rachel

and entered into the studio blog. Entries should be creative, reflective, and descriptive and refer to the works being read/listened to in that week.

Each person must be involved in presentation and studio blog.

**Part 2 - Presentation piece** – 1 x 8 minutes. An single audio work that will be played to the other students at the end of year presentation. It should include excerpts of works made and reflections on the studio.

**Part 3 - Studio blog** – It will include links to each final work, all the weekly updates, the 1 x 8 min presentation audio,

#### **Part 4 - Written Reflection**

Each student must submit a 1000 word written reflection that outlines what you did during the in-class exercises and reflects on what you learned. You can use quotes from your personal blog. The reflection should also include a bibliography, and mention at least three works from the reading/listening list.

You must submit this online. It will be assessed on fulfilling the assignment brief, writing skills, a clear indication that you participated in the in-class assignments, did the listenings/readings, did your weekly update, and role you played in the presentation and studio blog.

Learning outcomes for assessment are:

Media 2: 1, 2, 3, 4

Media 4: 1, 2, 3

### **Thurs 27 Oct :: Media Program Studio Presentations and Exhibition**

#### **Submission of Work:**

All assessment materials are required to be submitted electronically via shared folders on your RMIT Google Drive account. Each separate submission must be accompanied by the following electronic declaration:

I declare that in submitting all work for this assessment I have read, understood and agree to the content and expectations of the assessment declaration

Students should ensure that they keep backup copies of all and any type of work submitted.

#### **Technical Resources:**

All students must have a laptop they can bring to the studio. This should have functional software appropriate for editing the kinds of media objects (e.g. short audio pieces) we may be making. Specialist audio recording equipment is available for loan from the School of Media and Communication Technical Store on the Ground Floor of Building 9.

#### **Further Information:**

### **Safety and shooting protocols**

Safety issues in media production (including dealings with the public) will be addressed in the studio and are taken extremely seriously. Any transgressions against these policies will be dealt with severely.

### **Use of student work/s in research**

There may arise occasions where the work that you undertake, including work that is submitted for assessment, may be quoted or commented upon in research. Permission to cite work will only be sought after all assessment tasks have been completed and individual permission will be sought in all instances. All such work will be appropriately acknowledged and cited, and if you wish it will not specifically identify you.

### **Grading Principles**

HIGH DISTINCTION (80% and above) - Indicative of work. Distinguished by original thought, highly creative and innovative implementation, depth and clarity of documentation and/or discussion and an intelligent critical and/or creative engagement with the tasks.

DISTINCTION (70-79%) - Excellent work, containing original ideas and creative or innovative implementation, a comprehensive grasp of the requirements and their expression, but marred by one or two minor problems.

CREDIT (60-69%) - Good to very good work, displaying some original thought and creativity and/or innovation, but undermined by gaps in documenting or discussing what you have done and why, insufficient critical engagement with your ideas and work, or work that interprets the required tasks in an overly literal manner.

PASS (50-59%) - Average work, displaying a basic grasp of the requirements, but with a range of more or less serious flaws, such as technical problems, a lack of communicative clarity, lack of appropriate and adequate documentation and discussion, poor reasoning, and so on.

FAIL (0-49%) - Fail, or NN grades are given to inadequate work. Some reasons for failing include where there is no evidence of any attempt to cover what is required, or the work simply demonstrates the task rather than interprets and engages with the task. Plagiarism can also be grounds for failure. DNS indicates that no work was submitted for the assessment task.

### **Late submission**

If you are unable to complete your assessment project, assignment or essay by the due date, and you are seeking an extension of up to 7 calendar days, you need to apply to the course coordinator. The course coordinator will consider your request and will notify you within 24 hours as to whether your request for an extension of up to 7 calendar days from the due date has been granted or not.

This Application for Extension is to be made using the form downloaded from here: [Application for Extension](#) together with supporting evidence such as a medical certificate. The Application is to be submitted to the course coordinator (by email or in person), no later than one working day before the official due date.

However, if you are seeking an extension of longer than 7 calendar days, or if you are seeking an extension for an exam, test or lab-based assessment, you need to apply to the University for Special Consideration.

If you are unsure which application to make, please discuss with your program director or appropriate student adviser.

If the course coordinator does grant you an extension of up to 7 calendar days after the due date, or if the University does grant you [Special Consideration](#), and you submit the work within the time approved, you will not be penalised for lateness. However, if you submit your work late without an approved extension, your work will be penalised for lateness as follows: work submitted after the deadline without an approved extension, or approved Special Consideration, will incur a penalty of 5% of the total mark available for the assignment for each calendar day after the due date. For example, if an essay is worth 40 marks and is submitted 3 calendar days late, you will lose  $3 \times 2$  (5% of 40) = 6 marks.

Work submitted more than two weeks beyond the due date without an approved extension or approved Special Consideration will not be graded, resulting in a mark of zero (0%).

### **Study and Learning Centre**

If you need help with English expression or how to learn effectively in your course, you should make the time to investigate and use the following resources. RMIT has an [English Ready Centre](#) in building 80.3.17

Information and appointments can also be made at the [Study and Learning Centre website](#) as well as at their drop in centre in building 8, Level 4, Room 12, City campus. No appointment needed for city campus; just drop in.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and it is your responsibility as a student to be familiar with the University's Policy and Procedure related to Plagiarism. It is essential that you refer to the "Academic Integrity" section of the RMIT website, which includes information about Plagiarism (what it means, and the process and range of academic penalties when it is identified). This information can be found at <http://www1.rmit.edu.au/students/academic-integrity>.

Plagiarism in oral, written or visual presentations is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person, without appropriate referencing, as though it is one's own. Plagiarism is not acceptable. The use of another person's work or ideas must be acknowledged. Failure to do so may result in charges of academic misconduct which carry a range of penalties including cancellation of results and exclusion from your course.

### **Course Evaluation and Feedback**

Student feedback is welcome at any point throughout the course either in class, or via the teaching staff. A Course Experience Survey (CES) will be made available towards the end of semester whereby students can provide feedback anonymously. The results

of these surveys contribute directly to the content and learning processes of this course in future.

**Special consideration**

If, during the academic year, you believe that your performance has been affected by illness or other serious cause, and this has either prevented you from meeting an assessment deadline OR caused you to perform below standard during the assessment, you may apply in writing for a special consideration in the assessment of performance. Such applications must have supporting evidence attached (e.g. medical certificate) and shall be considered by the Head of Department or departments concerned, in accordance with the conditions laid down from time to time by the Board. Application forms can be obtained at any Hub or by accessing <http://www1.rmit.edu.au/students/specialconsideration>. Applications must be lodged no later than 48 hours after the due date for assessment.

**Student complaints policy**

For information about how to make a complaint and the Student Complaints Policy go to your Faculty or Departmental Office. More information at <http://www1.rmit.edu.au/students/complaints>.