

# LANG 3059 LAW, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 102416

**Coordinator** Christopher Conti (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Christopher Conti/>)

**Description** This subject explores the value of literature to provide insight into the role of law in society. With special emphasis on the post-Mabo context of Australian culture, students will examine the law not just as a set of codified rules or as a legal system but as a cultural story that embraces an understanding of who we are and where we came from. We view law not just as a set of rules but as a cultural story that defines our identity and roots. By analysing literary representations of legal notions such as justice, guilt, punishment, agency and confession, students will seek to understand the shared ground between literature and law, asking the thought-provoking question: "What can poets teach judges?" Through this exploration, students will enrich their understanding of both disciplines.

**School** Humanities & Comm Arts

**Discipline** Literature

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 1 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 3 subject

## Restrictions

Successful completion of 60 credit points of study in currently enrolled program.

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the culture of the rule of law and its impact on minority groups in Australia.
2. Investigate the intersection of law, sovereignty, narrative and race.
3. Analyse key legal concepts and practices (e.g. testimony, confession, crime, punishment, judgment, justice, human rights, etc) in the critical terms of their literary representation
4. Critically examine the politics and aesthetics of literary/cinematic discourse on historical and environmental issues.
5. Evaluate and compare the literary representation of legal decisions and issues with selected case studies of legal and historic significance.

## Subject Content

Topics include but are not limited to:

- Understanding the rule of law and its cultural/institutional supports;
- Following debates centring on the legal concept of sovereignty, including the distinction between settler sovereignty and Aboriginal sovereignty;
- Exploring practices of Aboriginal recognition in legal and cultural contexts, including the idea of legal story-telling and its cultural impact in The Bringing Them Home Report;

- Examining new genre distinctions like Indigenous Gothic, the sovereignty novel, and eco-fiction as ways of apprehending a new, post-Mabo cultural landscape;
- Investigate the discourse of 'coming to terms with the past' in comparative national and colonial contexts;
- Investigate the historical limitations of law to prosecute state crimes like genocide and the evolving legal and aesthetic discourses on the Holocaust;
- Inquire into the concept of emergency law or the state of exception and its fictional representations in comparative national contexts.

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task
Presentation	5 minutes + 800 words	15	N	Group/ Individual
Participation	In-class	5	N	Individual
Intra-session Exam	1,500 words	40	N	Individual
Essay	1,500 words	40	N	Individual

## Prescribed Texts

- Nicole Watson, *The Boundary*. UQP, 2011.
- J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Random House, 2005.
- Peter Weiss, *The Investigation*. Marion Boyars, 2000.

## Teaching Periods

### Autumn (2024)

#### Penrith (Kingswood)

##### On-site

**Subject Contact** Christopher Conti (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Christopher Conti/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject\\_code=LANG3059\\_24-AUT\\_KW\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject_code=LANG3059_24-AUT_KW_1#subjects))

### Parramatta - Victoria Rd

##### On-site

**Subject Contact** Christopher Conti (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Christopher Conti/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject\\_code=LANG3059\\_24-AUT\\_PS\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject_code=LANG3059_24-AUT_PS_1#subjects))