



MAS 314

Screenwriting: Images, Ideas, Stories

S2 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Alexander Murawski

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Y3A 193

Thursday 11am-1pm

Karen Pearlman

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp including MAS202

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The unit investigates a diversity of processes and techniques from around the globe for writing and editing drama, documentary and hybrid screenplays. Assessment tasks combine creative writing projects with critical analysis. It is relevant to those writing for performance, screens and digital media.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.

Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.

Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.

Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field

research tasks to a deadline.

Engage in the process of learning

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Critical Readings</u>	5%	Weeks 3 - 7
<u>Screenplay Synopsis</u>	20%	September 5th 2014
<u>Treatment & Analysis</u>	30%	October 10th 2014
<u>Screenplay Draft</u>	35%	November 14th 2014
<u>Workshop Participation</u>	10%	Throughout Semester

Critical Readings

Due: **Weeks 3 - 7**

Weighting: **5%**

In groups, students will present their analysis and response to set readings and lectures for a particular week (to be signed up for in the first class). The emphasis of the task is a brief presentation (about 10 minutes per student) raising issues and questions regarding the week's topic, lecture and readings. Students will then lead a workshop discussion.

MAS 314 students will prepare for their presentation and discussion in groups but will be individually marked for this assignment. However, you must show that you have planned your presentation as a group.

This is not a simple reproduction of information explored in the readings and lectures. Aim to expand the discussion from the readings and lectures into relevant areas.

Your individual 1-2 page presentation notes /outline must be handed in to your tutor after your presentation.

If you are absent on a day you are due to give a presentation, you will forfeit your marks. Should you have a doctor's certificate, however, please consult your tutor about rescheduling your presentation.

Assessment Criteria:

Clarity of expression

Capacity to articulate the key ideas of the text and expand discussion

Demonstrated relevant research

Engage in the process of learning

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Screenplay Synopsis

Due: **September 5th 2014**

Weighting: **20%**

Research and write a Synopsis for a 12-15 minute film.

As discussed in the course a vital component of short films is that they be focused and about one thing. *Narrow it down, then rewrite.*

In addition, screenwriters who pursue funding - which unless you are a media mogul is every one of us - often need to provide various summarised versions of their project along the way.

This assessment aims to challenge and assist in both of these skills. The process you take to realising and developing your idea is up to you.

For this assessment you must complete each of the following:

- a) Log Line (under 30 words)
- b) One Paragraph Synopsis (under 75 words)
- c) One Page Synopsis (This tells the complete story and has a clear indication of the story's structure – how it begins, develops and ends)
- d) Writer Development Notes (under 500 words)

This assignment will be discussed further in MAS 314 workshops.

Assessment Criteria

Ability to identify relevant/innovative screen ideas

Capacity to draft and revise a screenplay through successive stages and respond to critical feedback

Ability to identify and communicate screen ideas clearly and succinctly in a written document

Engage in the process of learning

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Engage in the process of learning

Treatment & Analysis

Due: **October 10th 2014**

Weighting: **30%**

Story Treatment and Research

This assessment consists of two parts - creative output and research. As screenwriters we are always combining the two. We are influenced by others yet need to step back and reflect on their methods in order to create our own.

Both the creative and research components must be completed.

Screenplay Treatment

a) A treatment is a chronological (in screen time) unfolding of the story. It is what is happening on the screen in words (prose, third person present tense) and pays particular attention to narrative, character, style and mood. It shows how you intend to 'treat' the story cinematically and generally avoids using dialogue.

It is to use 12 point Courier Font, single spacing and be no more than 3 pages.

Feature Screenplay Analysis

View a feature film made this century that has departed from the traditional screenwriting model (improvisation, no written script, other unusual approaches to narrative etc).

a) Provide a 75 word synopsis of the film.

b) Using any information you can about the script – excerpts online, interview with writer, press kit, production notes etc. - detail how the film departed from the traditional screenwriting model and reflect on the strength and weaknesses of the employed process on the final film (750 words)

c) Select a 1-2 page scene from any produced screenplay that you regard as compelling writing. The excerpt should include 'big print' and dialogue or narration. Briefly discuss its strengths. (300 words)

References must be provided for this assessment.

This assignment will be discussed further in MAS 314 workshops.

Assessment Criteria

Screenplay Treatment

Capacity to draft and revise a screenplay through successive stages and respond to critical feedback

Ability to identify and communicate screen ideas clearly and succinctly in a written document

Engage in the process of learning

Feature Screenplay Analysis

Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production

Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Screenplay Draft

Due: **November 14th 2014**

Weighting: **35%**

12-15 minute First Draft Short Film Screenplay

Your final assessment is a culmination of all the work throughout the semester. Your "first draft" should be the result of a well thought through idea that has been continuously revised, rewritten and reimagined.

Please provide:

- a) 50 word Synopsis of your idea
- b) 300 word account of how you have responded to feedback from your treatment and the process you have used to toward writing your first draft
- c) A 12-15 minute First Draft of your Short Film Screenplay.

Screenplays are expected to be formatted according to the Australian film industry conventions. Material will be provided on iLearn.

However, thought-through departures from standard formatting are acceptable. Options include a Scriptment or Image/Text Assemblage. Please consult with your tutor before submitting a non-traditional screenplay format.

This assignment will be discussed further in MAS 314 Workshops.

Assessment Criteria

Ability to effectively translate screen idea/s to a first draft screenplay stage.

Demonstrated capacity to respond to feedback and develop screenplay, as evidenced by 150 word account.

Appropriate formatting and writing fluency/competency.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Engage in the process of learning

Workshop Participation

Due: **Throughout Semester**

Weighting: **10%**

Students are expected to attend workshops regularly and actively contribute to discussions of readings, screenwriting exercises and readings of other students' work.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
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Delivery and Resources

Required and recommended texts and/or materials: The MAS 314 Unit Reader is required for this unit. This is available for purchase from Co-op Bookshop on campus.

Key texts referred to in this course are Linda Aronson (2010) *The 21st Century Screenplay*; Dancyger and Rush (2007) *Alternative Scriptwriting: Successfully Breaking the Rules*; J.J Murphy (2007) *Me and You and Memento and Fargo: How Independent Screenplays Work*; and Linda J. Cowgill (2005) *Writing short films: structure and content for screenwriters*

Students are expected to watch and listen to weekly lectures, and the content of these lectures will be addressed in the following week workshops.

Additional information relating to the Unit will be available on iLearn.

Attendance at Workshops : You must attend 9 out of 11 Workshops to pass MAS 314. Any absence from a workshop must be supported by documentation such a medical certificate and should be discussed with your tutor.

Extensions for Assignments: These are only granted on grounds of illness or misadventure, and appropriate supporting documentation (along with an extension form signed by a staff member) must be submitted. If you are having problems, please speak to your tutor as early as possible. Late delivery of assignments without agreement of the lecturer will incur a penalty and may result in automatic failure.

Special Consideration Policy: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Applying for Special Consideration: Students applying for Special Consideration circumstances of three (3) consecutive days duration, within a study period, and/or prevent completion of a formal examination must submit an on-line application with the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation. The online Special Consideration application is found at: <https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/forms/display/disruptions>

Technologies used: Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>. PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are a requirement.

Hard Copy Submissions: Written work must be submitted through the Arts Student Centre (via the appropriate assignment box) on Level 1, W6A. Students must print and attach a completed coversheet to all submitted work. A personalised assignment coversheet is generated from the student section of the Faculty of Arts website at: http://www.arts.mq.edu.au/current_students/undergraduate/admin_central/coversheet.

Please provide your student details and click the *Get my assignment coversheet* button to generate your personalised assignment cover sheet. No other coversheets will be provided by the Faculty.

Return of marked work: During semester, marked work will be returned to students in workshops. Residuals will be available for collection from the Arts Student Centre (W6A Foyer).

Examinations: There is no exam for MAS 314.

Unit Schedule

Week 1, beginning Monday 4th August

4th August Online Lecture: *Introduction to MAS 314*

No workshops

Week 2, beginning Monday 11th August

11th August, Online Lecture, *Generating Screen Ideas*

Workshops

Week 3, beginning Monday 18th August

18th August, Online Lecture, *Short Film Structure: A Viewpoint*

Workshops

Week 4, beginning Monday 25th August

25th August, Online Lecture, *Short Film Structure: World Views*

Workshops

Week 5, beginning Monday 1st September

1st September, Online Lecture: *Screenwriting Practices : Compose & Improvise*

Workshops

Screenplay Outline Assignment due Friday September 5th.

Week 6, beginning Monday 8th September

8th September, Online Lecture: *Traditional Story Structure*

Workshops

Week 7, beginning Monday 15th September

15th September, Online Lecture: *Alternative Story Structure*

Workshops

MID SEMESTER BREAK

Week 8, beginning Tuesday 7th October

Treatment and Research Week - No Lecture

Workshops

Story Treatment and Research Assignment due Friday October 10th October

Week 9, beginning Monday 13th October

Online Lecture: *Writing Speech and Inner Speech*

Workshops

Week 10, beginning Monday 20th October

No Lecture. Individual consultations with convenor, by arrangement

Workshops

Week 11, beginning Monday 27th October

No Lecture. Individual consultations with convenor, by arrangement

Workshops

Week 12, beginning Monday 3rd November

No Lecture. Individual consultations with convenor, by arrangement

Workshops

Week 13, beginning Monday 10th November

No Lecture. Individual consultations with convenor, by arrangement

Screenplay Draft Assignment due Friday November 14th.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Hard Copy Submission

Written work must be submitted through the Arts Student Centre (via the appropriate assignment box) on Level 1, W6A. Students must print and attach the appropriate coversheet - available through the student section of the Faculty of Arts website.

Late Submission

A late penalty of 5% per day will be applied.

Extensions

Extensions may only be granted by Unit Convenor in line with University policy.

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Synopsis
- Treatment & Analysis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Engage in the process of learning

Assessment tasks

- Treatment & Analysis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge,

scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Assessment tasks

- Critical Readings
- Screenplay Synopsis
- Treatment & Analysis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.

- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Assessment tasks

- Critical Readings
- Treatment & Analysis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.

Assessment tasks

- Critical Readings
- Screenplay Synopsis
- Treatment & Analysis
- Workshop Participation

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of

work-in-progress.

- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Synopsis
- Treatment & Analysis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify and refine screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.
- Engage in the process of learning

Assessment tasks

- Critical Readings
- Screenplay Synopsis
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded,

sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research tasks to a deadline.

Assessment task

- Workshop Participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Workshop Participation