



# MAS 314

## Screenwriting: Images, Ideas, Stories

S2 Day 2015

*Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Y3A 189H

tbc

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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.

Analyse and 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

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#"><u>Critical Readings</u></a>	10%	Throughout Semester
<a href="#"><u>Screenplay Outline</u></a>	25%	Wk 4 - 21 August, 2015
<a href="#"><u>Screenwriting Dossier</u></a>	20%	Week 7, 11 Sept, 2015
<a href="#"><u>Screenplay Draft</u></a>	35%	Week 13, November 6th 2015
<a href="#"><u>Workshop Participation</u></a>	10%	Throughout Semester

### Critical Readings

Due: **Throughout Semester**

Weighting: **10%**

In groups, students will present their analysis and response to set readings 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 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.

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 official 'disruption of studies' paperwork, however, please consult your tutor about rescheduling your presentation.

**Submission:** through in-class presentation and delivery of printed notes/outline on the same day, as scheduled in tutorials.

#### Assessment Criteria:

- Relevance, accuracy and insight of critical analysis of readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Clarity and professionalism of presentation
- Capacity to synthesise discipline specific knowledge as demonstrated through planning of presentation and leading of workshop discussion

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

## Screenplay Outline

Due: **Wk 4 - 21 August, 2015**

Weighting: **25%**

Research and write an Outline for a 12-15 minute film.

The Outline should include your initial *screen idea*, information on the *key location you envisage* and *brief development notes on the next stage*.

Your film idea can be presented as :

a. collage or assembly of images and text (may be delivered as powerpoint presentation, video, or pdf)

OR

b. a written text

It should be a maximum of 750 words or an equivalent in words and images.

This assignment will be discussed further in MAS 314 workshops.

**Submission:** via ilearn link

**Assessment Criteria:**

- Identification and some refinement of a screen idea
- Strength and clarity of the screen idea and its presentation
- Synthesis of discipline-specific knowledge as demonstrated by application of course content to conception and articulation of screen ideas

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.

## Screenwriting Dossier

Due: **Week 7, 11 Sept, 2015**

Weighting: **20%**

## Screenwriting Dossier (25%)

Writers in MAS 314 will keep a dossier of reports/research relating to contemporary screenwriting texts, practices and means of recording screen ideas.

Please choose 3 of the following 'open tasks.' The dossier should show engagement with material discussed at lectures and workshops in this course.

**1. One compelling scene.** Please select a 1-2 page scene from a produced screenplay that you regard as compelling writing. The excerpt should include 'big print' and dialogue or narration.

Briefly discuss its strengths in 500 words.

2. Screenwriting links. Prepare a page of **annotated web links** about screenwriting.

3. View a **film currently on release** in cinemas. Track down any information you can about the script – excerpts online, interview with writer, press kit, production notes. Write a 500 word report on its storytelling and/or idea exploration strategies.

4. Review a piece of **writing software such as 'Celtix', Non-linear storytelling software such as 'Twine' or pre-visualisation software** or iphone app. Eg *scripped*, *storyboard composer*. Evaluate its possibilities and limitations as a writing tool in 500 words.

5. Discuss the **dialogue** in any one scene of a published screenplay draft. (Not transcripts of films). 500 words.

Please feel free to add script excerpts and images to your Screenwriting Dossier.

**Submission:** via ilearn link in week 7

### Assessment Criteria:

- Relevance and depth of research as demonstrated through selection and investigation of materials
- Clear, concise and insightful critical analysis of materials selected

- Application and synthesis of discipline-specific knowledge as demonstrated by accuracy of observations and integration of course content with analyses

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

## Screenplay Draft

Due: **Week 13, November 6th 2015**

Weighting: **35%**

Develop your Screenplay Outline for a 12-15 minute screen production to a First Draft Script.

The Screenplay should be accompanied by a 50 word Synopsis of your idea and 150 word account of how you have responded to feedback on your Outline.

Screenplays will usually be expected to be formatted according to the Australian film industry conventions (for an example see: [http://www.awg.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=217&Itemid=73](http://www.awg.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=217&Itemid=73)). However, this assignment is not primarily a technical writing exercise and thought-through departures from standard formatting are acceptable. Options include a Scriptment or Image/Text Assemblage. Technical terms should be avoided as much as possible.

This assignment will be discussed further in MAS 314 Workshops.

**Submission:** via ilearn link

### **Assessment Criteria:**

- Development and refinement of screen ideas through successive stages of screenplay writing.
- Responsiveness to critical feedback.
- Strength and clarity of the screen idea and its presentation
- Synthesis of discipline-specific knowledge as demonstrated by application of course content to conception, development and articulation of screen ideas

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.

- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.

## 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.

**Submission:** Attendance and general level of relevant and collegial contributions in discussions, exercises and and readings will be noted.

### **Assessment Criteria:**

- Appropriately articulated and considered responses and contributions to critical feedback in screenplay readings processes.
- Relevant and observant contributions to discussion of readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.

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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Analyse and 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.

## Delivery and Resources

**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 disruption of studies, and appropriate supporting documentation. 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.

**Disruption to Studies Policy:** [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/procedure.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/procedure.html)

**Required and recommended texts and/or materials:** The MAS 314 readings are available through the MQ library e-reserve system. These readings are required for this unit.

**Technologies used:** Supplementary information and task submission links can be accessed

at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>. Internet access is required, as are basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing.

**Examinations:** There is no exam for MAS 314.

**Changes made to previous offerings of this unit:** The topics in this unit have been updated to reflect shifts in global screenwriting practices. Topics have been added to this unit in order to best offer students insight into the rapidly changing media environment, with a particular focus on digital screenwriting practices. In response to student feedback, the order and weighting of the assignments has been modified so that the research undertaken for the Screenwriting Dossier assignment can better feed into students' work on their own screenplays.

## Unit Schedule

### **Week 1, Weds 29 July or Thurs 30 July**

Workshops:

- Discussion: Generating Ideas 1
- Writing Exercise
- Intro to Unit

### **Week 2, Weds 5 Aug or Thurs 6 Aug**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Generating Ideas 2
- Writing Exercise

### **Week 3, Weds 12 Aug or Thurs 13 Aug**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Storytelling and Emotion
- Writing Exercise

### **Week 4, Weds 19th Aug or Thurs 20th Aug**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Global Storytelling
- Writing Exercise



*Screenplay Outline Assignment due Friday 21 August*

**Week 5, Weds 26th Aug or Thurs 27th Aug**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Nonfiction & Hybrids
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

**Week 6, Weds 2nd Sept or Thurs 3rd Sept**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Playing with Time
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

**Week 7, Weds 9th Sept or Thurs 10th Sept**

Workshops:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Building a Scene
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

*Screenwriting Dossier Assignment due Friday 11th September*

MID SEMESTER BREAK

**Week 8, Weds 30th Sept or Thurs 1st October**

Workshop:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Suspense & Revelation
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

**Week 9, Weds 7th Oct or Thurs 8th of Oct**

Workshop:

- Readings Presentations
- Discussion: Writing for a Low Budget/Storyworlds for Crossing Platforms
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

**Week 10, Weds 10th Oct or Thurs 11th of Oct**

Workshop:

- Discussion: Onscreen Drafting & Editing Thinking
- Exercise or Script Readings

### **Week 11, Weds 21 or Thurs 22 October**

Workshop Script Readings or Individual consultations with convenor or tutor, by arrangement with tute group

### **Week 12, Weds 28th or Thurs 29th October**

Individual consultations with convenor or tutor, by arrangement

### **Week 13, Weds 4th or Thurs 5th of November**

Individual consultations with convenor, by arrangement

*Screenplay Draft Assignment due Monday the 9th of November*

## **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](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](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](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/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## **Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

## MMCCS website

[https://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/faculties\\_and\\_departments/faculty\\_of\\_arts/department\\_of\\_media\\_music\\_communication\\_and\\_cultural\\_studies/](https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/department_of_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](http://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](http://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

### 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.
- Analyse and 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 Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation

## 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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Analyse and 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 Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- 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.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise script ideas through contributing to script readings of work-in-progress.

### Assessment tasks

- Screenwriting Dossier
- 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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Analyse and 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

- Critical Readings
- Screenplay Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- 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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Analyse and 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

- Critical Readings
- Screenwriting Dossier
- 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 readings about 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 Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- 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 readings about the nature of the screenplay in screen production.
- Analyse and 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

- Critical Readings
- Screenplay Outline
- 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**

- Analyse and 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