



# MAS 202

## Screenwriting: An Introduction

S1 Day 2015

*Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Kathryn Millard

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Y3A Room 157

Monday 2.30-4.00

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces students to writing for screen media; from film and television to portable devices. It explores techniques for developing ideas and writing scripts for fiction, non-fiction, animation and hybrid forms. This unit combines creative writing projects with critical analysis. It is relevant to those interested in screen media, writing and creative process.

## 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:

Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies

Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media

Draw upon independent research for a creative project

Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress

Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

Contribute to collaborative discussions

## General Assessment Information

### Unit Requirements and Expectations

Students attend a one-hour lecture weekly. Students attend and participate in a two-hour weekly tutorial workshop from Week 2. Students are expected to read and view materials posted by the Lecturer at the iLearn page for this course.

To pass this course, students are expected to attend lectures, participate in tutorial exercises and discussion, submit all assignments and receive a Pass grade overall.

Without adequate documentation (eg. doctor's certificate), missing more than three tutorials will adversely affect your participation grade.

There is no examination for this unit.

### Submitting Assignments

Assignments should be submitted via the boxes on the ground floor of Building W6A. They will be returned to students in class.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#"><u>Script Field-Notes</u></a>	25%	23/03/15
<a href="#"><u>Storyboard OR Treatment</u></a>	25%	27/04/15
<a href="#"><u>First Draft Script</u></a>	40%	05/06/15
<a href="#"><u>Participation</u></a>	10%	ongoing

### Script Field-Notes

Due: **23/03/15**

Weighting: **25%**

This task involves leaving your computer behind and taking a field trip. The aim is to observe/record details from the world. This material will feed into the short screenplay you will be working on this semester.

A. Write a 150 word outline of your script idea. Your script idea should be for a movie suitable for broadcast via the web, mobile devices or screening. It should be able to be shot in Australia. It could be for a short drama, non-fiction, animation or hybrid movie.

B. Assemble Field-Notes for your script idea.

Your Field-notes should address the following:

1. **Character.** Draw a quick sketch of your proposed character or entity. Or record an interview with someone who might have a similar professional or personal background to your proposed character? What did you learn that was surprising about this person or entity? What were your observations of the subject's dress, body language and speech rhythms? How could you draw on this in developing your script?
2. **Place.** Visit a place that could function as a key location in your script. Take some photographs. Observe the time of day. Note the light, colours, forms, location sounds. Consider how you might use these observations in your script.
3. **Key Imagery.** Assemble 6 key images (photographs, postcards, magazine images, found pictures, frames from other movies etc.) that could inspire situations, ideas, imagery or dramatic action.
4. **Research.** Briefly summarise any key reading, viewing or listening that has informed your script idea.
5. **Key text.** A quote that is relevant to your idea. (Please provide details of the writer and where it was published.)

Assemble your notes into a document/folder for assessment.

Prepare a 10 minute version to discuss with your tutorial group. Your tutor will allocate you a time to present.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress

## Storyboard OR Treatment

Due: **27/04/15**

Weighting: **25%**

The storyboard for this assignment is aimed at developing your script idea, rather than shot-listing for production.

Prepare the storyboard or treatment using Celtx or Microsoft Word. If you would like to use an alternative, discuss it with your tutor.

Development Storyboard Parameters:

A development storyboard presents an overview of your proposed 10 minute script in sketches and/or photographs and text.

1. The storyboard can use text on screen, voiceover, music and sound. Keep any dialogue to a minimum.

2. You must include a minimum of 12 images. Use more if necessary.
3. The storyboard should be prepared using Celtx software (unless you have discussed an alternative with your tutor). Please submit a printed hard copy for assessment.
4. The storyboard should be accompanied by a 150 word outline of your 10 minute script idea.

#### Treatment Parameters

A treatment is usually a chronological (in screen time) unfolding of your story, generally without dialogue, paying particular attention to style, dynamics, mood, genre, colour, character, sound and action. *It is what is happening on the screen in words.*

The submitted treatment should include:

1. 3-6 line biographies of the key characters
2. 3 page complete draft story treatment
3. Detailed scene breakdowns of the first three scenes of the script.

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- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

## First Draft Script

Due: **05/06/15**

Weighting: **40%**

Write a First Draft screenplay of around 10 minutes (roughly 10 pages).

You should aim to draw on the research you have undertaken - and the feedback you have received - throughout the semester.

#### Script Parameters

1. Tell the story visually. Use dialogue sparingly.
2. Please refer to the Australian film industry's standard drama format for guidance.

Alternative presentations such as photo/text collage, complete animation storyboard, graphic novel style, or transmedia, game or multi-platform format scripts – are encouraged. Please discuss this option with your tutor or the lecturer well in advance of the due date.

Please note that information on formatting will be available at the unit's iLearn page. It will be discussed in tutorials ahead of the assignment.

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## Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all tutorials. Participation is more than attendance. It requires being punctual and prepared. Tutorials will be devoted to exercises aimed at generating ideas and stories and discussion of creative work-in-progress.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Contribute to collaborative discussions

## Delivery and Resources

### E Readings

MAS 202 e-readings for this course will be available on the iLearn site prior to the weeks teaching. Additional hard copies of recommended and required readings will be placed on 7 day loan in Reserve. The e-readings contain information necessary to completing assignments for this course. Additional readings will be posted on iLearn through the semester.

### Technologies/resources required.

Students will be required to use their own computers for development of treatments, storyboards and scripts. It is recommended that MAS 202 students become familiar with Celtx (free script software). Microsoft Word or Final Draft (professional script writing software) can also be used for scriptwriting.

## Unit Schedule

### Lecture Schedule (and Required Readings)

**Week 1:** *Introduction to MAS 202. What is a Screenplay?*

**Week 2:** *Where do story ideas come from?*

Reading:

Karentnikova, Inga (1990) *How Scripts Are Made* pp. 1-15

Wells Paul (2007) 'Initial Ideas and starting points' in *Scriptwriting Basics* (Animation) pp. 40-57.

**Week 3:** *Journeys and Going Places*

Reading:

Dancyger, Ken and Rush, Jeff (2007) 'Alternative Scriptwriting' pp.16-37

Shortland, Cate (2004) *Flowergirl* Script in Emma Crimmings and Rhys Graham Ed. '*Short Site: Recent Australian Short Film*'

**Week 4:** *People and Encounters*

Reading:

Dancyger, Ken (2001) 'Genre' in *Global Scriptwriting* pp.59-74

Elliot, Adam (2004) *Harvey Krumpet* Script in Emma Crimmings and Rhys Graham Ed. '*Short site: Recent Australian Short Film*' 2004.

**Week 5 : Guest Lecturer**

**Week 6: Drawn from Life**

Sorkin, Aaron (2010) *Social Network* Screenplay pp.1-20

**SEMESTER BREAK**

**Week 7:** *Writing with Images*

Reading:

Millard, Kathryn (2006) 'Writing for the Screen: Beyond the Gospel of Story'

[http://www.scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal\\_id=77](http://www.scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=77)

Nolan, Christopher (2010) *Inception – Shooting Script* pp. 7-19

**Week 8:** *Voice and Sound*

Grove, Eliot (2014) *Raindance Writers' Lab* pp.101-112

**Week 9: Guest Lecturer**

**Week 10:** *Collaboration*

Reading

Millard, Kathryn (2014) 'Collaboration: Writing the Possible' in '*Screenwriting in a Digital Era*' pp. 158-177

Alibar, Lucy and Zeitlin Benh (2012) *Beasts of the Southern Wild* Screenplay pp.1-20

**Week 11:** *The Writer's Room*

Reading:

Redvall, Eva Novrup (2014) *Writing and Producing Drama in Denmark* pp. 131-158

Read an excerpt from one of the Emmy Award nominated scripts here:

<http://la-screenwriter.com/2013/07/22/read-scripts-of-emmy-nominated-shows/>

**Week 12:** *Writing for Production*

**Week 13:** *No Lecture this week*



## 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).

## Additional information

MMCCS website [https://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/faculties\\_and\\_departments/faculty\\_of\\_arts/departments/media\\_music\\_communication\\_and\\_cultural\\_studies/](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](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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action
- Contribute to collaborative discussions

### Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes

- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action
- Contribute to collaborative discussions

### Assessment tasks

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- 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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project

## Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

## Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies

- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action
- Contribute to collaborative discussions

### **Assessment tasks**

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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**

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

### **Assessment tasks**

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Generate story ideas and material suited to screen media
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action
- Contribute to collaborative discussions

## Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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:

## Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Storyboard OR Treatment
- First Draft Script
- 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

- Participation