MAS 202

Screenwriting: An Introduction

S1 Day 2016

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

Contents

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Kathryn Millard
kathryn.millard@mq.edu.au
Contact via kathryn.millard@mq.edu.au
Y3A Room 157
Monday 2.30-4.00

Justine Martin
justine.martin@mq.edu.au

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

General Assessment Information

Unit Requirements and Expectations

Students attend a one-hour lecture in Week1 and view a weekly lecture on iLearn in Weeks 2-10

Students attend and participate in **a two-hour tutorial each fortnight beginning in Week 2**. You are required to attend all tutorials. As participation in the process of learning is linked to and underpins the unit Learning Outcomes, you will need to either apply for Disruptions to Studies to cover any missed tutorial (if the disruption is greater than three days) or supply appropriate documentation to your unit convenor for any missed tutorial (if less than three consecutive days).

Students are expected to read and view materials posted by the Lecturer at the iLearn page for this course.

Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes. Timely submission of assessment tasks is a unit requirement or penalties apply. 10% per day (including weekends) will be deducted for all late submissions unless Disruption to Studies (including a request for an extension) is approved.

There is no examination for this unit.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments should be submitted via the link at the Course's iLearn page.

They will be returned to students in class.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Script Field-Notes	30%	25/3/16
Treatment	30%	26/04/16
First Draft Script	40%	05/06/15

Script Field-Notes

Due: **25/3/16**
Weighting: **30%**

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 12 key images (photographs, postcards, magazine images, found pictures, frames from other movies etc.) that could inspire situations, ideas, imagery or dramatic action.

4. **Reading/Viewing/Listening Research**. In 1-2 pages, 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 digital document for assessment. Please include some key images.

Prepare a 10 minute summary to discuss with your tutorial group.

Assessment Criteria

The criteria for this assessment are:

* Suitability of your outline as the basis for an engaging and innovative short film

* Clarity and fluency of written expression

* Evidence of in-depth research suited to the development of your screen idea that includes all five required modes in section B above (place, character, imagery, viewing/listening/reading, key text)

* Assembly and presentation of your work - both text and images.

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

Treatment

Due: **26/04/16**
Weighting: **30%**

The treatment is a stage in developing your screen idea.You can submit a treatment for a fiction or non-fiction project.

Prepare the treatment using Celtx or Microsoft Word. You may find some of the development tools in Celtx useful.

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, themes character, sound and action. a documentary version may provide additional material on research, themes. *It is what is happening on the screen in words. I*mages can form part of the treatment but this is not essential.

The submitted treatment should include the following elements:

1. a 50 - 75 word outline summarising your idea in an engaging way.

2. 3-6 line biographies of the key characters or participants (non-fiction)

3. a two page treatment

4. The first three scenes of the script fully written.

A handout with some approaches and examples will be available at iLearn before the assignment is due.

Assessment Criteria

* Clarity of expression

* Ability to tell a story (fiction or non-fiction) visually

* Understanding of the modes of writing used for a script treatment and scene breakdown.

* Presentation

On successful completion 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

First Draft Script

Due: **05/06/15**

Weighting: **40%**

Write a First Draft screenplay of around 10 minutes (roughly 10 pages) for a short movie. You should aim to draw on the research you have undertaken - and the feedback you have received - throughout the semester.

Parameters

1. Tell the story visually. Use dialogue sparingly. Narration or text on screen are good alternatives.

2. Format using an accepted Australian film industry format.

 Please note that information on formatting and examples for fiction and non-fiction will be available at the unit's iLearn page. This will be discussed in tutorials ahead of the assignment.

3. The submitted assignment should include a title page followed by a 50-75 word outline (revised from the treatment) summarising your idea in an engaging way.

4. The submitted assignment should include a 200 word Writer's Statement identifying any challenges and obstacles you faced in shaping the story materials and how you have chosen to address them.

Assessment criteria

* The suitability of the First Draft as the basis of an engaging and innovative short movie

* Written expression and demonstrated use of visual storytelling, narration and dialogue, as appropriate to your chosen genre, form etch.

* Demonstrated understanding of script formatting

* Evidence of critical reflection in Writers' Statement.

On successful completion 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

Delivery and Resources

E-Readings

MAS 202 e-readings for this course will be available via the Library. The e-readings contain information necessary to completing assignments for this course.

Videos

Key videos relevant to assignments will be available through the MAS 202 iLearn page**.** They form part of the lecture material.

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 can also be used for scriptwriting.

Unit Schedule

Lecture Schedule (Week 1 only a live lecture. Lectures for Weeks 2-10 to be viewed at iLearn site).

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

Week 2 Tuesday March 8th **:** *Where do Story Ideas come from? Script Stages.*

Week 3: Tuesday March 15th *Story Structures: Journeys and Going Places*

Week 4: Tuesday March 22nd *Story Structures: People and Encounters*

Assignment 1 Due Friday March 25th 9.00 a.m.

Week 5: Tuesday March 29th *Writing Visually*

Week 6: Tuesday 5th April *Approaches to Character*

SEMESTER BREAK 11th - 25th April

Assignment 2 Due Tuesday 26th April 9.00 a.m.

Week 7: Tuesday 26th April *Speech and Inner Speech*

Week 8: Tuesday 3rd May *Playing with Time*

Week 9: Tuesday 10th May *Short Script Case Studies*

Week 10: Tuesday 17th May *Writing for Production and Collaborative Environments*

Assignment 3 Due Tuesday Friday 27th May

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

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessm

ent/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.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/

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.

Additional information

MMCCS website 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) 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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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

Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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

Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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

Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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

Assessment tasks

- Script Field-Notes
- Treatment
- First Draft Script

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
- Treatment
- First Draft Script