MAS 314

Screenwriting: Images, Ideas, Stories

S2 Day 2017

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Karen Pearlman
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Y3A 189H
Tuesdays 1:15 by appointment

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
(39cp at 100 level or above) 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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.

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

Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.

Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Screenplay Outline	25%	No	week 4, Sunday, 27 August
Screenwriting Dossier	25%	No	Wk7 in class & online
Screenplay Draft	40%	No	Sunday, 13 November
Workshop Participation	10%	No	Throughout Semester

Screenplay Outline

Due: **week 4, Sunday, 27 August**
Weighting: **25%**

Screenplay Outline

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

The Outline should include your initial screen idea, with reference to your idea's cinematic qualities, storyworld, characters, events or plot, narrative or change over time, genre or tone, and theme. Include an image of a key location, prop or costume that you envisage and brief notes on the ways you will research and develop the idea's strengths and address gaps in logic, coherence or drama.

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

Feedback: General comment, rubric and in-text comments attached to assignments marked in

GradeMark.

Late Submissions: No extensions will be granted. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a **10% per day** penalty. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Screenwriting Dossier

Due: **Wk7 in class & online**
Weighting: **25%**

Screenwriting Dossier (25%)

Writers in MAS 314 will keep a dossier of reports/research relating to contemporary screenwriting texts and practices

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. 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. 500 words

3. Choose one of the following **terms** commonly used in professional screen writing practice: Character backstory, Subtext, Metaphor or Genre. Research the term and summarise a working definition of it (derived from more than one source) in 250 words or less. Write an example of it that will be useful in your developing screenplay. This might be a character backstory, a scene with subtext, a cinematic metaphor or a story world in your chosen genre.

4. Select a short film (NOT one you wrote or one where you can access the screenplay) and transcribe the dialogue. Then **write 'big print'** (scene headings and description of action) that you think could have been in the original screenplay that would have elicited the directorial responses that you see in the production. If the film is longer than 5 minutes you may

just do the first scene, last scene and a key scene in the middle.   Provide a link to the film with your submission.

5. Trade screenplay outlines or drafts of scenes with someone else in the class and provide a dramaturgical response to your partner's ideas that includes: written observations or questions about the storyworld, characters, theme and perspective and relevant reference images, other films, books, information, artworks, sites, locations or casting possibilities that you think might be useful or inspiring to the idea you are reading about.

Submission: via brief (5 minute) in class presentation and ilearn link in week 7

Assessment Criteria:

- Concise and insightful critical analysis of screen ideas, terms, screenplays, films, or links selected

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

- Clear and professional written communication, formatting and presentation.

Feedback: General comment, rubric and in-text comments attached to assignments marked in GradeMark.

Late Submissions: No extensions will be granted. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a **10% per day** penalty. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.

Screenplay Draft

Due: **Sunday, 13 November**
Weighting: **40%**

Develop Assessment Task #1 (Screenplay Outline) into a 12-15 minute script

The script 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). 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

Feedback: General comment, rubric and in-text comments attached to assignments marked in GradeMark.

Late Submissions: No extensions will be granted. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a **10% per day** penalty. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Identify and develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Workshop Participation

Due: **Throughout Semester**
Weighting: **10%**

Students are expected to attend workshops regularly and make considered and informed contributions in response to weekly discussion questions, screenwriting exercises and other students' work.

Submission: through consistent punctual attendance and relevant, informed contributions in discussions of scripts, screenings and readings.

Assessment Criteria:

- Appropriately articulated and considered responses and contributions to critical feedback in screenplay readings processes.
- Relevant and observant contributions to discussion of readings and screenings.

Active participation is assessed by a student's engagement in activities such as; discussions facilitated by the lecturer/tutor, contributions to online discussion forums, or general questions asked during lectures or tutorials and involvement in set activities. Participation is expected to be well considered and relevant to the unit of study.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Identify and develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Delivery and Resources

Extensions for Assignments: These are only granted on grounds of disruption of studies, and appropriate supporting documentation. Late delivery of assignments without agreement of the lecturer will incur a penalty. See late submission policy below.

Late Submissions

Tasks 10% or less. No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Tasks above 10%. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty of 10% per day. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved.

Disruption to Studies Policy: 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.   Assessment Tasks have been modified to integrate theory and practice more effectively.

Unit Schedule

Week 1

Workshops:

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

Week 2

Workshops:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Generating Ideas 2
- Writing Exercise

Week 3

Workshops:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Storytelling, Character and Emotion
- Writing Exercise

Week 4

Workshops:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Storytelling and Place
- Writing Exercise

Assessment Task #1 due at end of week 4

Week 5

Workshops:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Nonficiton & Hybrids
- Writing Exercise or Script Readings

Week 6

Workshops:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Playing with Time
- Writing Exercise or Dramaturgical work with peers

Week 7

Workshops:

- In class presentations of Screenwriting Dossiers - 5 minute summary of what you did, what you learned and how you will apply it

Screenwriting Dossier Assessment Task #2 due in class in week 7

MID SEMESTER BREAK   - WORK ON SCREENPLAY IS EXPECTED

Week 8

Workshop:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Suspense & Revelation
- Writing Exercise or Dramaturgical work with peers - developing screenplay drafts

Week 9

Workshop:

- Critical Analysis of Readings and/or Screenings
- Discussion: Writing for a Low Budget/Storyworlds for Crossing Platforms
- Writing Exercise or Dramaturgical work with peers - developing screenplay drafts

Week 10

Workshop:

- Discussion: Onscreen Drafting & Editing Thinking
- Writing Exercise or Dramaturgical work with peers - developing screenplay drafts

Week 11

Creative exercises and dramaturgical work - developing screenplay drafts

Week 12

Individual consultations with convenor or tutor, by arrangement

Week 13

Individual consultations with convenor or tutor, by arrangement

Screenplay (Assessment Task #3) due

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_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration

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.

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

- Identify and develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
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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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.

- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Outline
- 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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment tasks

- 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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment tasks

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- 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

- Identify and develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Outline
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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 develop screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
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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

- Apply discipline-specific knowledge by planning, carrying out and documenting field research and writing tasks to a deadline.
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- Screenplay Draft
- 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:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.
- Analyse and evaluate texts that conceptualise screen ideas through in-class development of own and peers work

Assessment tasks

- Screenplay Outline
- Screenwriting Dossier
- Screenplay Draft
- Workshop Participation