



MMCC3012

Screen Production: Documentary Filmmaking

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

School of Communication, Society and Culture

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	5
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	5
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	10

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Karen Pearlman

karen.pearlman@mq.edu.au

rm 157, 10HA

Tuesdays 5:30 to 7 pm drop in sessions weeks 1-6 and 9-12, all welcome, room 284, 10HA

technical director (cameras, lights, mics, etc.)

Alex Ryan

alex.ryan@mq.edu.au

Contact via email

10HA

by appointment

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp at 1000 level or above including MAS213 or MMCC2013

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The special focus of this unit is documentary as a mode of screen storytelling. Students encounter different modes and forms of documentary production and analyse the impact of the strategies used to shoot and compose them. Students practice core documentary making skills such as observation, interview, image composition, dramatisations and structuring stories. Through practical work, students address a range of artistic choices available in representing the real. By engaging with the opportunities this unit offers, students can produce work suitable for their professional portfolios and for entry into film festivals.

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:

ULO1: synthesise practical, technical and conceptual skills through the research,

development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen production.

ULO2: develop and implement strategic creative and technical pathways towards the production of non-fiction screen works.

ULO3: analyse technical and creative strategies through a critical appraisal of non-fiction screen works.

ULO4: evaluate critically one's own and other's creative screen works.

General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day an assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to written reports and recordings only. Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs) will be addressed by the unit convenor through email correspondence and/or special consideration application.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Creative Task 1 (minor)	35%	No	11/04/2025
iLearn Quizzes & Tasks	15%	No	weekly, weeks 1-6
Creative Task 2 (major)	50%	No	30/05/2025

Creative Task 1 (minor)

Assessment Type ¹: Creative work

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **11/04/2025**

Weighting: **35%**

Creative Screen Production Task. Refer to iLearn for further information.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- synthesise practical, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen production.

- develop and implement strategic creative and technical pathways towards the production of non-fiction screen works.
- evaluate critically one's own and other's creative screen works.

iLearn Quizzes & Tasks

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **weekly, weeks 1-6**

Weighting: **15%**

Students will respond to a series of low-stakes iLearn activities such as quizzes, short practical exercises, or critical viewing tasks. Students will be expected to draw on resources informing these tasks for their productions and reflection statements.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- analyse technical and creative strategies through a critical appraisal of non-fiction screen works.
- evaluate critically one's own and other's creative screen works.

Creative Task 2 (major)

Assessment Type ¹: Creative work

Indicative Time on Task ²: 60 hours

Due: **30/05/2025**

Weighting: **50%**

Creative screen production task. This is a creative project incorporating advanced production techniques discussed in the unit. Refer to iLearn for further information.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- synthesise practical, technical and conceptual skills through the research, development and collaborative realisation of creative non-fiction screen production.
- develop and implement strategic creative and technical pathways towards the production of non-fiction screen works.
- evaluate critically one's own and other's creative screen works.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

This unit is delivered on campus, in order to facilitate skills development in collaboration and use of professional standard equipment.

For Creative Task 1 students are generally expected to work independently using their phones and laptops, but may request access to gear by submitting production approval forms through the booking system.

For Creative Task 2 students work in teams, with each person performing an individually assessable role on a crew and using Macquarie University cameras, lights, sound recording gear and editing software.

All editing must take place on campus in the specially designated editing suites allocated to third year student to ensure professional level skills.

Unit Schedule

This schedule is provisional and any substantive variations will be posted on ilearn.

NOTES:

- ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL SCHEDULED SEMINARS, PRACTICALS AND WORKSHOPS
- ALL EDITING WILL TAKE PLACE ON CAMPUS. Your Creative Task 2 productions will have access to individual edit suites and we will review productions there in weeks 10 and 12.
- For the first 6 weeks of semester, the unit convenor will be available for consults in room 284 of 10HA from 5:30 to 7pm on Tuesdays.

Week	Activity	Notes & Due dates
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<p>1</p>	<p>SEMINAR</p> <p>Monday 4pm Feb 20 (ONLY),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything you need to know about the unit and how to get the most out of it • Meet the cohort and start the brainstorm <p>AND</p> <p>Practical Class</p> <p>Tuesday 10am, 12 pm or 3pm, or Weds 10 am, or 1pm – according to your enrolment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT DEVELOPMENT • PITCH PRACTICE 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><i>Bring your ideas this week!</i></p> <p>Could be an idea for a character, or an incident or event, or an issue or idea, or a feeling or experience, or a place with some history or story.</p> <p>We want lots of ideas to workshop!</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable activities</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Practical Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT DEVELOPMENT • PITCHING AND CREWING 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><u>Individually or with others</u></p> <p>Prepare a powerpoint to help you and/or your colleagues pitch a documentary production idea</p> <p><u>Individually</u></p> <p>Choose themes/ideas for individually authored documentaries</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable development activities</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTERVIEWS • CAMERAS & MICS 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><u>As a crew:</u></p> <p>Production meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set schedule, • allocate research tasks • create Milanote or google drive • discuss theme, approach & resources <p><u>Individually</u></p> <p><i>Researching & writing</i> Individually Authored documentaries</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable activities including upload of contribution to Crewed Doc.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VISUAL STYLE • DESIGN & LIGHTING FOR STORY/ IDEAS 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><u>As a crew:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production meetings: • Discuss research & references each team member has contributed on characters, issues, and/or contexts. • Outline scripts 1 (Identify locations, expectations, questions, characters, imagine a sequence) • Producers: if team members are not contributing or participating fully please notify convenor. <p><u>Individually</u></p> <p>Selecting or shooting material Individually Authored documentaries</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable activities including upload of creative contributions & production documents for Creative Task 2</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHOOTING ON THE FLY • EDITING DOCUMENTARY 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><u>As a crew:</u></p> <p>Production meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine script outline • Confirm sourcing of locations, characters, props/sets • Shoot an onscreen draft <p><u>Individually</u></p> <p>Shooting/recording/generating</p> <p>Individually Authored documentaries</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable activities including upload of creative contributions & production documents for Creative Task 2</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>WORKSHOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IN CLASS PRODUCTION MEETING WITH CONVENOR • In-class mini 'onscreen draft' (trying out ideas) & work with Alex on technical challenges 	<p>PREP:</p> <p><u>As a crew:</u></p> <p>Production meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm schedule, & locations & cast • plan shotlist & shooting schedule • allocate transport • prep & submit production approval forms • book gear <p><u>Individually</u></p> <p>Editing & Sound – individually authored documentaries</p> <p>Online readings & screenings & assessable activities including upload of creative contributions & production documents to Crewed Docs.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>No scheduled classes this week</p> <p><u>INDIVIDUALLY AUTHORED DOCUMENTARIES</u></p> <p><u>(CREATIVE TASK 1)</u></p> <p><u>DUE ON THE 11TH OF APRIL!</u></p>	<p><u>As a crew:</u></p> <p>Production meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finalise plans • submit revised production approval forms as needed • book any unbooked gear you require

Mid sem break	<p><u>Production week 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production period – shooting & sound recording of Creative Task 2 	
Mid sem break	<p><u>Production week 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production period – shooting & sound recording of Creative Task 2 • Ingesting, viewing & sorting material already shot • Create paper edits/plans 	
8	<p><u>Production week 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production period – shooting & sound recording of Creative Task 2 • Ingesting, viewing & sorting material already shot • Create paper edits/plans 	
9	<p><u>FINAL PRODUCTION WEEK & EDIT WEEK ONE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production period – shooting & sound recording of Creative Task 2 • Ingesting, viewing & sorting material already shot • Create paper edits/plans • MOVE INTO EDIT SUITES, SET UP PINBOARDS 	

10	<p>EDIT WEEK 2 & Practical Class</p> <p>Edit Suites building 10HA (attendance is compulsory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st assembly screenings • Feedback and discussion of material's strengths and possibilities • Debrief on shoots 	<p>EDITING – all post-production work must take place on campus. See post-production pathway guidelines.</p>
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11	<p>EDIT WEEK 3 & Practical Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough cut screenings, • Feedback and discussion of structure and storytelling • Attendance is compulsory for all students • 	<p>EDITING & SOUND</p> <p>all post-production work must take place on campus. See post-production pathway guidelines.</p>
12	<p>EDIT WEEK 4 & Practical Class & SUBMISSION</p> <p>Edit Suites building 10HA</p> <p>(attendance is compulsory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine cut screenings • Discuss rhythm, character, tone • Feedback and discussio <p>Reflections and EXPORTS are due on ilearn on 30 May at 11:55pm</p> <p>Producers and directors are responsible for ensuring that they or the editors or sound designers on their team check their sound mix and grade before exporting, export to the correct folder on the server and also save a copy of the film to an external drive of their own (for your portfolios or festival submissions)</p>	

Before you finalise your grade and sound you must meet, in the edit suite, with Alex Ryan or Tom Benson to ensure that your work meets standards. You may get support for exporting during that meeting. You must ensure that your export settings are for ProRes422HQ as a minimum quality standard, and you must export to your Exports folder on NEXIS. More details on ilearn under assessment task details.

Attendance is required at all practical classes.

A minimum of 12 hours of your editing time (4 hours per week in weeks 10, 11, and 12) must be on campus working collaboratively with editor and director in the same edit suite at the same time. More collaborative on campus work is recommended so that you can get appropriate input on the creative direction of the work from your team as well as input from lecturers or technical staff.

A minimum of 4 hours of sound editing time must be on campus working collaboratively with sound editor and director in the same edit suite at the same time. More collaborative on campus work is recommended so that you can get appropriate input on the creative direction of the work from your team as well as input from lecturers or technical staff.

Policies and Procedures

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

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)

- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.

Unit information based on version 2025.03 of the [Handbook](#)