



MAS 202

Screenwriting: An Introduction

S1 Day 2018

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Karen Pearlman

karen.pearlman@mq.edu.au

Contact via karen.pearlman@mq.edu.au

Y3A-193H

Mon & Tues 1:15 to 1:45 by appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp at 100 level or above

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 Week 1.**

Students **read materials, watch films, do creative tasks and quizzes posted weekly in iLearn** in weeks 1 to 10 (quizzes in weeks 1 to 7)

Students attend and participate in **a two-hour workshop each fortnight beginning in Week 2.** You are required to attend all workshops. 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 workshops or supply appropriate documentation to your unit convenor for any missed tutorial.

Students are expected to read and view materials posted by the Convenors/Lecturers at the iLearn page for this course every week.

Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes. Timely submission of assessment tasks is a unit requirement or penalties apply.

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Submitting Assignments

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

Methods of Feedback

- Students will receive informal feedback from peers and tutors in workshops.
- Tutors comments and marks on written assignments can be found in iLearn.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Script Outlines</u>	35%	No	Week 7: 13 April
<u>Script & Creative Statement</u>	45%	Yes	Week 13: June 8th
<u>Participation</u>	10%	No	All of semester
<u>Online quizzes</u>	10%	No	weekly - weeks 1 to 7

Script Outlines

Due: **Week 7: 13 April**

Weighting: **35%**

Drawing on material generated so far this semester through weekly iLearn exercises, select two ideas, one fiction, one documentary or hybrid. Write short outlines for each of them.

Outline parameters:

- Title and form (is it a short film? web series pilot? Interactive?)
- Genre, approach and/or tone – mood boards compiling resonant textures, images, colours and so on are welcome
- What is it about? (not plot, yet, but theme or issue or what compels you about it)
- Characters who might be in it. Include names, ages, and a sense of who they are as entities with emotional lives
- What do they do, what will happen on screen (plot, or, if you don't know yours yet, describe circumstances and issues or emotions)
- How character or circumstances might change, develop or escalate
- Key image (include at least one image and briefly describe its relevant aspects. More images are welcome and not all need to be described if you are running out of words)
- Research you have done and further research you will do to develop each idea

Outlines should not exceed 750 words per idea. (1500 words total for assignment, not including bibliographies or lists of works cited). Submit both outlines in one pdf made from word documents or power points, or submit your outlines as video essays (maximum three minutes).

Consider FEASIBILITY.

If you would like your screen idea to come to life on screen it **must be feasible**. In an MQ production context this means: no scenes on trains or busses, no more than two or three locations, no crowded public spaces, no guns at all, no knives as weapons, no car stunts, limited number of cast members, no named music (you won't be able to get the rights).

Assessment criteria:

- Identification and development of themes and characters,
- Clarity and creativity of choices of circumstances, issues, or events
- Relevance, specificity and depth of consideration of image/s, genre/s and approach/es
- Strength of research and proposed further research
- Clarity and fluency of written expression

Assessment standards in this unit align with the University's grade descriptors, available at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

Late Submission Policy:

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for

lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Submission:

Submit both of your outlines as one PDF document via ilearn by Midnight on Friday the 13th of April

Feedback:

Students will be instructed in protocols of giving constructive feedback and are expected to provide each other with responsive feedback on ideas as they develop in all workshops. Feedback and marks for this assignment will be on ilearn.

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

Script & Creative Statement

Due: **Week 13: June 8th**

Weighting: **45%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

Part 1

Script

5 to 7 pages

Write script for a fictional, or documentary or hybrid screen production.

It could be a short film, a pilot for a web-series or interactive/narrative game.

Include:

- - A title and two-sentence outline summarising your idea in an engaging way.
- - Coherent and compelling characters and events
- - Creative use of image, sound, dialogue, and action
- - Structure of onscreen narrative events that opens and then resolves questions,

conflicts, or encounters

- - Clear and fluent writing in an accepted Australian film industry format. (Information on formatting and examples for fiction and non-fiction will be available on the unit's iLearn page.)

Your screenplay should be feasible for production in a low/no budget Australian context.

Part 2

Creative Research/Alternate Version Statement

750 words plus bibliography, submitted at the end of your screenplay (in the same document)

In this statement you will answer the question: what if the content of the screenplay I have written was converted to another form? Fiction to documentary, documentary to fiction, hybrid to fiction or documentary (not both). You may also choose to convert a short film to a game or game to film (eg. fiction film to fiction game).

The purpose of this statement is to reveal the depth of your research, your understanding of your own themes, characters and stories, and your capacity to apply research creatively. It is also to give you a chance to play with your idea in another form!

It should include statements on:

- - Theme
- - Character
- - Place and circumstances
- - Changes over time
- - Images and metaphors

In each case answer the questions:

- - What (or who in the case of characters) are they? How would they appear in your alternate version?
- - What is significant about them in the current version (important to you, the thing you would strive to keep, if possible). How would you include it in the alternate version?
- - What research did you do in to them? How would that research inform an alternate, converted version?

Finish with a title and two-sentence outline summarising your alternate idea in an engaging way.

Assessment criteria

- Development, creativity and coherence of characters and events
- Creative and significant use of image, sound, dialogue, and action

- Effective structure of onscreen narrative events to open and resolve questions, conflicts, or encounters
- Feasibility in the context of a low/no budget Australian context
- Substantive creative research and effective application of research

Assessment standards in this unit align with the University's grade descriptors, available at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

Submission:

Submission is via learn. All parts of the task should be in one pdf.

Late submission policy:

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Feedback:

Students will be instructed in protocols of giving constructive feedback and are expected to provide each other with responsive feedback on ideas as they develop in all workshops. Tutor feedback and marks for this assignment will be on ilearn.

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
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- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

Participation

Due: **All of semester**

Weighting: **10%**

Students are expected to attend seminars 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.

Assessment standards in this unit align with the University's grade descriptors, available at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- Evaluate screenwriting and creative work in progress
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect in action

Online quizzes

Due: **weekly - weeks 1 to 7**

Weighting: **10%**

There will be short quizzes on the materials posted weekly on ilearn in weeks 1 to 7. You will be required to do the reading and watch the films online via links provided and then respond to questions about content of each.

Assessment Criteria:

- correct answers to multiple choice questions
- consistent engagement

Assessment standards in this unit align with the University's grade descriptors, available at: <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand a range of screenwriting approaches and methodologies
- 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

Schedule (Week 1 only is a live lecture.).

Week 1 *Introduction to MAS 202. LIVE! Don't miss it!* Online: Ideas generation (& script formatting) (+ quiz)

Week 2 Generating ideas from actuality and research (+ quiz)

Week 3: Genre & Tone (+ quiz)

Week 4: Metaphors & Hybrids (+ quiz)

Week 5: Character (+ quiz)

Week 6: Theme & variation (+ quiz)

Week 7: Circumstance & Escalation - Outlines due on Friday of week 7 (+ quiz)

SEMESTER BREAK

Week 8: Place & Image

Week 9: Synthesis (Fiction)

Week 10: Synthesis (Documentary & hybrids)

WEEK 11 & 12 - INDEPENDENT WRITING - Scripts and Creative Research/Alternate Version Statements due on Friday of week 13

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). 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](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

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

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement

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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement
- 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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement
- Participation
- Online quizzes

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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement
- Participation
- Online quizzes

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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement
- 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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement

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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement
- 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 Outlines
- Script & Creative Statement

Changes from Previous Offering

online quizzes have been added as an assessment task to insure active engagement with online materials

parameters and form of outlines and scripts have been adjusted to maximise creative ideas development and to insure that scripts generated are feasible for production in units in the screen majors