



MAS 202

Screenwriting: An Introduction

S1 Day 2019

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

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10HA-193H

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

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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, interactive narrative, and hybrid forms. This unit combines creative writing projects with critical analysis. It is relevant to those interested in screen media, writing and the 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

Students attend and participate in a **one-hour tutorial** (aka workshop) **each WEEK beginning in Week 1.** You are required to attend all tutorial/workshops. As participation in the process of learning is linked to and underpins the unit Learning Outcomes, you will need to either apply for Special Consideration to cover more than one missed tutorial/workshop or supply appropriate documentation to your unit convenor for more than one 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>	25%	No	31 March (wk5)
<u>Screenplay Development</u>	20%	No	29 Apr. online, in-class wk8/9
<u>Script, Synopsis & Reflection</u>	35%	Yes	June 2 (end of wk 12)
<u>Participation</u>	10%	No	All of semester
<u>Online quizzes</u>	10%	No	weekly - weeks 1 to 10

Script Outlines

Due: **31 March (wk5)**

Weighting: **25%**

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

Outlines include:

- 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)
- Theme - what is it really about? what underlying theme or issue compels you?
- Characters - include names, ages, and a sense of who the key characters are as *entities with emotional lives*
- Storyworld & key plot event - what are the circumstances of the story, how do they change or escalate? what happens?
- 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.

Consider **FEASIBILITY**.

If you are doing screen production units at MQ you may get a chance to pitch the screenplay you develop in this unit if it a strong idea and it is **feasible**. **Feasible** means: small cast, small number of locations, avoid public transport and beaches as locations (getting rights to film on a bus or train is almost impossible, beaches pose dangers for camera gear). No crowded public

spaces. No guns at all. No knives as weapons, No car stunts (any car crash must be off screen). No named music (don't include a song you like - you won't be able to get the rights).

Assessment criteria:

- Identification and development of ideas, themes and characters,
- Clarity and creativity of choices of circumstances, issues, or events
- 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 Sunday the 31st of March (midnight)

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

Screenplay Development

Due: **29 Apr. online, in-class wk8/9**

Weighting: **20%**

This task is designed to **develop a specific aspect of the screenplay on which you are working** for your final submission. Start with consideration of where focused independent research and development would be most beneficial to your creative work. Then:

1. Choose the a term from the following list. **Research** the term you have chosen. **Summarise** a working definition of the term (derived from more than one source) in 250 words or less.

- Character backstory
- Subtext
- Metaphor
- Specific Genre in which you are working (eg. drama, black comedy, horror, satire...)
- Storyworld
- Creative Research
- Plot

2. Do the creative writing task associated with the term you have researched (see list below). These tasks will be read aloud in tutorials for discussion in week 8 or 9. The creative writing should be relevant to the screenplay you are working on for your final assessment task.

- *Character backstory*: write the backstory of one or two key characters - real people for doc, fictional for drama. (up to 750 words)
- *Subtext*: write a scene with subtext
- *Metaphor*: write a scene or short sequence with a visual or aural metaphor embedded
- *Specific Genre in which you are working*: write a scene or short sequence where conventions of your selected genre are creatively employed
- *Storyworld*: describe the circumstances, pressures, and rules or relationships or your storyworld (up to 750 words)
- *Creative research*: write up the findings from research that you will apply to your script (up to 750 words)
- *Plot*: write a complete outline of all the planned onscreen events in your screen idea

Submission: ilearn link on last day of mid-semester break and via brief in class presentation in week 8 or 9

Submission **filename requirements:** TuteDay&Time-Surname-TaskName

filename example: Tues2pm-Surname-ScreenplayDevelopment

Your submission must include:

- Summary of working definition of your chosen term
- Bibliography of sources used in defining term (may be academic or credible industry/ journalism sources from online or print)
- Written creative task associated with the term as per list above

Assessment Criteria:

- Clarity and accuracy of summary definition of selected term
- Insightful application of knowledge of the term to creative writing task
- Creativity and sophistication of creative writing

Feedback: Interaction with peers and tutors in-class. Students also receive general comments & rubric. Marks are made available through the Gradebook function in iLearn.

For a full assessment rubric, please refer to iLearn.

Examples of relevant or related assessment tasks will be discussed in practicals.

Late Submissions:

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.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and develop original screen ideas by drafting and revising a screenplay through successive stages and responding to critical feedback.
- Apply discipline-specific knowledge of topics covered in the unit to development of screen ideas and creative writing for the screen.
- Analyse and apply dramaturgical insights to screen ideas and screen writing through in-class development of own and peer's work
- Critically analyse and communicate ideas about readings, resources, screenplays and productions.

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, Synopsis & Reflection

Due: **June 2 (end of wk 12)**

Weighting: **35%**

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

Consolidate your work and learning this semester into a script for a short fictional, documentary,

hybrid, or interactive screen production. 5 to 7 pages. 15% length variation (approx. 1 page) plus or minus is allowable. For more substantial variations you must consult your tutor.

The script must be accompanied by an approximately 50 word synopsis of your idea and a 150 word account of how you have responded to feedback on your Outline.

Remember: if you are enrolled in screen production units, make your script **feasible** for a chance to see it produced. **Feasible** means: small cast, small number of locations, avoid public transport, beaches & crowded public spaces as locations, no guns at all, no knives as weapons, no car stunts.

Assessment criteria

- Development and refinement of screen ideas through successive stages of screenplay writing and responsiveness to critical feedback.
- Application of discipline-specific knowledge of topics covered in the unit to creative writing for the screen
- Creativity and sophistication of the screen play

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 is via learn. All parts of the task must 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
- Draw upon independent research for a creative project
- 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 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 exercises.
- 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 10**

Weighting: **10%**

There will be short quizzes on the materials posted weekly on ilearn in weeks 1 to 10. 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

Lecture - week 1 only

Tutorials (aka workshops) week 1 through 11 (inclusive)

Quizzes weeks 1 through 10 (inclusive)

The weekly ilearn quizzes and tutorial/workshops are designed to consolidate and activate learning about screenwriting topics such as: generating ideas, research for creative productions, genre, theme, storyworld, character, plot.

Assignment 1 due end of week 5

Assignment 2 due end of mid-semester break

Assignment 3 due end of week 12

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-centr](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-centr)

al). 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 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 ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments_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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

- Screenplay Development
- Script, Synopsis & Reflection

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, Synopsis & Reflection
- 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, Synopsis & Reflection
- 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
- Screenplay Development
- Script, Synopsis & Reflection
- 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
- Screenplay Development
- Script, Synopsis & Reflection
- 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
- Screenplay Development
- Script, Synopsis & Reflection

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
- Screenplay Development
- Script, Synopsis & Reflection
- 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, Synopsis & Reflection

Changes from Previous Offering

online quizzes and assessment tasks further developed for the 2019 offering

tutorials have been changed from fortnightly to weekly

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
19/02/2019	1. ADDED NAMES OF TUTORS 2. ADDED SENTENCE TO FURTHER CLARIFY ASSESSMENT TASK 2 AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO FINAL ASSESSMENT TASK 3. CHANGED ATTEND EVERY FORTNIGHT TO ATTEND EVERY WEEK IN GENERAL ASSESSMENT INFO