

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH FILM THEATRE & MEDIA STUDIES
THEATRE AND FILM PROGRAMMES
COURSE INFORMATION SHEET 2008
THEA/FILM 405 (CRN 10205)

SCRIPTWRITING

Course Co-ordinator

John Downie; 85 Fairlie Terrace, Room 101, tel: 463 6826, email: john.downie@vuw.ac.nz Office hours posted on the door of Room 101. Theatre and Film Programmes office tel: 463 5359.

Class Times and Venue

Trimesters 1 and 2. Tuesdays 3-6, fortnightly, beginning 4 March (see **timetable**).

Room 108, 85 Fairlie Terrace.

Additional one on one sessions to be arranged individually.

Additional information will be announced in class, or posted on the Course Noticeboard, 77FT, Level 3.

Course aims

The course aims to provide a structured introduction, at graduate level, to both the direct practice and critical reception of the scriptwriting process. It will encourage a broad approach, which can encompass writing for any performance medium, whether live or recorded. Informal script readings will be held to encourage a sense of the collaborative processes involved in writing for performance.

Course Objectives

By the completion of the course, students should:

- be able to understand the ways in which the scriptwriting process contributes towards the final outcomes of a performance text.
- have developed personal scriptwriting skills, both in the area of locating and opening out ideas, and in the crafting and drafting skills involved in realising sequences, scenes and acts.
- be able to understand certain key aspects of a performance script provided by the scriptwriting process, such as the designing of actions to a timeframe, the employment of plot reversals (peripeteia), concealing and revealing, and so on.
- have completed two scripts for any performance medium, one being of some length and ambition; to have written an extended scenario; and to have compiled a folio of creative writing exercises.

Course Content

The course will begin by outlining some very broad considerations which provide perspectives for script creation; then consider key nuts and bolts elements, particularly storyline and scene structure, action and dialogue; then support individual scriptwriting through shared readings of student material.

Required Texts

ed., W B Worthen, *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*, Wadsworth Thompson, London, 2004.
Linda Aronson, *Scriptwriting Updated*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 2000.

These volumes are available through Victoria Book Centre. The first of these books provides a basis for theatre plays, theatre history and theory; the second a general approach to scripting via a screen model. Additional short material for study will be provided during class sessions.

In addition to further suggested reading, students will be encouraged to visit theatre and cinema showings in the city, and to 'read' through the performances of them.

Assessment

There are four assessable components to the course.

Assignment 1 A short (10-15 minutes) script written as an adaptation of a provided text, for any performance medium. 20%. *Due Tuesday 1 April.*

Assignment 2 An extended scenario (60 minutes) for any performance medium. 20%.
Due Tuesday 15 July .

Assignment 3 A crafted and drafted script (30+ minutes), for any performance medium. 40%. *Due Tuesday 7 October.*

Assignment 4 A workbook/folio of writing exercises, draft material, and extended thinking about scripting and dramaturgy. 20%. *Due Friday 17 October..*

If you wish to ask for an extension, please do so well before the due date. Unless there are exceptional circumstances (eg medical reasons, with certificate), work handed in late may receive little in the way of feedback. Aegrotat provisions may apply if, for unavoidable reasons, you are unable to submit the full range of your project work. In such a case, please contact the course co-ordinator. There is a university policy on reasonable accommodation with respect to assessment procedures for students with disabilities.

Workbooks

All students should keep a larger format (A4) file, which can receive a developing body of writing exercises; and a small hardbacked notebook which can be easily carried, in which they can trace, from a personal perspective, their creative and critical explorations in scriptwriting. This could be a chronology of thoughts, ideas, flashes of intuition, intellectual elaboration, or more detailed and persistent observation of crafting issues and problems, perhaps arising from viewing or reading.

Workload

The University anticipates that you should be able to devote at least 12 hours per week to a full-year (two trimester) paper in a 4-paper Honours or Graduate programme. At Honours level, it is expected that students will attend every seminar; if you expect to be absent from a class seminar, please contact the course co-ordinator in advance if possible.

General University Statutes and Policies

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html <

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html>

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General

Information” at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>
<<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Academic integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:**

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one’s own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words. *Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University’s website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Theatre Programme Facilities

There are standard requirements regarding conduct within 77 FT, 83 FT, 85 FT, 93 KP and 225 Aro St:

Smoking

Due to NZ law changes smoking is not permitted anywhere on Theatre premises or within 3 metres of surrounding buildings. Please smoke elsewhere and dispose of cigarette butts thoughtfully.

Food

Food may only be consumed in the 77FT Green Room, and 85FT, 93KP and Aro St kitchen areas.

No beverages (with the exception of bottled water) are allowed in the studio theatre, dressing room, film room, library, foyer area, and 93 KP or 225 Aro St and 85FT(except kitchen areas listed above).

Student and staff using kitchen areas are strongly expected to clean up after themselves **Strictly no food or drink in the 85FT Digital Edit Suites.**

Alcoholic drinks are not to be brought onto the premises unless authorised by Programme Director Film or Programme Director Theatre

Green Room

The Green Room is available to students working in the Film and Theatre Programmes. **You are expected to clean up after yourselves** (this includes returning any mugs removed from the Green Room and operating the dishwasher).

Library

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77 Fairlie Terrace; however, please note that **books and department materials do not leave the building**. Please return books to shelves before you leave the library. Please do be aware that the library is doubling as an editing suite for some production courses, and that editing facilities are not to be touched unless you have made a booking with our our events co-ordinator, Lee Barry, [room 309, 77FT, Telephone: 463 5221] or our administrator, Kushla Beacon [room 307, 77FT , Telephone: 463 5359]. Please remember that the Library is a quiet study area.

End of Class

Rooms 306 (lecture theatre), 305, 205 (film room), 209 (seminar room), studios, studio foyer, 93 KP, 83 FT and 225 Aro St **must have the desks and chairs returned to order for any following classes or rehearsals.**

Lockers

Lockers are available to majoring drama students on Level 0 77FT. There are only 52 so once they run out those with double lockers will have to consider sharing. Students provide their own lock and key. See the Administrator in room 307. Access your lockers via back stairs through Green Room. Please make sure the door to the main stairwell remains shut. Access to lockers will not be available during the trimester break so please take everything with you at the end of this trimester and inform the Administrator if you are not taking a theatre subject next trimester.

Theatre Rules

There are more specific rules regarding safety and security within the premises occupied by Film and Theatre. These are unlikely to be relevant to this course as they are largely to do with practical work and use of the theatre, but please note them as posted up around the building and as listed in the FAT Book. This document is available on all Theatre course Blackboard sites.

Pin Boards

Students are welcome to use the pin boards located on level 3 of 77 Fairlie Terrace but you must get the poster/flyer date stamped by the Administrator and take responsibility for removing it again once the information is no longer valid. This is limited to one poster/flyer per event. **Items that appear without the approval stamp may be removed without notice.**

TIMETABLE

Seminar every alternate Tuesday, 3-6pm; group scriptreading sessions will be scheduled separately.

Week	Date	Subject
2	4 Mar	Intro. Method. Conscious dreaming. Action Images/Dance of Action.
4	18 Mar	World, History , the Everyday. Things Change.
6	1 Apr	Never-ending Story. Mythic Field. Things remain the same.
<u>1 April: Assignment 1 due.</u>		
TERM BREAK		
8	29 Apr	Storyline. Classical Dramatic Narrative. Weaving actions. Story distance.
10	13 May	Storyline. De-construction and Performance layering.
12	27 May	Parts of the work (scriptreading with actors).
WINTER BREAK		
<u>15 July: Assignment 2 due.</u>		
14	15 July	Scenography & mise-en-scène.
16	29 July	Dance and dialogue.
18	12 Aug	Scene/sequence structure.
TERM BREAK		
20	9 Sept	Predicament and Character.
22	23 Sept	The Performer.
24	7 Oct	The Whole Work (scriptreading with actors).
<u>7 Oct: Assignment 3 due; 17 Oct: Assignment 4 due.</u>		

