



## **INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON**

### **CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME CREW 592: Scriptwriting Portfolio 2010 (MA in Scriptwriting)**

**Trimester dates: this is a full year course (G status)**

**Trimester 1: 1 March – 4 June**

**Trimester 2: 12 July – 15 October**

### **Learning Objectives**

This course gives recognition to work in creative scriptwriting. Its aim is to develop the craft skills and imaginative capacity of talented new writers through a programme of folio supervision, writing workshops, complementary reading/viewing and industry placements. The MA does not limit itself to a single performance medium, it encompasses writing for film, theatre, television and radio. Nor does it teach a specific set of predetermined skills; rather, it encourages writers to identify and articulate their own distinctive voices in their chosen medium. By the end of the year each class member will complete a full-length script to third draft standard.

### **Course Structure**

The three elements in the MA programme (and mandatory course requirements for CREW 592) are as follows:

#### **Classes**

Classes run throughout the first two trimesters - i.e. from early March (first class Tuesday March 2) to mid-October (last class Tuesday October 19) – and total 5 hours per week. All sessions are conducted by David Geary (Glenn Schaeffer House: Room 403, phone 463.6882; mobile 021 201 5111) and are held in the Workshop Room, GSH 102.

You are required to attend all classes.

Meeting times are:

Tuesday Workshop:

10:00am-1:00pm

At the Tuesday Workshop a range of exercise work is undertaken and the results presented and discussed. This is also where class members present their folio work-in-progress.

Wednesday Workshop:  
10:00am-12:00noon

The Wednesday Workshop is an opportunity for class discussion and practical exercises and also provides a forum for guest visits by writers and industry professionals.

Unless we agree otherwise, there are no formal classes during university breaks: see attached meetings schedule. However, during the midterm break (June 5- July 11), there will be the equivalent of a one week/40 hours Industry Placement, to be arranged between David Geary and the class members. And also a three day masterclass with an Overseas Guest. Any additional information about the MA will be made available at workshop meetings, or by email, or will be distributed into student pigeonholes.

## **Reading Programme**

You are required to read and/or view extensively in areas related to your major writing project and to the craft of scriptwriting in general. To do this, you follow an individually designed programme (agreed upon with the course director) of film/video titles, theatre productions, scripts, books on scriptwriting and research material relevant to your project. You report on your reading/viewing by keeping a detailed and regular Reading Journal where you note your responses to your list of agreed films, videos, scripts or books. You should have completed your reading/viewing list and submitted your Reading Journal (minimum length 6,000 words) by Friday October 1.

## **Portfolio (Major Project)**

It is expected that you will complete 3 drafts of a full-length work as your portfolio project, with first, second and third drafts due on specific dates during the year: see attached schedule. The recommended length of an MA thesis in a subject such as English Literature is 30,000 words. It is recognised, however, that the length of a Creative Writing portfolio will depend very much on the nature of each project. In terms of timings, a feature film script would be expected to be of a duration not less than 80 minutes. The duration of a full-length playscript similarly should be not less than 80 minutes. The duration of TV scripts should conform to the commercial half-hour or hour. Students undertaking a TV project as their Portfolio should discuss with David Geary the amount and type of work that should be delivered throughout the year and for final assessment.

You will be discussing the progress of your portfolio work at workshop meetings. You will also be assigned a portfolio supervisor, with whom you will have regular meetings (these should average out at one hour per fortnight across the teaching year). As against the diversity of views you are likely to meet in workshops, your supervisor provides the response of a single, continuing reader. Your supervisor will respond to your work as you write it and act as final reader at the point when the folio is to be submitted. Usually David Geary will act as

supervisor for seven writers in the class, the remaining three writers are matched up with external supervisors.

## **Major Exercises**

Apart from your main project there are two major writing exercises during the year. These are:

30 Minute Script – written during the early part of the year. If your major project is film then you will be expected to write a half-hour play for this exercise. If your major project is theatre, then you will write a thirty minute film script. This exercise is to be delivered on Thursday April 1. The delivered script will provide a basis for further exercise work through the year, and will be the source of a 10 minute reading performed by actors at the Circa Theatre as part of the Writers On Mondays series on September 20 and 27.

TV Series Outline – written during the middle of the year. This is an outline (including concept, character breakdowns and one-page story outlines) for a 7 x 1-hour drama series for television. In discussion with David Geary, a 14 x half hour television series may also be considered. This exercise is to be delivered on Friday July 23. During the first half of the year you will have an in-class storylining session on your series. If your main project is a TV series, then you will write an approximately 15 page treatment for a feature film.

## **Reader's Report**

In addition to verbal feedback given in class, you will be expected to write a more detailed Reader's Report on a fellow class member's first draft. You will be notified of the required format for the report. The date for delivery of the completed Reader's Report is Friday July 2.

## **Industry Placements**

You will be expected to complete about 40 hours of industry placement. Arrangements will be negotiated between you and the Course Director (David Geary) and approved by him during the first half of the academic year. Dates for placements are dependent on the schedules of production companies and other host organisations - but usually the best time for this has been during the latter part of the June/July mid-year break. It is expected that any work you do during your placement will be non-paid – i.e. in return for the experience gained. If you accept a placement outside of Wellington, you will also have to cover any travel or accommodation expenses yourself.

## **Mandatory Course Requirements**

If you fail to meet these requirements your folio will not be assessed, and you will automatically fail the course.

There are three requirements:

- You must attend classes and fully participate in workshops (including completion of all exercise work).
- You must meet the appropriate requirements for the Reading Programme.
- You must fulfil all requirements of your industry placement.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is based entirely on the Portfolio script you submit at the end of the year. At present there is provision for the MA degree to be awarded with a grade of pass, merit or distinction. Three examiners - your supervisor, an external reader from the scriptwriting community, and an industry representative - will read each portfolio and make their recommendations. Copies of their written reports will be returned to you.

**You must submit three copies of your folio (ie completed third draft script) by Friday 5 November, 2010.**

These should be in soft or temporary bindings. When examining is completed, two of these copies will be returned to you, along with examiners' reports. At this point you can make any necessary corrections. The International Institute of Modern Letters keeps the third softbound copy as part of its record of work done for the MA.

## **Depositing Your Thesis**

In order to complete the requirements for graduation you must then lodge one hardbound copy of your folio with the International Institute of Modern Letters who will deposit it in the university library on your behalf. The library requirements for the depositing of theses can be found at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/services/thesesdeposit.aspx>

## **Electronic Library Deposit**

If you visit the above url you will note that the Library states it is mandatory to deposit an electronic copy of your portfolio/research thesis with the library. We are currently discussing the implications of this requirement with the library and other university authorities and will keep you informed.

## **Penalties**

If you fail to deliver a completed third draft script, or deliver it unacceptably late, then your folio will not be assessed, and you will automatically fail the course.

## **Human Ethics Regulations**

If your research involves quoting directly from interviews with living people, you may need to seek approval from the Human Ethics Committee. If you are in doubt, talk first to your supervisor or workshop coordinator.

## **Masters Thesis Policy**

The MA in Creative Writing is a distinctive research degree, with its own protocols and requirements. Broader information about Victoria's university-wide Masters thesis policy can be read at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/degrees/docs/master's-thesis-policy.pdf>.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also has guidelines for Masters students at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/degrees/docs/masters-guidelines-07.pdf>

## **Workload**

You should expect to spend about 40 hours a week on this course.

## **MA Workspace**

As well as the Workshop Room, there are three rooms set aside for students in the MA Creative Writing programme. Room 401 in Glenn Schaeffer House contains student lockers and pigeonholes, an on-line computer and a small library containing a collection of books on scriptwriting available for loan. The IIML subscribes to a number of scriptwriting magazines which can also be found in this room.

There is also a small writing room next to the IIML at 14 Waiteata Road, which you can book for private work. You will have key access to the buildings and rooms, so that you can come and go after hours. (You will need to see the IIML's Administrators about keys and swipe cards.)

These rooms belong to you. Please use them whenever you wish, both as work-spaces and meeting spaces. There is also a kitchen on the ground floor of Glenn Schaeffer House. Tea and coffee is free for MA students. You are welcome to use anything here – fridge, microwave, stove – but please wash up after you.

Printing and copying arrangements: check with the IIML's administrators.

## **Materials and Equipment**

The Final Draft scriptwriting package is industry standard and if possible you should use it for all scripts written in the course. If you are unable to purchase it for yourself, the IIML should be able to provide you a copy for the year. These must be deactivated by the start of the following year.

If you are considering buying a laptop, Victoria University operates a rebate scheme for Masters students. The scheme will continue in 2010 and updated information is available at *PostgradLife*: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/postgradlife/>

## **Award**

The Embassy Trust Prize of \$2000 is awarded to the best script submitted by a CREW 592 student in any one year.

## **Scholarships**

There are two 'project scholarships' currently available to fund a period of further work on selected major projects beyond the third draft stage (ie in 2010). These scholarships are for \$5000 each and will be awarded at the end of this year or early next year.

## **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## **Communication of additional information**

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed by email to all class members.

## General University Requirements

### General University policies and statutes

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* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx>

### MA IN CREATIVE WRITING (SCRIPTWRITING): 2010 PROVISIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE

Tues March 2	Introductory Session – HW Silent movie	
Wed March 3	The Big Picture – HW Project Exercises	
Tues March 9	Silent Movie - Project Exercise Results – Legs - HW Invention	
Wed March 10	5 min scene (1) – Pitch – Treatment – Guest...	
Tues March 16	Invention/ Build-A-Story	HW: First Five Pages
Wed March 17	5" min scene (2) Guest...	HW: Film Analysis
Tues March 23	First Five Pages results/ Film Analysis	
Wed March 24	5" Scene (3) 30 min scripts progress – Guest...	
Tues March 30	Writing Film exercise	
Wed April 31	TV Genres	
<b>Thurs April 1</b>	<b>Delivery: 30 minute scripts</b>	
<b>APRIL BREAK (2 weeks) Decide and research First Draft of Folio Project</b>		
<b>Friday April 16</b>	<b>Delivery: 5 minute film scenes to IIML.</b>	
Tues April 20	Character/ First 10 minutes	HW: Scene edit
Wed April 21	Dialogue	
<b>Mon April 26 – Fri May 30:</b> Shoot 5 min film scenes - Toi Whakaari and NZ Film School while also having regular classes.		

Tues April 27	30 minute scripts 1 - 6
Wed April 28	30 minute scripts 7 - 10
Tues May 4	Joint Folio Workshop: Projects 1 and 2
Wed May 5	<i>TV Series Storylining: 9 and 10</i>
Thurs May 6	Radio New Zealand Workshop – Radio NZ House 9am-5pm TBC
<b>Fri May 7</b>	Radio NZ Workshop – morning TBC
Tues May 11	Joint Folio Workshop: Projects 3 and 4
Wed May 12	<i>TV Series Storylining: 7 and 8</i>
Tues May 18	Joint Folio Workshop: Projects 5 and 6
Wed May 19	<i>TV Series Storylining: 1 and 2</i>
Tues May 25	Joint Folio Workshop: Projects 7 and 8
Wed May 26	<i>TV Series Storylining: 5 and 6</i>
Tues June 1	Joint Folio Workshop: Projects 9 and 10
Wed June 2	<i>TV Series Storylining: 3 and 4</i>
<b>Friday June 4</b>	<b>Delivery of completed First Draft of folio project</b>

**MID-YEAR BREAK (5 wks) – Industry Placements and Overseas Guest Workshop TBC**

<b>Friday July 2</b>	<b>Delivery of Reader’s Report of a First Draft</b>
Tues July 13	Rewriting/Editing 1
Wed July 14	Rewriting/Editing 2
Tues July 20	Reading/Feedback of Projects 1 & 2 First Drafts
Wed July 21	Exercise: Story/Theme
<b>Friday July 23</b>	<b>Delivery of TV drama series outline</b>
Tues July 27	Reading/Feedback of Projects 3 & 4 First Drafts
Wed July 28	Exercise: Drama/Plot
Tues Aug 3	Reading/Feedback of Projects 5 & 6 First Drafts
Wed Aug 4	Exercise: Character
Tues Aug 10	Reading/Feedback of Projects 7 & 8 First Drafts
Wed Aug 11	Exercise: Scene Construction/Flow
Tues Aug 17	Reading/Feedback of Projects 9 & 10 First Drafts
Wed Aug 18	Exercise: Dialogue

**AUGUST BREAK (2 weeks)**



Tues Sept 7	Workshop 1
Wed Sept 8	Workshop 2
<b>Friday Sept 10</b>	<b>Delivery of completed Second Draft of folio project</b>
<b>During next two weeks – Mon Sept 13-24 Writers on Mondays Rehearsals TBC</b>	
Tues Sept 14	Reading/Feedback of Projects 1 & 2 Second Draft
Wed Sept 15	Exercise: Beginning
<b>Mon Sept 20</b>	Writers on Mondays – Readings at Circa 12 noon til 1:15pm
Tues Sept 21	Reading/Feedback of Projects 3 & 4 Second Draft
Wed Sept 22	Exercise: Middling
<b>Mon Sept 27</b>	Writers on Mondays – Readings at Circa 12 noon til 1:15pm
Tues Sept 28	Reading/Feedback of Projects 5 & 6 Second Draft
Wed Sept 29	Exercise: Ending
<b>Friday Oct 1</b>	<b>Delivery of completed Reading Journals</b>
Tues Oct 5	Reading/Feedback of Projects 7 & 8 Second Draft
Wed Oct 6	Guests
Tues Oct 12	Reading/Feedback of Projects 9 & 10 Second Draft
Wed Oct 13	Guests
Tues Oct 19	Final class
<b>Friday November 5</b>	<b>Final delivery of completed folios (Third Draft)</b>