



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME**

**MA IN CREATIVE WRITING 2011
CREW 592: Scriptwriting Portfolio**

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

Trimester 1: 28 February – 3 June

Trimester 2: 11 July – 14 October

Withdrawal dates:

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details:

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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 – from early March (first class Tuesday March 1) to mid-October (last class Tuesday October 18) – and total 5 hours per week. All sessions are conducted by Ken Duncum (Glenn Schaeffer House: Room 403, phone 463.6882; home phone 385-6199) 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. Any additional information about the MA will be made available at workshop meetings, or by e-mail, 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 September 30.

- **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 Ken Duncum 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 Ken Duncum acts 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 Friday April 1. The delivered script will provide a basis for further exercise work through the year, and may be the source of a 10 minute reading performed by actors as part of the Writers On Mondays series around September.

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. This exercise is to be delivered on Friday July 22. During the first half of the year you will have an in-class storylining session on your series.

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 1.

Industry Placements

You will be expected to complete about 40 hours of industry placement. Arrangements will be negotiated between you and the Course Director (Ken Duncum) 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 – ie. 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 4 November, 2011.

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 third softbound copy will be kept by the International Institute of Modern Letters 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/about/policies/theses.html>

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. You must complete and sign one of the Availability of Thesis forms to include with your bound copy. We do recommend opting for the permanently restricted archive if you hope to find a publisher for your work at some future date, or if your thesis contains third party material likely to be covered by the copyright.

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/fgr/policies-and-resources/default.aspx#masters>. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also has guidelines for Masters students at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/study/postgraduate/ma.aspx>.

Workload

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

MA Workspace

As well as the Workshop Room, there are two 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 might 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 \$400 rebate scheme for Masters students. The scheme will continue in 2009 and updated information is available at *PostgradLife* <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/postgradlife/>

Award

The David Carson-Parker Embassy 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 2012). These scholarships are for \$5,000 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>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.