

FILM 332 FILM PRODUCTION

Trimester 1 2011

28 February to 2 July 2011

30 Points

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	28 February to 3 June 2011
Mid-trimester break:	18 April to 1 May 2011
Study week:	6 to 10 June 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	3 June 2011

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

Course Coordinator:

Costa Botes

Room 103, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 6728 Email: costa.botes@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours: by appointment

Senior Technical Officer:

Paul Wolfram, Room 105, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 6823 Email: paul.wolfram@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours:

Monday 8.30 – 5.00

Tuesday 8.30 – 9.00

Wednesday 8.30 – 3.00

Thursday 8.30 – 5.00

Friday 8.30 – 5.00

Technical Officer

Bernard Blackburn, Room 106, 85 Fairlie Terrace, 04 463 9498 Email: bernard.blackburn@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: tbc

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Tuesday	10-1	77 Fairlie Terrace room 205
Friday	10-1	77 Fairlie Terrace room 205

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will be delivered primarily via lectures and interactive practical sessions in class time. There will be no set texts, but much suggested reading or viewing material. Some additional notes will be supplied in the form of printed handouts (original notes written by the Course Coordinator) which will be made available on Blackboard. Outside class time, students will be expected to put the necessary amount of time into completing personal and collaborative assignments.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Most communications will be via class or notice board at the School. Blackboard and/or emails will be used to convey additional information to students if necessary.

COURSE CONTENT

A practical study of the creative and technical aspects of film production. Areas covered will include scripting, photography, *mise-en-scene*, performance, sound recording and mixing, and editing.

The aim of FILM 332 is to develop students' knowledge of the creative and technical aspects of film production. There will be a particular emphasis on encouraging students to develop a robust creative process based on understanding and respecting the fundamentals of dramatic narrative storytelling.

Students will be given tools and strategies for developing their ideas, and ways to effectively present them. The course will then move on to a practically oriented emphasis on 'hands on' learning, with basic introduction being given on the use of cameras and audio recording. Students will learn basic directing techniques for working with actors and crew. All students will be given a practical introduction to non linear editing equipment and editing techniques.

Students passing the course will have demonstrated creative ability at an introductory level in the field of audio visual production, and a basic mastery of relevant technical skills. They should also have enhanced their analytical skills and gained a greater understanding of filmmaking as a craft and industrial process.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To develop their creativity
- To develop their judgement about the quality and viability of their work
- To enhance their skills at presenting ideas
- To enhance their technical skills in core aspects of film production

- To demonstrate artistic or craft abilities in an aspect of film production – direction, screenwriting, cinematography, audio, editing, or production.
- To demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 30 point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 15 hours per week. Students will be expected to undertake assignments away from class and keep up with scheduled delivery requirements. Independent reading, writing assignments, viewing films, and work on productions will require an approximate minimum effort of 1 - 2 hours for every hour spent in class.

GROUP WORK

Students will be assessed individually for overall course credit. However, there is a heavy group component in FILM 332. Students will be expected to participate in interactive class lessons and workshops. They will be required to collaborate in groups to produce a dramatic DV short as a major assignment. The collaborative nature of this project will follow standard film practice. In consultation with the course coordinator some leeway may be given if individuals choose to collaborate with others on selected production activities.

READINGS

Notes will be placed on Blackboard for all topics covered in class. In addition the course coordinator will suggest internet links of interest as required.

Recommended Reading:

Story by Robert McKee

Save the Cat by Zack Snyder

Adventures in the Screen Trade by William Goldman

Final Cut by Steven Bachman

The Devil's Candy by Julie Saloman

The Film Festival Survival Guide by Chris Gore

Recommended Viewing:

Citizen Kane by Orson Welles

Chinatown by Roman Polanski

Aliens by James Cameron

Jaws by Steven Spielberg

The Station Agent by Thomas McCarthy

Memento by Christopher Nolan

Adaptation by Spike Jones

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind by Michel Gondry

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Film making equipment will be supplied by the School.

Students will be responsible for any expendables and special requirements of their productions. The degree of personal expense that might be incurred will vary according to students' ingenuity and scale or ambition of projects. Students will be encouraged to plan strategically and choose story concepts that emphasise dramatic values over spectacle. Individual costs could reasonably be expected to be in the region of \$500.00. This is an approximate guide only.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All assessment will be internal. There will be six assignments. Five will be individual work with a total weighting of 60%. The final assignment will be group work on a DV film and count for 40% of students' total marks.

	Due Date	Weighting
(1) Act Structure Analysis	11 March	10%
(2) Outline Writing Exercise	15 March	10%
(3) Screenplay Format Exercise	15 March	5%
(4) Story Pitch	29 March	15%
(5) Short Screenplay Writing	12 April	20%
(6) Group Work on DV Short Film	3 June	40%

Assignment One: Act Structure Analysis

You will pick a film you know well and break it down in outline form, 1-2 pages, or max 600 words, identifying how the narrative either follows or breaks with classical act structure paradigms. This assignment will help cement an understanding of the orthodox classical template underlying most narrative cinema.

Assignment Two: Outline Writing Exercise

Students will source a factual story taken from any source and use it as the basis for creating a dramatic story outline. This should be short – 400 to 600 words, but divided into three clear acts, and with a clearly defined protagonist and antagonist, or source of conflict. The ability to recognise viable dramatic ideas and describe them economically in outline form is a crucial skill. This assignment will test and develop that skill. The assignment will be assessed for dramatic values character and plot, marketability (i.e. feasibility of production and potential audience interest), and style – i.e. clarity of presentation, impact of writing.

Assignment Three: Screenplay Format Exercise

There is a universal standard format employed by screenwriters around the world. Failure to adhere to this standard means automatic rejection by any professional assessor. Students MUST learn to lay out scripts perfectly. This exercise

will require students to write 1-2 pages of content in screenplay form, employing all the standard conventions of screenplay layout. Samples will be given as a guide, and links will be given to free formatting software available on the web. This is not a creative exercise. Assessment will be on accuracy and attention to detail.

Assignment Four: Story Pitch to Class

Each student will be required to formulate and deliver a short pitch, duration 2-3 minutes, to the class for an original story. The criteria for assessment will be emotional impact of the pitch, clarity of the idea, marketability (i.e. how relevant to its target audience?), and personal delivery. Pitching has become increasingly vital as a means of winning the confidence of potential backers. This assignment will introduce students to the highs and lows of the process.

Assignment Five: Short Screenplay Writing

Students will write a short screenplay – maximum length 12 pages or ten minutes – to be based on their pitches. Scripts will be assessed on emotional impact, narrative craft, marketability, and use of correct formatting. This assignment will test both creative and formal discipline in a vital aspect of film-making.

Assignment Six: Group Work on DV Short film

Most films are made in a collaborative way, with groups of people coming together to realise a shared vision. From the first articulation of an idea to the final delivery of a completed film to an audience, it is vital to the success of a production that the team making it work together to make the most of their individual creativity. Students will be assigned to work in groups of 5 on a DV short film. They will be allocated key creative and technical roles in these productions. Assessment will be based on examination of individual performance, measuring craft skills, attitude, teamwork, and impact of individuals on the finished film. This is necessarily a subjective process, but the Course Coordinator's observations will be moderated by other staff, and there will be opportunity for input from peers, and a reflective interview.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the written and practical work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend all classes except where unable by reason of ill health, accident, or unavoidable ill fortune.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i.e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy). 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.

GENERAL ADVICE

Please note that a professional attitude towards the care and borrowing of equipment is essential. This will constitute an assessment component in all relevant assignments, and penalties will apply for misuse of gear or failure to return it on time.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

FILM 332 students are encouraged to make full use of the video viewing facilities (housed in 83FT) and the Library at 77FT. However, please note that videos and library materials do not leave the building. There is a coin-operated photocopy machine on Level 3 of 77FT. The Green Room in 77FT is also available to students working in the building. You are expected to clean up after yourself, including returning to the Green Room any mugs removed from there. The same rules apply for the kitchen area at 85FT.

AWARD

The Prize for Film Studies, arising from a fund established by the Wai-te-Ata Press, will be awarded to the best student of film history, criticism or production.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Safety in the premises occupied by the School of English, Film Theatre and Media Studies at 77 and 85 Fairlie Terrace is the responsibility of everyone who uses the facilities. While we make every effort to ensure that our premises are safe and hazard free, we need the cooperation of all students and visitors and hence request the following:

1. Any student or visitor who discovers an actual or potential hazard should report it without delay to a member of staff. Where possible written reports are appreciated.
2. All university equipment must be handled in a careful and appropriate manner in accordance with the specifications and with due regard to safety. Any breakages must be reported as soon as possible.
3. It is the individual responsibility of all students to read the safety notices relating to fire, earthquake etc. and to carry out the provisions as indicated in the notices.

In addition there are certain ground rules regarding conduct within the premises at 77 Fairlie Terrace and 85 Fairlie Terrace.

- Smoking is not permitted.
- Alcoholic drinks are not to be brought onto the premises unless authorized.
- All students are expected to assist with security by making sure that doors are locked, windows closed and heaters switched off before the buildings are vacated.

More details are in The Fat Book. We greatly appreciate your help with these matters.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	March 1	Introduction , welcome, and administrative info Story Structure: Introduction to fundamentals of act structure ASSIGNMENT 1: Act Structure analysis (Due 1PM March 11)
	March 4	Intro to camera: Care and assembly of equipment. Practical Exercises
Week 2	March 8	Camera 2 Fundamentals of composition, use of lenses, depth of field
	March 11	Character & Dialogue Character design & Dialogue writing Handout: Screenplay format Guidelines w/links to free software ASSIGNMENT 2: Dramatic story outline exercise (Due March 18) ASSIGNMENT 3: Screenplay format exercise (Due March 18)
Week 3	March 15	Lighting 1 Basic equipment and lighting techniques Students to hand in list of 3 preferred crew roles
	March 18	Idea Development 1 Intro to creative brainstorming and pitching ASSIGNMENT 4: Short story pitch to be delivered in class March 29
Week 4	March 22	Moving the Camera Equipment and techniques This week, students should seek feedback from course coordinator on pitches.
	March 25	Idea Development 2 Techniques for creative brainstorming.
Week 5	March 29	Pitch Delivery All students to deliver a short (2-3 minute) verbal pitch in class. Each pitch to be peer critiqued, with moderation from Course Coordinator. Assignment of Groups and Crew Roles ASSIGNMENT 5: Short screenplay based on pitches. Story to be refined into a screenplay (max 10-12 pages, or 10 minutes duration) written in perfect format. (Due April 12)
	April 1	Intro to Audio Recording use and care of field recording equipment
Week 6	April 5	Lighting 2 Practical Workshop
	April 8	Intro to Editing Getting started with Final Cut Pro, basic overview, setting up, digitising, organising, saving work.

Students should seek course coordinator feedback now on draft story ideas.

Handout: Basic Production management & Scheduling

Week 7 April 12 **Directing 1** Onset work flow, blocking with actors

April 15 **Directing 2** Workshop & Exercises

ASSIGNMENT SIX: 4 Groups to each produce a short dramatic film (max 10 minutes duration) finished on DV. Students to be assessed on contribution to Group work. (Due June 3)

Mid Trimester Break: Monday 18 April– Sunday 1 May 2011

Week 8 May 3 **Editing 2** Opening projects, Basic Edit Tools, working in timeline, output to tape.
Groups should have a draft breakdown and schedule by now

May 6 **Audio Post Production** Editing and mixing sound

Week 9 May 10 **Production (no class)**

May 13 **Production (no class)**

Week 10 May 17 **Production (no class)**

May 20 **Production/Editing (no class)**

Week 11 May 24 **Editing (no class)**

May 27 **Rough Cut Screening** Viewing and feedback in class

Students to schedule reflective interviews with course coordinator this week or next.

Week 12 May 31 Reflective Interviews continue this week (no class)

June 3 **Final Deadline for Group Films**

Handout: A guide to getting films seen