

THEA 405 Scriptwriting

Trimester 2 2013

15 July to 17 November 2013

30 Points



Image: Sarah Clark Copywriting

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 15 July to 18 October 2013

Mid-trimester break: 26 August to 8 September 2013

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Tuesdays 3.10 – 6.00pm FT83 Room 201

Tutorials

Individual tutorials with Lori Leigh TBA.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator	Lori Leigh	lori.leigh@vuw.ac.nz	04 463 6712	FT77/Room 304
Course Administrator	Cathy McCullagh	cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz	04 463 5359	FT83/Room 202

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information for this course will be posted under the course number on the course notice boards in 77 Fairlie Terrace (Theatre). If you are uncertain about any elements relating to classes and course assignments, please email Lori Leigh for advice.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

PRESCRIPTION

This course provides both a theoretical and a practical approach to writing scripts for theatrical and screen media performance. Particular topics covered are myth and story, dramatic and scenographic mise-en-scene, spoken dialogue, and both narrative and organic dramaturgy. Study is made of playscripts, theatre works in performance, film and TV drama. Students pursue individual study of selected writers, and compile portfolios of their own original writing, including a full-length script.

COURSE CONTENT

This is a creative course employing a number of touchstone topics with which to work into and through the broader perspectives of script creation, paying particular attention to dramatic and narrative structure, action, and dialogue.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

- 1) Understand and apply the fundamentals of playwriting, such as dramatic structure(s), action, and character, to develop scripts.
- 2) Develop personal scriptwriting skills both in the area of locating and opening out ideas and in the habit of writing frequently and consistently.
- 3) Work with collaborators in performance processes in relation to dramaturgical principles.
- 4) Be familiar with the process of giving and receiving constructive feedback in a creative workshop environment.
- 5) Understand the process of rewriting, revision, and drafts.
- 6) Analyse work by contemporary playwrights, identifying strategies and dramaturgy employed and how it relates to her/his own writing practice.

TEACHING FORMAT

Weekly open seminars, plus one-on-one tutorials where needed.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50% students must complete all assignments within the stipulated deadlines and options, and attend a minimum of 80% of weekly class sessions.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 30 point course is 300 hours over the trimester or 20 hours per teaching week. 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 coordinator in advance if possible.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Writing Exercises: In this assignment, students will complete short writing exercises (1-10 pages) throughout the term focussing on various tools of playwriting such as action, conflict, characterisation, dialogue, impulse. The prompts will be posted on the THEA 405 Blackboard site or assigned in class. These assignments will be written in Standard Manuscript Formatting, brought into class to be shared, and submitted to the lecturer in class.	25%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	As per schedule (23 Jul, 30 Jul, 6 Aug, 13 Aug)
2	Playwright's Presentation and Report: In this assignment, students will select a play by a contemporary playwright and present on the playwright, as well as the selected play's dramaturgy (construction, structure, and form of the play). A short report (1 page typed) will be submitted in class the day of the assigned presentation detailing her/his findings and reflecting how the work relates to her/his own writing. More detailed information on the Playwright's Presentation and Report Assignment Sheet.	25%	1, 2, 6	As per schedule (30 Jul, 6 Aug, 13 Aug, 20 Aug, 10 Sep, 17 Sep)
3	Script: Students will work on a script and submit 30 pages of writing as a final project (either as a complete short play or part of a full-length play). Students will workshop their writing in class (on assigned days) and receive feedback from both the instructor and peers to aid in the process. A final draft of the project will be submitted in hard copy.	40%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	11 Oct by 12PM

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4	<p>Contribution/ Feedback Report: This includes attendance, discussion of readings and lecture material, sharing of writing, reading of peers' scripts and constructive criticism of work presented. On assigned days, students will make a record of feedback given on scripts and submit this in hardcopy.</p>	10%	1, 3, 4	TBA As per schedule
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Marking Criteria: These assignments will be based on (1) the quality, imagination, and originality of the piece presented, (2) the sense that each assignment conveys of elements of thought and craft that have been presented as components within the teaching, and (3) the drafting and workshop process including development through successful incorporation of feedback. All assignments must be typed, properly formatted, and free of spelling, grammar, and typographical errors. Samples of standard manuscript format will be posted on the THEA 405 Blackboard site. Further details on these assignments, including relation of assessment to objectives, will be available early in the course.

Though students will be assessed individually for all assignment work, informal collaborations between students will be invited and encouraged outside the formal class times.

Please note: Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until feedback from the external examiner has been considered. Note also that Honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made by the Honours programme examination committee.

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool.

Hard-copy assignments will be submitted in class directly to the lecturer or in the drop slot outside the administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace. Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your lecturer's name.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your lecturer in class or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

PENALTIES

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.

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. 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. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

SET TEXTS

Spencer, Stuart. *The Playwright's Guidebook*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2002.

You can order textbooks online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz.

There will be additional reading posted on the THEA 405 Blackboard site.

As in the course programme, students will be required to read six plays over the course of the trimester (selected and sourced by the students) aligning with the scheduled Playwright's Presentations (Assignment 2).

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

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.

You may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and email address for this course:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Resolving academic issues:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

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COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1 16 July Course Introduction. What makes a good play?

Week 2 23 July Structure. Action. Motivation. Subtext.

WE #1 DUE

Week 3 30 July Conflict. Stakes. Event.

PP #1 DUE and WE #2 DUE

Week 4 6 August Beats, Acts, Scenes.

PP #2 DUE and WE #3 DUE

Week 5 13 August Character.

PP #3 DUE and WE #4 DUE

Week 6 20 August The idea.

PP #4 DUE

Mid Trimester Break: Monday 26 August to Sunday 8 September 2013

Week 7 10 September Playwright's Workshop.

PP #5 DUE

Week 8 17 September Playwright's Workshop.

PP #6 DUE

Week 9 24 September Playwright's Workshop.

Week 10 1 October Playwright's Workshop.

Week 11 8 October Playwright's Workshop.

Assignment 4 (Script) DUE by Friday, 11 October 12PM

Week 12 15 October Playwright's Workshop.

PP= Playwright's Presentation and Report

WE= Writing Exercise