

## Course Outline

Advanced Screenplay.dot (118 Kb)

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

GRIFFITH FILM SCHOOL

OPEN UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA

CMM37

DOCUMENTARY SCRIPTWRITING

UNIT OUTLINE

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## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet introduces you to the Unit Documentary Scriptwriting. It details what you can expect of the unit and what the University, the Faculty of Arts and your tutors will expect of you when you submit work for assessment. The booklet also provides you with an introduction to Griffith University and the type of intellectual work it seeks to promote.

## ABOUT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Griffith University was established in the early 1970s with a distinctive philosophy. It is organised along different lines from traditional

subject-oriented universities, with a view to providing an education which is more directly relevant to contemporary social conditions, and therefore more useful to students both for their personal understanding of their social and physical environments and for their future career prospects. This is known as an interdisciplinary approach to education.

Traditional universities are often organised into departments, each of which teaches one subject or 'discipline'. Study at Griffith University, on the other hand, is organised around contemporary 'problem areas', which require for their understanding and resolution the collaborative contributions of people working across different disciplines and different mixes of knowledges and skills. At Griffith, consequently, there are no departments organised around traditional 'subjects'. Instead, groups of staff with different intellectual and disciplinary backgrounds design and teach broad-ranging interdisciplinary programs designed to provide students with appropriate knowledges and skills. This 'Griffith Philosophy' informs this Open Universities Australia unit in Communications.

In some ways, this sort of work is more intellectually demanding than traditional 'subjects', each of which occupies itself with carefully compartmentalised and limited fields of enquiry (French literature, British history, economics). The interdisciplinary approach is more intellectually exciting, and more closely corresponds to the real conditions outside the University to which these fields of enquiry relate.

If you are interested in discovering more about Griffith University and the range of programs it offers in its five campuses and colleges, the Griffith University Program Catalogue may be accessed via the world wide web, at:

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/academicprogramsandcourses>

#### ABOUT GRIFFITH FILM SCHOOL

Griffith University's new multi-disciplinary Film School consolidates and expands Griffith's vocationally-based digital and filmmaking offerings.

The school brings together disciplines such as 2D and 3D animation and effects, film and television production, orchestral scoring, multimedia, digital game development and commercialisation, media, business and law. It provides a unique focus for Australia's Creative Arts. Griffith University currently has the highest enrolment of Creative Arts students in Australian universities.

ABOUT THIS UNIT OF STUDY AND HOW IT FITS INTO THE GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Documentary Scriptwriting is, in Griffith University terms, a ten credit point course (10 cp) in Communications Studies. That is to say, it is equivalent to one eighth of the requirements for successful completion of a first year of full-time undergraduate study in the traditional mode (80 cp) or one half of the requirements of part (half) time undergraduate study (40 cp). To obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree over a three to ten-year period requires successful completion of 240 credit points of study.

Information about degree paths available through Open Universities Australia is provided in the Open Universities Australia Handbook or may be accessed via the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.open.edu.au>

Griffith University offers a Bachelor of Arts which may be completed entirely through Open Universities Australia. For further information contact the Administrative Officer (details appear in the ?Contact Staff? section of this document).

#### CONTACT STAFF

Staff of Griffith University that can assist with enquiries about Open Universities Australia are:

Administrative Officer

Off Campus & Assignment Handling Services

Division of Information Services

Griffith University

NATHAN QLD 4111

Phone: (07) 3382 1999

1 800 802 041 if you live outside the Brisbane area code

Facsimile: (07) 3382 1356

Email: [ocahs-admin@griffith.edu.au](mailto:ocahs-admin@griffith.edu.au)

If you wish to contact your tutor please phone the above Administrative Officer. They will contact your tutor and arrange for them to contact you as soon as possible. It is helpful if you have an answering machine or some form of voicemail for tutors to leave messages if you are out.

#### ABOUT DOCUMENTARY SCRIPTWRITING

Documentary Scriptwriting considers a range of documentary forms and styles including 'classical' documentary, cinema verite, observational film, oral history based production and more highly scripted documentary.

While the focus of the course is primarily on the audio-visual documentary students are also encouraged to consider other documentary outcomes such as the radio documentary, documentary theatre and documentary photojournalism.

The unit has three Blocks structured around the development of an industry format script package that includes a project synopsis, a treatment, associated script materials and a marketing brief.

The first Block, 'Devising A Documentary Topic and Developing a Documentary Proposal', introduces key institutions and practices relevant to documentary scriptwriting. It includes an emphasis on field and library research methods and script development techniques. For assessment, these methods are applied to write a Script Synopsis and Project Proposal.

The second Block, 'Researching, Developing And Drafting the Documentary Script Package & Research File', builds on the first by employing selected documentary script genres and formats used in contemporary documentary production. It provides an awareness of the place of the documentary in the contemporary mediascape and also requires an analysis of the research procedures and issues involved in script development. For assessment, these methods are applied to write a 1st. Draft Documentary Script Package & Documentary Scriptwriting Research File.

The third Block, 'Revising the Documentary Script Package' establishes procedures for revision re-drafting and polished presentation of the documentary script package. For assessment, these methods are applied to write a Final Draft Documentary Script Package

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the course is to promote knowledge of contemporary forms of documentary scriptwriting. Overall, this course should enable students to design and undertake documentary scriptwriting using widely recognised formats and processes

The course is also intended to provide students with the tools to understand the construction of the documentary form both as consumers of the various media in which it may appear or as potential documentary producers themselves. A feature of the course is that it provides an opportunity to work in professional and industrial formats of writing other than the traditional academic essay.

#### Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- ? competence in documentary scriptwriting using recognised script presentation and development formats including the synopsis, outline and treatment

- ? competence in research and fieldwork for documentary scriptwriting;

- ? an ability to write for an audiovisual or other appropriate medium

- ? an awareness of a range of different documentary genres and the capacity to make an appropriate choice of a formal vehicle for their project;

? an appreciation of the place of documentary in the wider cultural and media landscape

? an ability to analyse the construction of a range of documentary texts

? an understanding of policy and institutional considerations such as copyright and ethical obligations

The course also contributes to the development of a wider set of capacities which include:

? skills of analysis, argumentation and problem-solving via the research for the documentary script

? skills of presentation and negotiation (eg. making a case for a project, working on the research with external bodies and individuals);

? competence in written and oral presentation;

? ethical competences in working with and representing other people  
□ in part attained in liaison with persons or organisations outside the unit/University;

? a capacity for independent learning.

#### TEACHING ORGANISATION AND METHODS

Teaching in this unit occurs through a set of printed materials, supplemented by regular contact with your Tutor. Your Tutor will be able to address queries and concerns, while also suggesting documentaries to view on television when interesting titles appear in the broadcast schedules.

#### Print materials

The Study Guide is distributed to all students enrolled in the unit. It explains each topic and the role of the set readings. It includes ?Study Guide Exercises? that assist you in preparing assessment work. The book of Readings contains the core readings for both modules in the unit.

#### STUDY CHART

Week Topic Learning Activities In Class Learning Activities Out-of - Class

#### BLOCK ONE: DEVISING A DOCUMENTARY TOPIC AND DEVELOPING A DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL

1

Introduction to Documentary Scriptwriting

Course Aims and Activities

Study Guide Exercise 1

Analyse: (a) a Weekly Television schedule in order to identify and classify current broadcast slots available for documentary programming; &/or

(b) a media distributor's catalogue in order to identify and classify a range of documentary genres, subjects & formats  
Complete Study Guide Exercise 1

List 3 possible documentary topics and write a 25 word "one- line" synopsis for each topic

Prepare readings for Week 2

2

Getting Started: Identifying, researching and developing suitable documentary topics

Study Guide Exercise 2

Analyse either a feature article, a print interview, interview transcript or a pamphlet as a prospective basis for documentary

Complete Study Guide Exercise 2

Write 100 word outlines for two documentary topics & briefly indicate two possible treatments or approaches for each topic.

Prepare readings for Week 3

3

Documentary Storytelling: Introducing the documentary treatment and some options for developing a documentary story

Study Guide Exercise 3

Analyse a Weekly Television schedule (or a media distributor's catalogue) in order to identify and classify current styles of treatment employed for the broadcast / non-broadcast documentary.

Complete Study Guide Exercise 3

Write two differing 100 word treatments for a documentary topic & briefly indicate both a target audience and a means of accessing that audience

Prepare readings for Week 4

4

Pitching the

Documentary Proposal & Identifying Options for Documentary Script Development

Making an oral "pitch" for the documentary proposal based on work-in-progress on Assessment Item One the Script Synopsis and Project Proposal

Providing and receiving feedback on "pitched" proposals Complete a Draft of the Documentary Script Synopsis and Project Proposal

5

Consultation on a Draft of the Documentary Script Synopsis and Project Proposal  
Consultation on a Draft of the Documentary Script Synopsis and Project Proposal

Complete and submit the Documentary Script Synopsis and Project Proposal

Prepare readings for Week 6

BLOCK TWO: RESEARCHING, DEVELOPING AND DRAFTING THE DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT PACKAGE & RESEARCH FILE

6

Documentary Scripting: Some market expectations Study Guide Exercise 4

Analyse the forms of advice provided by a range of industry organisations (ABC/AFC) etc regarding the aims and drafting of a documentary proposal. Reconsider and revise the Script Synopsis and Project Proposal in light of Study Guide Exercise 4

Rewrite your Synopsis

Prepare readings for Week 7

7

Genres and Craft: an overview of the history and variety of the documentary form and shifts in the work of the writer

Study Guide Exercise 5

Analyse and compare the construction of two documentary sequences that employ differing modes of address.

Complete Study Guide Exercise 5

List 4 documentaries and identify their dominant modes of address

Rewrite your Outline and/or Treatment

Prepare readings for Week 8

8

Genres and Craft: Character, Interview and the role of the Writer

### Study Guide Exercise 6

The Role of the Writer in preparing, researching and planning for the Documentary Interview: transforming research materials in order to prepare an interview script

Complete Study Guide Exercise 6

List the major characters in your proposed documentary and briefly outline their roles and significance

Prepare readings for Week 9

9

Genres and Craft: Some Documentary scriptwriting research procedures: sources and copyright

### Study Guide Exercise 7

Preparing the Draft Research File and considering a field and library research report as a basis for sequence construction, shot listing, scripting, copyright and ethical issues

Complete Study Guide Exercise 7

Prepare a Draft of the Research File due in week 10

Prepare readings for Week 10

10

Genres and Craft: Writing the extended documentary treatment &/or script including Narration and Voiceover Conceiving, arranging and considering the functions of documentary sequences and the contribution of narration and/or voiceover

Complete and Submit

Full Draft Documentary Script Package & Documentary Scriptwriting Research File (Assessment Item 2)

### BLOCK THREE: REVISING THE DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT PACKAGE

11

Feedback: The roles of the Script Assessor, the Script Editor & the Producer Study Guide Exercise 8

Analyse the construction of a documentary to identify the functions of its key sequences

Complete Study Guide Exercise 8

Re-read your Draft Documentary Script Package & Research File and list its strengths and weaknesses

12

Re-drafting and reconsidering the Documentary Script package Study Guide Exercise 9

Analyse a variety of forms of documentary writing (research notes, letters to interviewees, synopses, narration) in order to consider the various roles of the documentary scriptwriter as applicant, correspondent, researcher and screen writer.

Complete Study Guide Exercise 9

Reconsider the target audience and means of distribution of your proposed documentary and begin the process of preparing Assignment Item 3 the Final Draft Documentary Script Package

13

Writing the Polished Draft: Questions of Audience

Considering the role of non-verbal elements (illustrations etc.) in script package presentation

Re-read your Draft Documentary Script Package in light of assessment feedback

Revise the synopsis, outline treatment character notes and other components of the Final Draft Documentary Script Package and consider the role of non-verbal elements (illustrations etc.)

14

Writing the Final Draft Documentary Script Package

Consultation on the Final Draft Documentary Script Package

Complete and submit the Final Draft Documentary Script Package

## TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

### Books

#### Prescribed Text

Documentary Scriptwriting book of Readings.

The book of Readings contains the core readings for the unit.

#### Recommended

Baird, Lois (ed.) (1992) Guide to Radio Production, Sydney, Australian Film Television and Radio School with Allen & Unwin. (The relevant parts are on scripting and writing.)

Kriwaczek, Paul. (1997) Documentary for the small screen / Paul Kriwaczek.: Oxford; Boston: Focal Press

Middlemiss, Jenny (1992). Guide to Film and Television Research. Sydney: Allen and Unwin with AFTRS.

Rabiger, Michael (1998), Directing the Documentary, London, Focal Press.

This is a comprehensive guide to making documentaries and parts are relevant to writing a documentary 'treatment'. The book of Readings contains excerpts.

Rosenthal, Alan (1996), *Writing, Producing and Directing Documentary Films and Videos*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press.

The book of Readings contains excerpts on documentary research, developing ideas into treatments and drafts, etc. The book has other useful sections on scripting and developing documentary materials in Part 1, and chapters on techniques such as narration and various documentary sub-genres.

Rosenthal, A (1995) *Writing Docudrama: Dramatizing Reality for Film and Television* Boston: Focal Press

Recommended Viewing

Ivens, Joris et al (1980): *Classic documentaries*: Minneapolis, Minn.: Festival Films,

Leacock, Richard (1979) *Richard Leacock talks with Stephen Maclean* North Ryde, N.S.W.: Australian Film and Television School

Rosenthal, Alan (1979) *Alan Rosenthal on documentary form* North Ryde, N.S.W.: Australian Film and Television School

Wintonick, Peter. (1999): *Cinema verite: defining the moment* Montreal, Quebec: National Film Board of Canada, (Heathcliff Distribution)

Additional

Documentary process

Baddeley, W. (1975). *The Technique of Documentary Film Production*. London: Focal Press.

Reisz, Karel and Millar, Gavin (1968). *The Technique of Film Editing*. New York: Hastings House. (Use selectively)

Debates, Genres, Histories, Ethics

Barnouw, E. (1974). *Documentary - A History of the Non-Fiction Film*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barsam, R (1992) *Nonfiction film: a critical history*: Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Bluem, A. William (1965) *Documentary in American television: form - function - method* New York: Hastings House

Bordwell, D. and Thompson, K. (1990). *Film Art: an introduction*. New York: Alfred Knopf. (Section on cinema verite)

Bruzzi, Stella, 2000. *New documentary: a critical introduction*: London; New York: Routledge

Cousins, Mark (& Macdonald, Kevin) 1996. *Imagining reality: the Faber book of documentary*: London; Boston: Faber and Faber,

Corner, John (ed.) (1986). *Documentary and the Mass Media*. London: Edward Arnold.

Corner, John (1996) *The art of record: a critical introduction to documentary*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press.

Creed, B. et al (eds) (1987). *Don't Shoot Darling: women's independent filmmaking in Australia*. Greenhouse.

Eaton, M. (1979). *Anthropology-Reality-Cinema, the films of Jean Rouch*. London: BFI.

Ellis, Jack C.(1989) *The documentary idea: a critical history of English-language documentary film and video* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Ellis, Jack C (1986) *John Grierson: a guide to references and resources* Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall

Gross, Larry, Katz, John Stuart, Ruby, Jay (eds) (1988). *Image Ethics: The Moral Rights of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press

Grant, Barry Keith, 1998: *Documenting the documentary: close readings of documentary film and video*: Detroit: Wayne State University Press,

Hurst, John and White, Sally A. (1994). *Ethics and the Australian News Media*. Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia.

Issari, M.A. (1979). *What is Cinema Verite?* New Jersey: Scarecrow Press.

Jacobs, L. (1971). *The Documentary Tradition: from Nanook to Woodstock*. Hopkinson and Blake.

Levin G. Roy (1971).*Documentary Explorations*. New York: Doubleday and Company.

Nelson, Joyce (1988).*The colonized eye: rethinking the Grierson legend* Toronto: Between the Lines

Nichols, Bill (1994) *Blurred boundaries: questions of meaning in contemporary culture* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Nichols, Bill (1991). *Representing Reality: issues and concepts in documentary*: Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

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Plantigna, Carl R. (1997) *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film* Cambridge Cambridge University Press

Renov, Michael (ed.) (1993). *Theorizing Documentary*. New York; London: Routledge (American Film Institute Reader).

Rosenthal, A (1971), *The new documentary in action: a casebook in film making*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Rosenthal, A. (1980). *The Documentary Conscience: a casebook in film making*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rosenthal, A. (1988). *New Challenges for Documentary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rothman, William (1997) *Documentary Film Classics* Cambridge Cambridge University Press

Silverstone, R. (1985). Framing Science: the making of a BBC documentary. London: BFI.

Tobias, Michael. (1998): The search for "reality": the art of documentary filmmaking: Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, C.

Vaughan, D. (1977). Television Documentary Usage. London: BFI (Monograph No. 6).

Waugh, T. (ed.) (1984). 'Show us Life': toward a history and aesthetics of the committed documentary. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press.

Winston, B (1995) Claiming the Real London: BFI.

Journals, magazines, etc.

The following are some of the journals, magazines, bulletins and updates produced by industry, government and academic sources in the media field. Griffith Libraries hold these publications although not on every campus. Some of the publications are also available online for recent periods.

ABA Update

Published by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) in print form. See the web address in section 7.3 below for information about this Update and the ABA's wider dissemination of information about media issues on the Internet.

AFC News

Published by the Australian Film Commission (AFC) as a print newsletter and on the AFC web site (see section 7.3 below).

Australian Screen Education

Published jointly by the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) and Cinemedia Screen Education. Known as Metro Education prior to Issue 20/21, Summer 1999.

Cinema Papers

Published by MTV Publishing Ltd., Richmond, Victoria.

Communications Update

Published by the Communications Law Centre, University of New South Wales. Information about this publication is available on the Communications Law Centre web site (see section 7.3 below).

Continuum

Dox

Encore

An Australian industry-oriented magazine published in Chatswood, NSW.

Film Comment

Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television

Media International Australia: Culture and Policy.

Published by the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, Faculty of Arts, Griffith University. Until 1998, Media International Australia (formerly Media Information Australia) and Culture and Policy were separate journals. In February 1998 (Issue no. 86), they merged into Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy.

Metro

Published by the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM). One of the few journals to publish regular reviews of documentary.

Quarterly Review of Film and Video (USA)

Sight and Sound

Published by the British Film Institute, London. Began in 1932 (former title Monthly Film Bulletin). New series started in 1991.

World Wide Web addresses

Relevant Web sites

The following web addresses are relevant to this unit ? not only for the material and information contained at each site but also for the links they have to other sites. They can help you get to know many organisations and information sources in the documentary field.

The web addresses are subject to change but are current at the time of preparing this document. If an address has changed, you may be directed to another location automatically or provided with the new address.

Please be aware that on certain sites there may be a fee for retrieving some of the information. For example, the Sydney Morning Herald archives site lists article titles free of charge but has a fee for clicking on the full-text version of the article.

ABC Online:

<http://www.abc.net.au/>

Useful as a gateway to News, Rural, Asia Pacific, Children, Youth, Indigenous, Science, Art & Culture, Religion, Sport, Education, Health

ABC Television Documentaries

<http://abc.net.au/documentaries/>

Useful for accessing typical industry guidelines

ABC Radio, The Media Report:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/>

<http://www.abc.com/au/rn/talks/8.30/mediarpt/mstories/index.html>

AMERICAN RADIOWORKS

<http://www.americanradioworks.org/>

AMERICAN RADIOWORKS? is the documentary project of Minnesota Public Radio and NPR NewsSM. ARW is public radio's largest documentary production unit; it creates documentaries, series projects, and investigative reports for the public radio system and the Internet

Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA):

<http://www.aba.gov.au/>

Australian Commonwealth Government entry point:

[http://www.fed.gov.au/t\\_index.htm](http://www.fed.gov.au/t_index.htm)

Australian Film Commission:

<http://www.afc.gov.au>

Australian Film Commission link to screen culture organisations:

<http://www.afc.gov.au/resources/online/sco/index.html>

Australian Film Institute:

<http://www.cinemia.net/AFI>

Australian Press Council:

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/apc>

Australian Teachers of Media Inc.:

<http://www.cinemia.net/ATOM/>

Broadcasting Services Act 1992:

[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/bsa1992214/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/bsa1992214/)

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association:

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~caama1>

Communications Law Centre

<http://www.comslaw.org.au>

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA):

<http://www.scu.edu.au/sponsored/cbaa>

Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts:

<http://www.dcita.gov.au/>

Documenter

<http://www.documenter.com/>

Documenter aims to provide positive critical debate in the documentary industry. It aims to connect ideas and people around the globe and foster an international documentary community. Documenter is run completely by volunteers who are committed to a lively and interesting documentary industry.

DOX Documentary Film magazine

<http://www.dox.dk/>

The journal of the European Documentary Network

Docos.com

<http://www.docos.com/>

On line international documentary industry information

European Documentary Network

<http://www.edn.dk>

EDN is a meeting point for all professionals, who work with documentary film and television.

Journalism Education Association:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/faculty/arts/journ/2ajr2.htm>

Metro Screen Ltd:

<http://www.metro.org.au>

Murdoch University's documentary reading room

<http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/doco/ozdoco/read.htm>

This page provides a bibliography of Australian documentary and is part of a site dedicated to the study of documentary production and the genre of documentary within an Australian framework.

National Library:

<http://www.nla.gov.au>

National Library, Australian Journals listing:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/oz.ausejour.html>

QDox:

<http://www.qdox.org.au>

QPix:

<http://www.qpix.org.au>

Radio National's Investigative Documentary Program

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing>

Background Briefing is Radio National's agenda-setting, current affairs radio documentary program, with a history of award-winning investigative journalism.

Radio National's Radio Eye

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/radioeye/default.htm>

In a media world where documentaries and features are endangered species, Radio Eye presents the best of both forms from Australia and around the world. See Guidelines for Radio Eye Freelancers: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/radioeye/contributors.htm>

Statement of Principles for Media Reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, 1994:

<http://www.dcita.gov.au/cgi-bin/trap.pl?path=/pubs/atsi.htm>

The Age:

<http://www.theage.com.au/>

The Australian:

<http://www.news.com.au/pageone/>

The Australian Financial Review:

<http://www.afr.com.au/>

The Australian Financial Review archives:

<http://www.afr.com.au/misc/archive.html>

The Courier-Mail:

<http://www.thecouriermail.com.au>

The SBS:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/>

The Sydney Morning Herald:

<http://www.smh.com.au/>

The Sydney Morning Herald archives:

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/static/html/search/index.html>

Young Media Australia:

<http://www.youngmedia.org.au>

Young People and the Media:

[http://www.sydneyform.com/abstracts\\_papers.html](http://www.sydneyform.com/abstracts_papers.html)

Audio and Video Resources

The Griffith University Library holds feature films, documentaries, current affairs and other television programs. Titles can be searched on the Library catalogue. Many of these titles will be available for viewing or borrowing from State libraries, large municipal and other university libraries. Some documentaries are available through commercial video stores, but their collections will obviously vary store-to-store, region-to-region.

The ABC's Radio National's Background Briefing, Radio Eye and the Media Report have entire programs or segments related to Documentary Scriptwriting

Videos

Some relevant documentaries held in the Griffith Library include:

Alan Rosenthal on Documentary Film

Allies

Another Way?

At Sea

Basil Wright: Documentary Films - a viewpoint

Camera Natura

Cane Toads

Common Threads: stories from the quilt

Don't Look Back

For Love or Money

Friends and Enemies

Harlan county, USA

Joe Leahy's Neighbours

Kamira: we're going back to our country

Kemira: diary of a strike

Lousy Little Sixpence

No Problems

Queensland's First Films 1895 - 1910

Rap, Race and Equality Rats in the Ranks

Red Matildas  
Red Ted and the Great Depression  
Relative Strangers  
Snakes and Ladders  
Song of Air  
The Legend of Fred Paterson  
The Stuart Challender Story  
Time's Up - story of the campaign for Equal Pay  
Two Laws  
Women of the Sun  
Yap: how did you know we'd like TV?

#### Additional

Your Tutor will be able to suggest additional readings and supporting materials relevant to your individual work on assessment items. Keep your eye on television schedules for interesting documentary titles each week.

#### TEACHING SUPPORT

In the absence of face to face teaching sessions we place a great deal of stress on the written comments on the assignment cover sheet and in the text of your assignments.

When you receive your marked assessment items, it is very important that you fully understand what the marker has written, what the strengths and weaknesses of your assignment are, and that you follow this up. Sometimes your assignments may miss the point entirely, sometimes there will be problems in the structure of the argument, sometimes there will be more technical problems such as spelling, punctuation, referencing, etc. No matter what the problem, however, it is important for you to recognise that the tutors are there to help you to develop your skills in university study. Tutors are not distant ?arbiters? or ?referees?. Rather, they should be thought of as advisors and facilitators in your academic development.

#### SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Assignments should be submitted to:

Off Campus & Assignment Handling Services

Division of Information Services

Griffith University

Nathan Qld 4111

**THEY MUST BE POSTED BY THE DUE DATE.**

Submitted assignments will be recorded as received at Griffith University and then forwarded to a tutor for marking. On return of the marked assignment Griffith University will record the mark awarded

and return the assignment to the student by post. It is expected that assignments will normally be recorded, marked and returned within three weeks from the date of submission.

Enquiries regarding overdue marking should be made directly to:

Assessment Assistant

Office hours: Telephone: (07) 3382 1999

1 800 802 041 if you live outside the Brisbane area code

Facsimile: (07) 3382 1356

Email: [ocahs-admin@griffith.edu.au](mailto:ocahs-admin@griffith.edu.au)

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND PROCEDURES

CMM37 Documentary Scriptwriting involves the completion of three linked assessment items. The three assessment items are intended to help build documentary research and writing skills and the ability to demonstrate understanding of issues in the documentary field.

Further advice on assessment work is provided in the Study Guide. Each item will be discussed in class, and you will have opportunities to receive feedback from your Tutor as you prepare your work for submission.

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Title and type of assessment item	Due date	Length/Duration	Weighting
Script Synopsis and Project Proposal	Week 5		5

(posted Friday) 1,500 words 25%

Full Draft

Documentary Script Package & Research File	Week 10		
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(posted Friday) Script package for 10 minute Documentary (1500 words) & 1000 word

Research File 45%

Final Draft

Documentary Script Package	Week 13		
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(posted Friday) Final Script package for 10 minute Documentary (1500 words) 30%

## 1.0 ASSESSMENT

Assessment in this unit of study conforms to standard Griffith University and Faculty procedures. For each individual assessment item you will be given a mark by the tutor. The marks, along with comments from the marker, will be recorded on the assignment cover sheet attached to your essay. The assignment cover sheet, the accompanying style and presentation check sheet and the comments made in the text of your essay are important feedback mechanisms for

you. An appropriate number of assignment cover sheets and accompanying style and presentation check sheets are included in the Study Package. These should be attached to each of the assessment items submitted. Please note the following points:

1. Always submit essays with cover sheet. Never send essays directly to the tutor or convenor.
2. You must always keep a copy of the final draft of your essay.
3. Note that markers have two working weeks to complete their assessment after your essay is received at the office.

## 2.0 AGGREGATION OF MARKS

At the end of the period of study a grade is the result awarded when you have completed your unit of study. Grades are confirmed by an Assessment Board. The grades are aggregated from individual marks. One of the following grades will be awarded for each subject from which a student has not formally withdrawn:

HD = High Distinction

D = Distinction

C = Credit

P = Pass

PC = Pass Conceded. This can be awarded to students who are not eligible for a grade of Pass, but whose marks, in the opinion of the Assessment Board, merit the award of a Pass Conceded. You can receive no more than 30 credit points towards your degree for subjects for which a Pass Conceded has been awarded.

F = Fail

FNS = Failure through non-submission. This will be awarded to a student who did not present any work for assessment. It will be counted as a failure.

For award of a grade of Pass Conceded or higher, students must have completed 85% or more of the weighted items, with marks above zero.

For any student that has formally withdrawn from a subject, at the end of the study period, the student will be awarded a grade as follows:

W = Withdrawn

## 3.0 DISCRETIONARY FACTORS

There are some further provisions which allow the Assessment Board discretion to act in your favour, particularly if you are near a borderline:

a) the Assessment Board may round up your final mark for award of a higher grade if the Board feels this is warranted, given your total array of marks/grades;

b) the Assessment Board may make adjustments to grades in the light of the documentary evidence submitted by students as to circumstances that may have disadvantaged them.

PLEASE NOTE: All assignments which receive marks below 50% will be double marked and the higher of the two marks will be recorded as the mark awarded for that item.

An assignment which receives a mark of zero may not be submitted/resubmitted.

#### 4.0 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Following approval of results by the relevant Assessment Board, students are notified of their results.

#### GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR DOCUMENTARY SCRIPTWRITING

1. Quality of concepts and perspectives presented (including clarity of focus in their articulation and evidence of appropriate research in their development)
2. Demonstrated awareness of the audience for and function of the completed programme
3. Ability to organise the structure, segmentation and interrelation of elements of the script to offer an engaging exposition and development of theme, character and situation.
4. Choice of appropriate format and creative presentation (ALL script documents must be in typescript.)
5. Awareness of the particular requirements of writing for the designated medium (e.g. audio-visual, radio, performance etc)
6. Clarity of writing and coherence and cogency of argument.
7. Quality of written expression and formal presentation (including paragraph construction, grammar, punctuation, referencing and ability to work effectively within the word limits).

#### ASSESSMENT 1: SCRIPT SYNOPSIS AND PROJECT PROPOSAL

Length: 1500 words plus list of sources

Due date: (to be posted by close of business)

Friday (end of Week 5)

Weighting: 25%

#### INSTRUCTION

The following Pro-forma indicates the tasks which need to be completed for this item.

Assessment Item One - Script Synopsis and Project Proposal

1. NAME
2. WORKING TITLE OF PRODUCTION
3. BRIEF OUTLINE (50 words)  
A "one-line" outline of the project
4. AIM OF PRODUCTION / PITCH (75 words)

Why is it important that this project be made? Why is this documentary significant? Why should we be interested in this project?

Where might the resources (financial/physical) needed to realise the project be found? Other comments that can help to 'sell' the project.

5. CENTRAL THEME, PROBLEM OR PREMISE (50 words)

6. DOCUMENTARY GENRE/STYLE (50 words)

Choose from a range of documentary genres e.g. Docudrama; Observational Documentary; Presenter or Hosted; Interview-based; Experimental; Other; Mixed.

Explain why the genre you have chosen is the one most appropriate for developing your central theme or premise.

7. SYNOPSIS (150 words)

The synopsis should make clear what the tape will be about. It may be helpful to break this up into TOPIC (approx. 25 words) & SUBTOPICS (approx. 125 words). Please indicate how these subtopics relate to one another and the topic

8. ON-SCREEN PARTICIPANTS (75 words)

Where relevant indicate Documentary Subjects/Characters with brief explanation as to why and how will their contribution be sought?

9. TREATMENT (700 words)

The 'treatment' should show how you propose to construct the documentary script.

It should indicate both the proposed general structure and how the main segments will be organised; and outline the intended use of particular documentary genres and techniques (address, sound/image relations) to develop the topic.

The Treatment should include a segmentation outlining the main scenes/parts of the documentary and an indication of the Exposition or 'point of attack' that you will be using at the beginning of your documentary script to establish characters, situations etc. It should also indicate the elements of Style (mise en scene, sound design, cinematography) to be employed.

10. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS (75 words)

Identify the research methods you will use, list your main sources/materials and explain how they will be used.

11. COPYRIGHT, AND OTHER PERMISSIONS AND CLEARANCES (50 Words)

Will the project employ copyright material e.g. archival images etc? Identify any measures necessary to obtain copyright material or other permissions and clearances.

12. PROPOSED AUDIENCE(S) (50 words)

13. POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION/EXHIBITION AVENUE(S) (50 words)

14. ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS (100 words)

At this stage, what kind of script development difficulties would you anticipate arising? (e.g. access to informants etc.) How might these problems be solved?

### AIMS

The purpose of this item is to introduce and establish the range of issues and procedures which should be considered in the preliminary phase of proposing a documentary script .

The aims of the assignment are to develop:

? competencies in using field and library facilities to identify, research and analyse an issue appropriate for documentary scriptwriting; and  
? skills of documentary proposal writing and presentation, which are relevant to work in media communications and beyond.

### ADDITIONAL MARKING CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT ITEM 1 (SCRIPT SYNOPSIS AND PROJECT PROPOSAL)

(i) Adequacy of coverage of each section of the Script Synopsis and Project Proposal.

(ii) Clarity of formulation of points in each section.

(iii) Evidence of preliminary research/analysis to support the Script Development Proposal.

### ASSESSMENT 2: 1st. DRAFT DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT PACKAGE & DOCUMENTARY SCRIPTWRITING RESEARCH FILE

Length: Script package for 10 minute documentary (approximately 1500 words) plus 1000 word Research File

Due date: (to be posted by close of business)

Friday (end of Week 10)

Weighting: 45%

### INSTRUCTION

This item is in two parts.

Part One is the Full Draft Documentary Script Package is an industry styled package for a 10 minute documentary including the synopsis, treatment and extended treatment/script developed from the documentary proposal submitted for Item One.

Part Two is the Documentary Scriptwriting Research File

Length / Duration

Part One: The Draft Documentary Script Package for the proposed 10 minute documentary is approximately 1500 words.

The script should be in an accepted 'professional' presentation format (examples for the various documentary genres are provide in the set of readings for the Course). ALL SCRIPTS MUST BE TYPED. As can be see from the examples given, double spacing and indented margins gives lots of room for notes to be made on the script at its various stages as it moves toward realisation.

- ? Detailed directions as to camera positions/angles etc are NOT encouraged.
- ? Ten minutes is the maximum allowable script length.
- ? As a rough but useful guide, a page of full script layout - double-spaced and with tightly indented margins - equates to one minute of screen time.
- ? Graphic and Photographic material may also be included with the script to give a feel for the 'look' of the piece.

Part Two the Documentary Scriptwriting Research File is approximately 1000 words. It employs the following pro-forma:

1. The working title and topic of the Documentary Script. (50 words)
2. A statement of why it was chosen and of its significance. (100 words)
3. Discuss issues - and strategies for dealing with them arising from the relation of the scriptwriter to:
  - ? the subjects (people, organisations etc) about, with, or for whom you are writing the script, and
  - ? the intended audience.
 (300 words in total)
- ? An annotated bibliography and a list of non-print sources. PLEASE NOTE you must explain why and how your script uses the key documents/sources listed (500 words)

#### AIMS

The purpose of this item is to introduce and establish the key documentary script writing materials accessed in the process of documentary script development and enhances skills in the research, analysis and development of ideas for documentary scriptwriting.

The aims of the assignment are to:

- ? consolidate practical skills in planning, researching and writing a documentary script package;
- ? enhance independent skills in defining issues and analysing materials;
- ? enable you to obtain feedback to assist in preparing your next assessment item.

#### ADDITIONAL MARKING CRITERIA FOR ITEM 2

Full Draft Documentary Script Package & Documentary Scriptwriting Research File

- (i) Coverage of all parts of assignment and evidence of understanding of course work on documentary scriptwriting forms and processes.
- (ii) Evidence of capacity to build on feedback and discussion of Assignment 1 (the Script Synopsis and Project Proposal).

(iii) Evidence of appropriate research and quality of analysis of research materials.

(iv) Demonstrated ability to transform and present research materials in an appropriate script, treatment or other appropriate script development documentation formats.

### ASSESSMENT 3: FINAL DRAFT DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT PACKAGE

Length: Final Script package for 10 minute Documentary

Due date: (to be posted by close of business)

Friday (end of Week 13)

Weighting: 30%

Note: If you wish to receive detailed comments on this end-of-semester item, please write this clearly on the front of your assignment.

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTION

Assessment item three - final draft documentary script package

A polished final draft of a documentary script package for a documentary no longer than ten minutes. The script should be in an accepted 'professional' presentation format (see examples for the various genres in the course readings).

Graphic and photographic materials are particularly encouraged at final draft stage to give a feel for the 'look' of the piece.

#### AIMS

The purpose of this item is to further establish and consolidate documentary scriptwriting formats and procedures. In particular it enables students to appreciate the importance of drafting and re-drafting in light of script editorial feedback and other project development processes.

The aims of this assignment are to promote skills in:

- ? conducting relevant revision and re-drafting ;
- ? using documentary script techniques and understanding their techniques and effects; and
- ? working with feedback and managing a project over time.

#### ADDITIONAL MARKING CRITERIA

The particular criteria for Item Three are the demonstration of a capacity to re-draft in light of feedback on Item Two and project management over a concerted period of time.

#### ACADEMIC PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Plagiarism means copying another text without referencing the source of that text. It is possible to plagiarise an idea, a paragraph, or an argument. Direct copying of lines and paragraphs word for word

(whether from a reading, the study guide or another source) is an obvious case of plagiarism. Cheating is defined as any fraudulent response to any item of assessment and includes plagiarism.

It is important that you be aware of the practices which constitute acts of plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs where:

? paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence which are copied directly, are not enclosed in quotation marks and appropriately referenced;

? where direct quotations are not used, but are paraphrased or summarised, and the source of the material is not acknowledged either by footnoting or other simple reference within the text of the paper;

? where an idea which appears elsewhere in printed material or film is used or developed without reference being made to the author or the source of that idea.

In cases where plagiarism is felt to be minor or due to scholarly ignorance, the marker may return the assignment with a mark of Unsatisfactory and require it to be resubmitted. In cases where the extent of plagiarism is significant, the assignment will be referred to the relevant Assessment Board which may award the assignment a mark of Unacceptable with no opportunity for resubmission.

#### APPEALS AGAINST MARK

Appeals against individual marks for assignments should be addressed to the relevant tutor. The tutor can request a second opinion on the assignment from another tutor.

#### APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF GRADE

(i) Students are encouraged to discuss with academic staff their performance in assessment items during a unit.

(ii) Where a student believes that an error has been made or an injustice done in respect of the grade awarded for a unit, the student may request a review of the grade. This request -

(a) MUST BE MADE IN WRITING

(b) must state the specific grounds on which the application for the review of grade is based.

(c) must be lodged with Off Campus & Assignment Handling Services within 14 days of the official notification of the result to the student.

(iii) All requests for review of grade shall be dealt with by the Convenor of the relevant unit who shall seek the advice of the relevant examiner/s.

(iv) The outcome of a review of grade may be either: (a) no change to the grade (ii) the grade is changed or (c) other action may be required as an outcome of the review of grade application (the student will be advised of specific details).

Any formal complaint about assessment procedures or results should be marked 'Confidential' and addressed to:

Administrative Officer

Off Campus & Assignment Handling Services

Logan Campus

Griffith University

MEADOWBROOK QLD 4131

The complaint will then be passed to the relevant Convenor.

Confidentiality will be respected at all times.