

## CMNS3440: Short Film Production

Newcastle City Precinct  
Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

*The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.*

## OVERVIEW

<b>Course Description</b>	Students will develop the skills, knowledge and ability to create a live-action short film. Working in groups students will take on the role of either a screenwriter, a director, a cinematographer, an art director, a sound recordist/composer or an editor. Emphasis in this course will be focused on original treatment of the story through crew collaboration and creative processes for location film production.
<b>Assumed Knowledge</b>	60 units at 2000 level including CMNS2035
<b>Contact Hours</b>	<b>Film Screening</b> Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per Week for 1 Weeks starting Week 13  <b>Lecture</b> Face to Face On Campus 1 hour(s) per Week for 7 Weeks starting Week 1 Weeks 1-6 and Week 13  <b>Tutorial</b> Face to Face On Campus 19 hour(s) per Term Full Term starting Week 2 3 hour(s) per Week for 4 Weeks (weeks 2-5) 1 hour(s) per Week for 7 Weeks starting Week 6
<b>Unit Weighting</b>	10
<b>Workload</b>	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

# COURSE OUTLINE

---

# CONTACTS

<b>Course Coordinator</b>	<b>Newcastle City Precinct</b> Dr Simon Weaving <a href="mailto:Simon.Weaving@newcastle.edu.au">Simon.Weaving@newcastle.edu.au</a> (02) 43494591 Consultation: Please email – best day is Tuesday
<b>Teaching Staff</b>	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
<b>School Office</b>	<b>School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences</b> NU Space, Level 4 409 Hunter Street Newcastle <a href="mailto:HCISS@newcastle.edu.au">HCISS@newcastle.edu.au</a> +61 4985 4500

# SYLLABUS

<b>Course Content</b>	Topics to be covered are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional production practices and creative processes for screen-based practitioners working in collaborative groups.</li><li>• Industry expectation for short film productions including budgets, planning and scheduling, risk assessments, legal and copyright issues.</li><li>• Editorial, technical and aesthetic content development for short film productions.</li><li>• Planning and realising a short film production on time and within a limited resource base</li></ul>
<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop skills, knowledge and understanding of short film production through collaborative filmmaking practice;</li><li>2. Develop and critically analyse short film scripts for location based productions;</li><li>3. Identify and critically reflect on the creative process related to short film production practices;</li><li>4. Demonstrate an understanding of industry expectations in regard to WHS, risk assessments, budgeting, ethical and moral issues, and safe working practices</li></ol>
<b>Course Materials</b>	See Canvas course website for further details and resources available.
<b>Attendance &amp; Engagement</b>	This course is intended for THIRD YEAR students who have completed courses in cinematography, sound, and foundations of media production. The course adopts standard industry practices wherever possible. Success in this course is highly dependent upon: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Attendance in the intensive 3-hour workshops (weeks 2-5)</li><li>2. Crew collaboration and, in particular, finding ways for every member of a crew to be engaged and attend crew-based activities. Crews will need to establish regular times (outside scheduled class time) when ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREW can meet for pre-production planning, the shoot, and post-production.</li></ol>

# COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass this course, each student must complete ALL of the following compulsory requirements:

## Contact Hour Requirements:

- Tutorial Induction Requirement - Students must attend and pass the induction requirements before attending these sessions. Compulsory Requirement: Induction Requirement - Students must pass the induction requirements before attending these sessions.

In order to participate in this course students must complete a compulsory safety induction (equipment usage).

# SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	The Writer		
2	4 Mar	The Director	Where's the drama? Beats, blocks and tipping points (3hrs)	Choose Scenes by end of week
3	11 Mar	The Cinematographer	Casting, directing amateur actors & pre-production paperwork (3hrs)	
4	18 Mar	The Producer	Set operations simulation (3 hrs)	Scene paperwork
5	25 Mar	The Production Designer	Short film story development workshop (3hrs)	Scene Rushes
6	1 Apr	Creative practice as research (online lecture due to Easter)	Review scenes & develop research questions	Scene Final cut
7	8 Apr		Short film making – production meetings	Research Question for exegesis
<b>Mid Term Break</b>				
<b>Mid Term Break</b>				
8	29 Apr		Short film making – production meetings	Short film Writer paperwork
9	6 May		Short film making – production meetings	Short film Director & Cinematographer paperwork
10	13 May		Short film making – production meetings	Short film Production Designer paperwork
11	20 May		Short film making – rough cut due	Short film Producer paperwork
12	27 May		Short film making – fine cut due	Short film Editor/Sound designer paperwork
13	3 Jun		SCREENING OF FINAL FILMS (Fri 7 June - TBA)	Short film final cut
<b>Examination Period</b>				Exegesis Due
<b>Examination Period</b>				

# ASSESSMENTS

This course has 4 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Short film production exercise (20%)	Paperwork Due: Week 4 in class Rushes Due: Week 5 in class Final edits due: Week 6 in class	Group	20%	1, 2, 4
2	Present Crew role paperwork for a short film (20%)	Writer – Week 8 in class Director - Week 9 in class Cinematographer - Week 9 in class Production Designer - Week 10 - in class Producer/1st A.D - Week 11 in class Editor/Sound Designer - Week 12 - in class	Individual	20%	1, 2
3	Short film 6 minutes (40%)	Rough Cut due to be screened in Week 11 in class Fine cut to be screened in Week 12 in class Final cut (for assessment) due Week 13 in class (and delivered online)	Group	40%	1, 2, 3, 4
4	Exegesis about Short Film practice (20%)	Research question due Week 7 in class Final Exegesis due Week 14, Sunday 9 June by 23:59.	Individual	20%	3

## Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

## Assessment 1 - Short film production exercise (20%)

### Assessment Type Description

Professional Task  
Scene exercise - Working in small groups allocated in class, students will film a script they are given. The objective is to work on an idea that belongs to someone else and to turn it into your own piece of dramatic, cinematic storytelling. Students will be allocated specific crew roles and will complete the (condensed) paperwork that is allocated to each crew role.

### Weighting

20%

### Length

2-3 minutes

### Due Date

Paperwork Due: Week 4 in class  
Rushes Due: Week 5 in class  
Final edits due: Week 6 in class

### Submission Method Assessment Criteria

In Class  
Further details and rubric on Canvas. This is a group project, but students will be graded individually.

### Return Method

In Class

### Feedback Provided

In Class - In class plus rubric and comments on paperwork online

## Assessment 2 - Present Crew role paperwork for a short film (20%)

### Assessment Type Description

Presentation  
This is a written assessment and an in-class presentation. Students will pick one of the following crew roles for the Short Film: Writer, Producer/1st A.D., Director, Cinematographer,

<b>Weighting</b>	Production Designer, Editor/Sound Designer and complete industry standard paperwork based on their short film, presenting a summary of their preparation to the class.
<b>Length</b>	20%
<b>Due Date</b>	5 min presentation & short professional report
	Writer – Week 8 in class
	Director - Week 9 in class
	Cinematographer - Week 9 in class
	Production Designer - Week 10 - in class
	Producer/1st A.D - Week 11 in class
	Editor/Sound Designer - Week 12 - in class
<b>Submission Method</b>	In Class
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Consistent with professional industry practice for their nominated crew role. Further details and rubric on Canvas.
<b>Return Method</b>	In Class
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	In Class - Verbal discussion and Rubric.

### Assessment 3 - Short film 6 minutes (40%)

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Professional Task
<b>Description</b>	5-7 minute Short Film – Short film ideas will be pitched by writers and these projects will be crewed within each class. Groups of 5-6 students will be created around the crew roles of Writer, Producer/1st A.D., Director, Cinematographer, Art Director, Editor/Sound Designer. Group progress will be monitored during the semester. Group work criteria laid out below will apply to this assignment. For this assessment students must use university equipment and any students filming on non-university equipment will receive a grade of zero.
<b>Weighting</b>	40%
<b>Length</b>	5-7 minutes – strictly enforced (not including credits)
<b>Due Date</b>	Rough Cut due to be screened in Week 11 in class
	Fine cut to be screened in Week 12 in class
	Final cut (for assessment) due Week 13 in class (and delivered online)
<b>Submission Method</b>	In Class
	Online
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	6 minute* short drama film completed through group work. All students will participate through their crew roles in the preparation, filming and edit of the short film. Failure to participate equally will incur penalty. Further details and rubric on Canvas.
<b>Return Method</b>	In Class
	In Person
	Ongoing Assessment
	Online
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	In Class.

### Assessment 4 - Exegesis about Short Film practice (20%)

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Journal
<b>Description</b>	2000-word exegesis (essay) is to be written by each student, examining his/her 'research question' that is related to their practice making the short film (developed by Week 7). The research must involve the keeping of a reflective journal that is used as a data source.
<b>Weighting</b>	20%
<b>Length</b>	2000 words
<b>Due Date</b>	Research question due Week 7 in class
	Final Exegesis due Week 14 Sunday 9 June 23:59
<b>Submission Method</b>	In Class
	Online
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	See rubric on Canvas
<b>Return Method</b>	Online
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	Online via Canvas

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Grading Scheme** This course is graded as follows:

Range of	Grade	Description
----------	-------	-------------

<b>Marks</b>		
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

\*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

#### **Attendance**

Attendance/participation will be recorded in the following components:

- Tutorial

#### **WH&S Requirements**

Due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, it is the student's responsibility to sanitise their work/computer space prior to any face-to-face lessons in this course. They must be mindful of current social distancing rules during their face-to-face lessons.

#### **Communication Methods**

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face-to-face meetings or supervision.

#### **Course Evaluation**

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

#### **Oral Interviews (Vivas)**

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination \(viva\) Procedure](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

#### **Academic Misconduct**

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

#### **Adverse Circumstances**

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:

1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or

- 
2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
  3. you are requesting a change of placement; or
  4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.

Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:

<https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>

### **Important Policy Information**

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/no-room-for/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

*This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.*

© 2024 The University of Newcastle, Australia