

MA Scriptwriting Culminating Project Guidelines

For FTV Students in the MA Scriptwriting Major

For the MA Scriptwriting Culminating Project, we have two options, the Thesis and the Directed Project. For Theses, the student will need to create a committee consisting of a Chair (who will guide the student through the process) and a Committee Member (who will offer feedback at the defense). Topic/focus of the project should be confirmed by the Chair prior to registration. Directed Projects will have a committee of one – the professor of record.

Option 1: Thesis

***Register for SSW 599**

This is a research manuscript (70-90 pp.) which addresses topics in the Cinema/Television/Theatre area dealing with the subject of writing. It could include a study of the biography of a writer and his/her contribution; the history of a narrative movement; or a look at something like “The Use of the Flashbacks as a Structural Device in Hitchcock’s Thrillers.” One student wrote a thesis tracking the evolution of the morality of the character of Spock across the Star Trek television series through to the current movies.

The student will create a Chapter Outline with his/her committee chair that will outline the Problem, the research component; the essential argument, conclusion, and bibliography. When completed, the final document will be defended in front of the committee.

If you plan on teaching, or entering the world of scholars, I highly recommend this route. The thesis is a strong calling card, and provides you with publishable material in the academic world.

*If you want your Thesis to be published in the University library, all paperwork/proofreading must be completed by the end of the semester after the grade is given. Published theses must be reviewed by a University-approved proofreader (list online). All publishing and proofreading costs are the responsibility of the student.

Option 2: Directed Project

***Register for SSW 596**

The Directed Project would focus on one specific media: a full length stage play, two hours of teleplays (pilots or specs) or a feature length screenplay. With your instructor’s approval, you could substitute with the equivalent length of a new media project.

Your project could be a work you began in a Regent class, or a new work you create for the Directed Project. In either case, the work will be developed throughout the semester with your instructor.

The Project would also include (10-12 pages):

1. A complete Premise line (synopsis), along with genre and market
2. A personal statement (What the piece means to you, motivation for writing, why this piece at this time...)
3. A statement on the redemptive nature of the script
4. A research section, discussing the research completed for the project (addressing both the content of the work, as well as research into the media itself)
5. A history of the critical development of the piece
6. A self-criticism of the work – what does the piece need in the next rewrite, what plan is in store for development, etc.