MONASH University

FIT3095
Creating narrative in multimedia

Unit guide

Semester 1, 2009

Last updated : 20 Apr 2009

Table of Contents

FIT3095 Creating narrative in multimedia - Semester 1, 2009

Unit leader :

Tom Chandler

Lecturer(s) :

Caulfield

- Tom Chandler
- Ruben Hopmans

Tutors(s) :

Berwick

- Tom Chandler

Introduction

Welcome to FIT3095 , Creating Narrative in Multimedia. The purpose of this unit information is to give you an overview of the unit, the content of the unit, the way the unit will be taught and the method of assessment.

Unit synopsis

ASCED Discipline Group classification: 029999 Information Technology not elsewhere classified

This unit aims to develop the student's knowledge of the concept of narrative structure, and its importance in the development of their understanding of how to create, and implement contextually appropriate narrative forms for multimedia products and systems, with a special emphasis on the game environment.

Topics will include: linear, visual and non-linear narrative, historical perspectives on the evolution of the narrative forms, and concepts such as representation, characterization, point of view, genre, closure, the role of the user, interactivity, immersion and engagement.

Students will learn the varied forms of narrative structure and the main techniques of narrative construction which are used in different media. Students will also learn to create user-centred interactive narratives for use in the business, entertainment, education and social environments.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

- understand the concept of narrative structure and a range of techniques employed in the construction of traditional media
- appreciate the main forms of narrative construction which might be usefully employed in a multimedia environment

- understand the key areas of research and development in the creation of narrative structures in multimedia environments

Attitudes, Values and Beliefs

- appreciate the importance of narrative structure to the user's experience of multimedia environments
- appreciate ways in which narrative forms might be adapted to the contextual diversity of different media
- appreciate narrative techniques appropriate to the multimedia environment
- appreciate the goals of multimedia production in relation to the input of narrative structure

Practical Skills

- Integrate and further develop skills acquired in the FIT2012 , MMS3402 to create multimedia for business, entertainment, education and social environments
- Analyse and identify the key elements in the narrative structure of a variety of media and technologies
- Create narrative structures appropriate to both context and user
- Evaluate the ways in which narrative structure contribute to the user experience of the multimedia product or system

Relationships, Communication and TeamWork

- Learn from, adapt and transform narrative models from other disciplines to multimedia environments where appropriate
- Understand that they produce meaning through a language (visual, audio, written etc) and that this language manifests in multimedia representations in order to exchange meaning to communicate
- Understand the nature of the developing trends in narrative structure within the context of an historical perspective

Workload

For on campus students, workload commitments are:

- two-hour lecture and
- two-hour tutorial (or laboratory) (requiring advance preparation)
- a minimum of 2-3 hours of personal study per one hour of contact time in order to satisfy the reading and assignment expectations.
- You will need to allocate up to 5 hours per week in some weeks, for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

Off-campus students generally do not attend lecture and tutorial sessions, however, you should plan to spend equivalent time working through the relevant resources and participating in discussion groups each week.

Unit relationships

Prerequisites

Before attempting this unit you must have satisfactorily completed

FIT2012 or equivalent.

Relationships

FIT3095 is a core unit in the Games Development major of the BITS degrees.

It is a prerequisite/corequisite that before attempting this unit you must have satisfactorily completed FIT2012

You may not study this unit and MMS3403 in your degree.

Continuous improvement

Monash is committed to 'Excellence in education' (Monash Directions 2025 - http://www.monash.edu.au/about/monash-directions/directions.html) and strives for the highest possible quality in teaching and learning.

To monitor how successful we are in providing quality teaching and learning Monash regularly seeks feedback from students, employers and staff. One of the key formal ways students have to provide feedback is through Unit Evaluation Surveys. The University's Unit Evaluation policy (http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/quality/unit-evaluation-policy.html) requires that every unit offered is evaluated each year. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the surveys as they are an important avenue for students to "have their say". The feedback is anonymous and provides the Faculty with evidence of aspects that students are satisfied and areas for improvement.

Faculties have the option of administering the Unit Evaluation survey online through the my.monash portal or in class. Lecturers will inform students of the method being used for this unit towards the end of the semester.

Student Evaluations

If you wish to view how previous students rated this unit, please go to http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/cheq/evaluations/unit-evaluations/

Unit staff - contact details

Unit leader

Mr Tom Chandler
Lecturer
Phone +61 3 990 47109
Fax +61 3 8622 8999

Lecturer(s) :

Mr Tom Chandler
Lecturer
Phone +61 3 990 47109
Fax +61 3 8622 8999
Mr Ruben Hopmans
Postgraduate Student
Phone +61 3 990 47127

Tutor(s) :

Mr Tom Chandler
Lecturer
Phone +61 3 990 47109
Fax +61 3 8622 8999

Additional communication information

Tom Chandler
Email: Tom.Chandler@infotech.monash.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 990 47109
Dept: Berwick School of IT

Ruben Hopmans
Email: Ruben.Hopmans@infotech.monash.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 990 47127
Dept: Berwick School of IT

Teaching and learning method

Week 1 The Role of Narrative
Introduction and Overview

Week 2 Storytelling Structures
Exercises and discussion will address the structure of stories in written media, films, animations and computer games. Theoretical overviews on the role of the reader/writer will also be covered

Week 3 Genres and Narrative
Exercises and discussion will cover genre and narrative structure. Variations in scene/sequel structure, time and dialogue will also be overviewed

Week 4 Archetypes and Myths
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering classical legends and the creation of stories with the *Monomyth* template

Week 5 Visual Storytelling I - Visual Design as a Narrative Device
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering visual narrative and the utility of visual design as a narrative device

Week 6 Visual Storytelling II -Graphic, Sign and Symbol
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering the way in which elements of images, symbols and icons can be incorporated into the flow of a visual narrative

Week 7 Sequential Images - Frame and Text
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering comic theory as it relates to storyboarding for games and animations, with special reference to framing, composition and viewpoint

Week 8 Sound and the Moving Image
Tutorial exercises and discussion covering the interrelationship of sound and video/sequential images and the use of sound as a narrative device

Week 9 The Architecture of Non-Linearity
Tutorial exercises and discussion will overview non-linearity (and parallel narrative structures) and the use of time, space, character and perspective

Week 10 Theories of Interactive Narrative
Tutorial exercises and discussion on combining interaction and narrative and an overview of various structures within interactive narratives such as branching/levels/nodes

Week 11 Interactive Narrative Environments
Tutorial exercises and discussion continuing the previous week's topics with reference to computer game environments

Week 12 Writing and Scripting Interactive Narrative
Tutorial exercises and discussion will overview the function of typical structures and key features in story driven games and the integration of story telling with gameplay

Week 13 Summary
Project Viewings, overview of non-linear and interactive narrative forms

Communication, participation and feedback

Monash aims to provide a learning environment in which students receive a range of ongoing feedback throughout their studies. You will receive feedback on your work and progress in this unit. This may take the form of group feedback, individual feedback, peer feedback, self-comparison, verbal and written feedback, discussions (on line and in class) as well as more formal feedback related to assignment marks and grades. You are encouraged to draw on a variety of feedback to enhance your learning.

It is essential that you take action immediately if you realise that you have a problem that is affecting your study. Semesters are short, so we can help you best if you let us know as soon as problems arise. Regardless of whether the problem is related directly to your progress in the unit, if it is likely to interfere with your progress you should discuss it with your lecturer or a Community Service counsellor as soon as possible.

Unit Schedule

Week	Topic	Key dates
1	The Role of Narrative	
2	Storytelling Structures	
3	Genres and Narrative	
4	Archetypes and Myths	Assessment 1 Linear Narrative Analysis and Presentation 30%
5	Visual Storytelling I - Visual Design as a Narrative Device	
6	Visual Storytelling II - Graphic, Sign and Symbol	
	Mid semester break	
7	Sequential Images - Frame and Text	
8	Sound and the Moving Image	Assessment 2 Visual Narrative Project and Analysis 30%
9	The Architecture of Non-Linearity	
10	Theories of Interactive Narrative	
11	Interactive Narrative Environments	
12	Writing and Scripting Interactive Narrative	

13	Summary	Assessment 3 Non-Linear Narrative Project - 40%

Unit Resources

Prescribed text(s) and readings

There are no prescribed texts for this unit, though students will be expected to review several key texts during the semester. Some of these texts will be online or in pdf format, others will be titles placed on reserve at the library.

Recommended text(s) and readings

The following recommended texts are available from the library.

Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen, Steven D. Katz, Michael Wiese Productions, 1991, ISBN 0-941188-10-8.

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. Scott McCloud Harper Collins Inc, 1993. ISBN 006097625X

Visual explanations : images and quantities, evidence and narrative Edward R. Tufte. Graphics Press, 1997 ISBN 0961392126

Designing Virtual Worlds Richard A. Bartle, New Riders, 2004. ISBN 0131018167

On Game Design, by Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams, Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams New Riders 2003 ISBN-10: 1592730019

The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters.Christopher Vogler . Pan Books, 1998

Additionally, a list of recommended Internet references (URL's, PDF's) will be made available as required during the course of the semester.

Equipment and consumables required or provided

Students studying off-campus are required to have the minimum system configuration specified by the Faculty as a condition of accepting admission, and regular Internet access. On-campus students, and those studying at supported study locations may use the facilities available in the computing labs. Information about computer use for students is available from the ITS Student Resource Guide in the Monash University Handbook. You will need to allocate up to **n** hours per week for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

Study resources

Study resources we will provide for your study are:

Library access

The Monash University Library site contains details about borrowing rights and catalogue searching. To learn more about the library and the various resources available, please go to http://www.lib.monash.edu.au.

The Educational Library and Media Resources (LMR) is also a very resourceful place to visit at http://www.education.monash.edu.au/library/

Monash University Studies Online (MUSO)

All unit and lecture materials are available through MUSO (Monash University Studies Online). Blackboard is the primary application used to deliver your unit resources. Some units will be piloted in Moodle. If your unit is piloted in Moodle, you will see a link from your Blackboard unit to Moodle (http://moodle.monash.edu.au) and can bookmark this link to access directly. In Moodle, from the Faculty of Information Technology category, click on the link for your unit.

You can access MUSO and Blackboard via the portal: http://my.monash.edu.au

Click on the Study and enrolment tab, then Blackboard under the MUSO learning systems.

In order for your Blackboard unit(s) to function correctly, your computer needs to be correctly configured.

For example:

- Blackboard supported browser
- Supported Java runtime environment

For more information, please visit: http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/students/downloadables-student.html

You can contact the MUSO Support by phone : (+61 3) 9903 1268

For further contact information including operational hours, please visit:
http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/students/contact.html

Further information can be obtained from the MUSO support site:
http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/index.html

Assessment

Unit assessment policy

To pass this unit you must:

Attempt all assessment tasks.

Obtain a total score from all assessment tasks of 50% or more.

Attend a minimum of 80% of both lectures and tutorials, unless medical certificates are provided.

Your final grade for the unit will be calculated by adding scores for all component assessment items which may be scaled.

Assessment Feedback - Raw Scores
In assessment feedback you will be allocated a raw score that will indicate your general level of performance against the criteria supplied and will be used to determine the rank order of students. You will also be given a feedback and comments that may assist you in the completion of future assignments by discussing the aspects of the assessment response that were completed to a high standard and areas that may be improved.

When raw scores for all assessment tasks are combined the total raw score may be scaled. The scaling of raw scores will not affect your rank order in relation to other students. Scaling of raw scores is intended to provide consistency of assessment outcomes across units within the degree and across courses within the university.

Assignment tasks

- ## Assignment Task

  Title : Assessment 1: Narrative Analysis and Presentation: 30%

  Description :

  Students will select and analyse the narrative structure of a digital animation or computer game with reference to the story's plot, setting, characterisation and genre in a written work of 2000 words. (20%). This submission will be complemented with a 5-10 minute presentation of the students chosen narrative which communicates the key points of their analysis to the tutorial group (10%)

  Weighting : 30%

  Criteria for assessment :

  Analysis of plot, characterisation, setting and genre of your chosen narrative.

  Well expressed and concise discussion of theory/referencing of appropriate theory and research

  Due date : Week 4

- ## Assignment Task

  Title : Assessment 2: Visual Narrative Project and Analysis: 30%

  Description :

  Students will develop a visual story (or computer game storyboard, or comic) consisting of 15-20 images/frames (20%) which integrates still images and text. A short report of 1000 words will justify and analyse your use of framing, transitions, point of view and stylistic composition (10%)

  Weighting : 30%

  Criteria for assessment :

  Visual narrative (framing, transitions, point of view) and visual aesthetics (colour, design, stylistic composition)

  Clarity of analysis and interpretation of the visual narrative in regard to framing, transitions stylistic composition and viewpoint. Well expressed and concise discussion of theory/referencing of appropriate theory and research

  Due date : Week 8

- ## Assignment Task

  Title : Assessment 3: Non-Linear Narrative Project: 40%

  Description :

  Students will develop a computer-based interactive story or game which transforms a traditional strictly linear narrative form into an interactive, non-linear form. In doing so, students will become familiar with the key features of an audience driven narrative. The aim is to "rewrite" the narrative in a non-linear, interactive form.

FIT3095 Creating narrative in multimedia - Semester 1, 2009

Weighting : 40%

Criteria for assessment :

The final assignment is assessed upon its narrative, aesthetics and execution

Narrative (complexity, humour, originality, engagement, twist)

Aesthetics (colour, design, movement, sound)

Execution
(a) clarity - does the re-telling of the story make sense?
(b) usability - can the user get around it?
(c) concept-enhancement - does the style enhance the story?
(d) technical excellence and software mastery

Due date : Week 13

Assignment submission

On-campus students should submit the assignment to the labelled Assignment Boxes in the foyer of the Berwick School of Information Technology at the Berwick Campus by 3 pm on the due date, with the appropriate cover sheet correctly filled out and attached

You may also submit the assignment to your tutors letterbox/pigeonhole if this has been agreed with your tutor beforehand

Assignment coversheets

Your submission should be accompanied by an assignment coversheet which clearly states your name and the name of your tutor. These coversheets can be found at the faculty website page: http://infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/students/assignments

University and Faculty policy on assessment

Due dates and extensions

The due dates for the submission of assignments are given in the previous section. Please make every effort to submit work by the due dates. It is your responsibility to structure your study program around assignment deadlines, family, work and other commitments. Factors such as normal work pressures, vacations, etc. are seldom regarded as appropriate reasons for granting extensions. Students are advised to NOT assume that granting of an extension is a matter of course.

Extensions

It is your responsibility to structure your study program around assignment deadlines, family, work and other commitments. Factors such as normal work pressures, vacations, etc. are seldom regarded as appropriate reasons for granting extensions.

Students requesting an extension must apply, using the standard 'Extension Request', to their unit adviser at least two days **prior** to the due date. You should also confirm your extension request via e-mail. Extensions may be granted for medical or personal reasons supported by appropriate documentary evidence. You will be asked to

forward original medical certificates in cases of illness, and may be asked to provide other forms of documentation where necessary. Students will be provided with a reply slip documenting the extension, a copy of which should be submitted with the assignment.

Late assignment

Assignments received after the due date will be subject to a penalty of a 10% reduction in marks for each day (including weekends) the assignment is late. Assignments will not normally be accepted if handed in more than 2 weeks after the due date.

This policy is strict because comments or guidance will be given on assignments as they are returned, and sample solutions may also be published and distributed, after assignment marking or with the returned assignment.

Return dates

Students can expect assignments to be returned within two weeks of the submission date or after receipt, whichever is later.

Assessment for the unit as a whole is in accordance with the provisions of the Monash University Education Policy at http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/

We will aim to have assignment results made available to you within two weeks after assignment receipt.

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion

Plagiarism and cheating are regarded as very serious offences. In cases where cheating has been confirmed, students have been severely penalised, from losing all marks for an assignment, to facing disciplinary action at the Faculty level. While we would wish that all our students adhere to sound ethical conduct and honesty, I will ask you to acquaint yourself with the University Plagiarism policy and procedure (http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/conduct/plagiarism-procedures.html) which applies to students detected plagiarising.

In this University, cheating means seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in any examination or any other written or practical work to be submitted or completed by a student for assessment. It includes the use, or attempted use, of any means to gain an unfair advantage for any assessable work in the unit, where the means is contrary to the instructions for such work.

When you submit an individual assessment item, such as a program, a report, an essay, assignment or other piece of work, under your name you are understood to be stating that this is your own work. If a submission is identical with, or similar to, someone else's work, an assumption of cheating may arise. If you are planning on working with another student, it is acceptable to undertake research together, and discuss problems, but it is not acceptable to jointly develop or share solutions unless this is specified by your lecturer.

Intentionally providing students with your solutions to assignments is classified as "assisting to cheat" and students who do this may be subject to disciplinary action. You should take reasonable care that your solution is not accidentally or deliberately obtained by other students. For example, do not leave copies of your work in progress on the hard drives of shared computers, and do not show your work to other students. If you believe this may have happened, please be sure to contact your lecturer as soon as possible.

Cheating also includes taking into an examination any material contrary to the regulations, including any bilingual dictionary, whether or not with the intention of using it to obtain an advantage.

Plagiarism involves the false representation of another person's ideas, or findings, as your own by either copying material or paraphrasing without citing sources. It is both professional and ethical to reference clearly the ideas and information that you have used from another writer. If the source is not identified, then you have plagiarised work of the other author. Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that is insulting to the reader and grossly unfair to your student colleagues.

Register of counselling about plagiarism

The university requires faculties to keep a simple and confidential register to record counselling to students about plagiarism (e.g. warnings). The register is accessible to Associate Deans Teaching (or nominees) and, where requested, students concerned have access to their own details in the register. The register is to serve as a record of counselling about the nature of plagiarism, not as a record of allegations; and no provision of appeals in relation to the register is necessary or applicable.

Non-discriminatory language

The Faculty of Information Technology is committed to the use of non-discriminatory language in all forms of communication. Discriminatory language is that which refers in abusive terms to gender, race, age, sexual orientation, citizenship or nationality, ethnic or language background, physical or mental ability, or political or religious views, or which stereotypes groups in an adverse manner. This is not meant to preclude or inhibit legitimate academic debate on any issue; however, the language used in such debate should be non-discriminatory and sensitive to these matters. It is important to avoid the use of discriminatory language in your communications and written work. The most common form of discriminatory language in academic work tends to be in the area of gender inclusiveness. You are, therefore, requested to check for this and to ensure your work and communications are non-discriminatory in all respects.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities that may disadvantage them in assessment should seek advice from one of the following before completing assessment tasks and examinations:

- Faculty of Information Technology Student Service staff, and / or
- your Unit Coordinator, or
- Disabilities Liaison Unit

Deferred assessment and special consideration

Deferred assessment (not to be confused with an extension for submission of an assignment) may be granted in cases of extenuating personal circumstances such as serious personal illness or bereavement. Information and forms for Special Consideration and deferred assessment applications are available at http://www.monash.edu.au/exams/special-consideration.html. Contact the Faculty's Student Services staff at your campus for further information and advice.