MAS340
Advanced Interactivity
3 Credit points

Unit Guide
Semester 1, 2012

Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies
Students in this unit should read this unit guide carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything in it is unclear, please consult one of the teaching staff in the unit.
**TEACHING STAFF**

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<tr>
<th>Unit Convenor</th>
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<td>Consultation Hours:</td>
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<th>Technical Officer</th>
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**CLASSES**

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: [http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au](http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au). This website will display update information on your classes and classroom locations.

**CHANGES MADE TO PREVIOUS OFFERINGS OF THE UNIT**

MAS340 – Advanced Interactivity is the third unit in the multimedia strand offered by the Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. This unit has been through several incarnations in order to keep in step with rapidly changing technologies and creative practices.

At the heart of this unit is the notion of digital non-linear storytelling. In previous years the vehicle for telling these stories has been Adobe Flash. Due to the transition towards HTML5 we believe that Flash will become redundant and replaced by HTML5 and JavaScript frameworks.
ABOUT THIS UNIT

In the context of MAS340 digital storytelling refers to using digital technologies and multimedia (a combination of text, still and moving images and sound) to tell a story. Hypertext and user interfaces present possibilities for non-linear narratives in which the user can affect the direction of the story and the events that occur within it. The technologies and approaches you will learn in this unit will prepare you to develop an online story in which users can select their own path through the narrative and engage with the story at an authorial level.

For 2012 we have decided that your stories will be presented in the form of Web-based comics with which users can interact.

We will be using the following technologies:

- Text Wrangler
- Adobe Photoshop
- Mozilla Firefox/Safari/Google Chrome
- jQuery

jQuery is a cross-browser JavaScript library that makes powerful scripting easier. It has a number of built-in effects such as show, hide, fade in/out and animate. You will learn how to use jQuery in conjunction with HTML and CSS.

Although jQuery was designed to make scripting easier, you will still need to learn the fundamentals of how to program using JavaScript. If you have not done any programming before this might seem daunting, but don’t worry the MAS340 staff are there to help you.

Note: MAS340 is an intensive unit that will challenge you at the creative and technical levels. If you intend to enroll in this unit then you must be committed to it – missing a single workshop will make it very difficult to catch up.

GOLDEN RULES

1. Come to classes on time and be prepared
2. Engage with materials, classmates and staff
3. Ask questions!!! There is no such thing as a stupid question in my classes!
4. Be creative and original
5. Enjoy your studies in MAS340
LEARNING OUTCOMES

COGNITIVE CAPABILITIES

1. Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

2. Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

3. Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

4. Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.
**INTERPERSONAL OR SOCIAL CAPABILITIES**

5. **Effective Communication**

   We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

6. **Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens**

   As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation’s historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

7. **Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible**

   We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

**PERSONAL CAPABILITIES**

8. **Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative**

   We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

9. **Commitment to Continuous Learning**

   Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their
experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

**Note:** The numbers listed at the end of each Learning Outcome indicate how it is aligned with the Graduate Capabilities.

The learning outcomes of this unit:

- A. Understand key concepts concerning non-linear digital storytelling (1,4,5)
- B. Engage with interactive possibilities offered by multimedia technologies (1,2,4)
- C. Plan and develop an original creative work (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)
- D. Present an original creative work in the online medium (1,2,3,4,5,6)
- E. Develop high-level CSS skills (1,2,3,4)
- F. Develop an understanding of the fundamentals of Web scripting (1,2,3,4)
- G. Become conversant with the jQuery framework (1,2,3,4)
- H. Develop problem solving skills (1,2,3,4,9)
UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

MAS340 uses formative assessment and students are required to submit ALL assessment tasks in order to complete this unit. Failure to submit an assignment task will result in a FAIL grade overall regardless of achievement in individual tasks.

Students are expected to attend all seminars and workshops. Failure to attend carries a risk of missing vital unit content and information relevant to assignments.

Students are expected to arrive to classes punctually and prepared.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

Task: Participation

Weight: 10%

Due Date: Ongoing

Linked Unit Outcomes: A, B, D, H

Linked Graduate Capabilities: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9

Description:

Seminars involve a combination of discussion and group exercises. Students will be assessed on their engagement with seminar material. Additionally, students will be assessed on their engagement with workshops.

Attendance is not the same as participation. Students receive no marks for simply attending tutorials.
Task: **Project Diary**

Weight: 10%

Due Date: Week 14 (as appendix to Critical Reflection assignment)

Linked Unit Outcomes: A, B, C, H

Linked Graduate Capabilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9

**Description:**

Students are required to keep a project diary throughout the semester. Each week you should make a 100-200 word entry documenting your experiences with the unit and your project noting any successes, problems, challenges and how you overcame them. You should also note how workshop content will impact on and feature in your final project.

These records will assist you in writing the critical reflection assignment.
Task: **Project Proposal**

Weight: 20%

Due Date: Week 7 – time slots to be negotiated

Linked Unit Outcomes: A, B, C, D, H

Linked Graduate Capabilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Description:

Project proposals will be in the form of a 5-10 minute presentation to teaching staff. You will be allocated a time-slot in which to do your presentation. Your proposal will:

- Give an overview of your story
- Detail interactive elements
- Showcase a storyboard
- Showcase the user interface
- Discuss technical implementation

You should arrive punctually and be prepared (PowerPoint presentation or hand-outs are recommended). You will need to be prepared to answer any questions from teaching staff.

You will be assessed on:

- Originality of your story
- Proposed interactive elements included in your story
- Demonstration of preparation
- Coherence of your presentation
Task: **Major Project**

Weight: 40%

Due Date: Week 13

Linked Unit Outcomes: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H

Linked Graduate Capabilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**Description:**

Students are required to create an online interactive Web comic using HTML, CSS and jQuery (JavaScript). Your comic should tell an original story and contain interactive elements that allow the user to direct the flow the story and affect the events therein.

Your comic should be comprised of at least 20 pages consisting of one panel per page. Note: this structure is flexible. For example, you may opt to have three panels on one page, two on another etc. The key point is that you should have a coherent interactive story.

The final project will be assessed on:

- Originality of the story
- Interface design
- Overall aesthetic design
- Interactivity
- Demonstrated understanding of contemporary Web design practices through valid HTML, CSS and JavaScript
- Creativity and innovation
- X-Factor – this is an indescribable “wow factor”
Task: **Critical Reflection**

Weight: 20%

Due Date: Week 14

Linked Unit Outcomes: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H

Linked Graduate Capabilities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9

Description:

Students are required to submit an 800-1000 word piece critically reflecting on their experiences during the semester. You must draw on and refer to your project diary and write up a formal submission detailing your experiences:

- What have you learned?
- What challenges did you face?
- How did you overcome them?
- How does MAS340 fit in with your degree and future employment or study plans?
- Be honest – give praise where it’s due and acknowledge your mistakes.

These points are not exhaustive; feel free to add anything else that you feel is relevant.

**You should include your project diary as an appendix at the end of the critical reflection.**
EXTENSIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Extensions may only be granted by the unit convenor in line with University policy.

The Special Consideration Policy is located at:
http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

Applying for Special Consideration

Students applying for Special Consideration circumstances of three (3) consecutive days duration, within a study period, and/or prevent completion of a formal examination must submit an online application with the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation.

The online Special Consideration application is found at:

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

There is a unit reader available electronically via iLearn and eReserve.

Handouts and “cheat sheets” will be distributed during workshops when required.

jQuery documentation available online at:
http://docs.jquery.com/Main_Page

UNIT WEBPAGE AND TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

MAS340 uses iLearn for announcements and supplementary materials. See http://www.ilearn.mq.edu.au for online units.

MAS340 also uses http://media.mq.edu.au/mas340 for workshops.
The University Grading Policy is located at: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

The grade a student receives will signify their overall performance in meeting the learning outcomes of a unit of study. Grades will not be awarded by reference to the achievement of other students nor allocated to fit a predetermined distribution. In determining a grade, due weight will be given to the learning outcomes and level of a unit (i.e. 100, 200, 300, 800 etc.). Graded units will use the following grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>85-100</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>75-84</td>
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<td>Cr</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>65-74</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50-64</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is an integral part of the core values and principles contained in the *Macquarie University Ethics Statement*. Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- All academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim.
- All academic collaborations are acknowledged.
- Academic work is not falsified in any way.
- When the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.
- The link below has more details about the policy, procedure and schedule of penalties that will apply to breaches of the Academic Honesty policy.

**Academic Honesty Policy**

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Macquarie University provides a range of Student Support Services. Details of these services can accessed at:

http://www.deanofstudents.mq.edu.au or http://www.campuslife.mq.edu.au/campuswellbeing

Arts Student Centre

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<tr>
<th>Phone:</th>
<th>9850 6783</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>W6A/Foyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:artsenquiries@mq.edu.au">artsenquiries@mq.edu.au</a></td>
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Centre staff helps smooth the way into university life; answer questions; give informed advice; provide a sympathetic ear; de-mystify uni ways and procedures.
**UNIT SCHEDULE (SEMINARS)**

Week 1 – Introduction

The first seminar for MAS340 will introduce students to the unit and go through assessment tasks and deal with any questions.

There are no workshops in this week.

**HOMEWORK:** Think about your project and come up with an initial rough idea to present to the class in the week 2 seminar.

Week 2 – Initial Project Ideas

This week you’ll present your initial project ideas. Although this presentation is not assessed it will contribute towards your participation mark. You’ll be given 2 minutes each for your presentation.

Week 3 – Telling Stories

We come across stories all the time on television, radio, the Web, print, through our friends. What makes a good story and why?

**READING:**


Week 4 – Icons, Symbols and Representation

Icons and symbols are a part of our daily lives. How do we communicate through symbols and icons? How can we represent events in different ways?

**READING:**

Week 5 – Characters and Development

The characters are sometimes the best things about stories. Are characters static beings? Are they just functions of the story or something more? What makes a good character and why? How do we develop characters?

READING:


Week 6 – Interactive Logic

Interactivity is all about making decisions and being involved in the drama. How will you motivate your player to engage with and move through your story?

Week 7 – Project Proposals

You’ll each be allocated a time slot for this week during which you will present your project formally to teaching staff.
## Unit Schedule (Workshops)

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<th>Week 1 – No workshops</th>
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<td>There are no workshops in week 1.</td>
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<th>Week 2 – A crash course in HTML and CSS</th>
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<td>This week we’ll give you some serious revision on HTML and CSS and introduce you to some approaches specifically geared towards the major project assignment.</td>
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<th>Week 3 – Introduction to jQuery</th>
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<td>You’ll be mainly using a combination of HTML, CSS and jQuery for your projects. This week we’ll get you started on the basics of jQuery and how it interacts with HTML and CSS.</td>
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<th>Week 4 – Solving jQuery Issues</th>
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<td>One of the great things about using jQuery is that as a framework, it is really well documented. This week we’re going to look at using the jQuery documentation to help YOU introduce YOURSELVES to some new jQuery functions. This week aims to increase your confidence in finding solutions to jQuery problems.</td>
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<th>Week 5 – jQuery and Data</th>
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<td>One of the things we want you to work into your assignments is interactivity. We want the user to be involved with the story. Sometimes this will mean collecting data directly from the user or his/her actions and storing it for later use, e.g. “did you pick up the gun three pages ago?” This week we’ll show you how to use cookies to store information and how to load in data from another document.</td>
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<th>Week 6 – Photoshop</th>
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<td>Your projects are going to be very image intensive. So this week we’ll go through the basics of using Photoshop – image formats, transparency, layers, effects and text.</td>
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<th>Week 7 – Question Time</th>
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<td>This is a negotiated week dedicated to “question time”. As a class you can decide on what you would like teaching staff to go over again or if you would like us to teach you something new.</td>
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Weeks 8-12 – Project Development

These weeks are intended for you to work on your projects during timetabled workshops. There is of course nothing preventing you from working on them at home, but if you’re on campus you have the full benefit of assistance from teaching staff.

Week 13 – Project Showcase

Projects due.