



Thursday, May 16, 2024

Curriculum Review

MFA in Dramatic Writing

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, JOURNALISM & FILM

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May 16, 2024



Workshop Objectives

CURRICULUM REVIEW

- Goal: evaluate and strengthen the program
- Gather data from multiple sources, including students, faculty, and administrative perspectives
- Make data-driven decisions given our current resources
- Assess what aspects of the program are working and locate areas of the program in need of improvement
- Determine what program changes and curricular changes we can implement in the short term and identify some longer-term plans



Data Discussed

- Outcomes (rankings, awards, festivals, job placements)
- MFA reps' assessment of curriculum
- Survey of current MFA students and alumni
 - Number of respondents: 25
- Focus groups held May 2024
 - Two sections comprised of current MFA students
- TA Evaluations from SP 2021-FA2023



Conclusions Reached






- Positives:

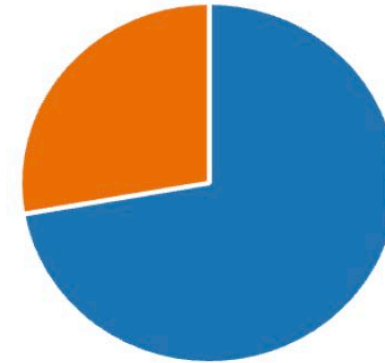
- Program Externals: BEA ranking as **#1 Scriptwriting Program** for three years running
- Alumni working in LA, NYC, winning Best Heartland Narrative Short Award at KCFilmFest
- Outcomes: script portfolios (features, pilots, stage plays, VR games, etc.), stage productions, short films, web series, feature-length film written and produced in the program
- Overwhelmingly positive survey responses: All respondents would recommend program
- The respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the writing classes and faculty. They find the program is helping them succeed and grow as writers.
- They also appreciated that the program included elements of production and producing and offered a great deal of flexibility.








Survey

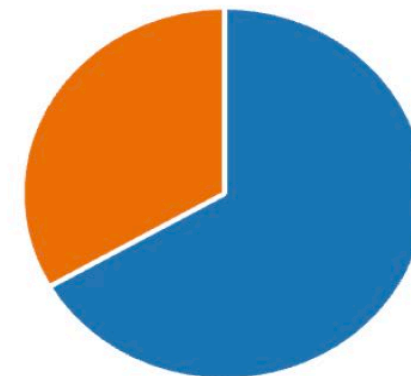
The MFA in Dramatic Writing program at MSU helped (or is helping) me become a better writer.

 Strongly agree	13
 Agree	5
 Neither agree nor disagree	0
 Disagree	0
 Strongly disagree	0



In general, my writing instructors taught me valuable information about their specialty areas.

 Strongly agree	12
 Agree	6
 Neither agree nor disagree	0
 Disagree	0
 Strongly disagree	0





#1

2024 Top Winning Scriptwriting Programs

Rank	School
1	Missouri State University
2	University of Georgia
3	University of Oklahoma
4	Huntington University
5	Purdue University Northwest
6	Palm Beach Atlantic University
7	San Francisco State University
8	James Madison University
9	Xavier University
10	Westminster College

Graduate Scriptwriting Competition

1st Place: *Stranger Things, Episode 501, "Chapter 1: The Pull"*; Alyssa Malloy, Missouri State University

2nd Place: *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*; Jacob T. Martin, Missouri State University

3rd Place: *Souled - "Anna Mali"*; Alyssa Malloy, Missouri State University

Awards of Excellence: *Midnight Climax*; K.P. Scott, Missouri State University (Narrative Feature Category)



Conclusions Reached

- Areas for Improvements:
 - More flexibility in general and specifically with regards to required producing classes
 - More training and onboarding in graduate students' first semester
 - More opportunities for interdepartmental collaborations across the University
 - Focusing producing classes on smaller-budget productions



Items Chosen for Action

CURRICULUM REVIEW

- Only require one producing course: MED 684 or 762
- Replace MED 714 with MED 668 – a blended course with grads and undergrads
- Make MED 717 & 718 Portfolio repeatable up to 6 hours each
- Create 600-level directing class to connect with Acting for the Camera certificate students, ultimately replacing MED 765
- Create a 3-credit theory requirement with several options
- Create a required course introducing students to the MFA/Pedagogy
- Offer additional playwriting course



Follow-up Plans & Next Steps

MFA - DRAMATIC WRITING

- Proceed with clear plan of curricular changes to bring to our faculty retreat for a vote in August
- Set clear SLOs for all classes that TAs and per course teach
- Send tentative assignment letters to all TAs
- Foster support for MFA alums via networking opportunities and host alumni event in 2025
- Connect with Theatre & Dance about directing class and opportunities for MFAs to work with Acting for Camera certificate students
- Connect with Marketing Department to promote MFA creative work



Items that Need Action at Higher Levels than the Department

MFA PROGRAM SUPPORT

- Additional funding for more TA/GA-ships
- More support for outreach to prospective students
- Update website to market the program
- Inquire if the Dean's office can fund second block classes with the same funds as intersessions
- Request funding to be used for guest speakers, outreach for prospective students, and supporting alums with networking opportunities



Questions?