

HONOURS PROJECT HANDBOOK

(2023-2024)

ACADEMY OF FILM

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The honours project is the culmination of your creative and critical training. It must be prepared and executed with the greatest care and effort. While taking FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop, you must choose a track for your honours project: production (fiction or non-fiction film), scriptwriting (a 90 to 120 minutes feature-length film screenplay) or thesis (a research paper). You will need to prepare a proposal and go through a procedure of Honours Project supervisor selection and allocation.

The honours project is not only a product of creativity, technical skills and critical thinking, but also an exercise of responsibility, discipline and time/logistical management. Please honor all due dates. You will have plenty of time to complete the project if you work on them in a serious and well-organized manner.

In order to guide you through the process of honours project, this handbook includes major information and regulations. Please read them carefully before you begin. Your supervisors will be happy to help in this important endeavour, so don't be shy of seeking advice.

QUALIFICATIONS*

To embark upon your chosen track, you must qualify in different ways.

- Production/Scriptwriting/Thesis:

Completion of FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop.

- Production:

Completion of 4 production courses taken at the home institution.

- Scriptwriting:

Completion of FILM4007 Advanced Scriptwriting at the home institution.

- Thesis:

Completion of FILM4047 Film Theory and Criticism at the home institution.

* All required course(s) need to be taken at home institution. Those who have waived the required course(s) are not qualified to select the related HP track.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

I. Timetable and Deadlines

March	<p>Submission of chosen tracks while taking FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop.</p> <p>Production track students need to indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) If they want to do individual or group projects. All projects need to provide working titles, member name(s) and position(s).2) Types of shooting schedule:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Normal schedule (as this table is based on): Shooting begins in or after December.b) Early schedule Shooting finishes before December. Post-production also starts and finishes earlier than normal schedule.c) Non-fiction schedule Shooting takes a longer period of time than the above two schedules. Students have to give up their time slots in the normal schedule as well as the standard equipment kit for fiction films. A typical non-fiction gear kit for a crew of one to several people will be provided.
April/May	<p>By the end of FILM3125 Honours Project Preparation Workshop:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Honours project proposal presentation.2) Submission of written proposals.
June	<p>Lists of available supervisors ready (internal and external).</p>

	<p>Release of project supervisors.</p> <p>Assignment of supervisors:</p> <p>1) Each faculty member will supervise no more than 5 projects.</p> <p>2) Students may have no more than 3 supervisor choice.</p>
November	First Week: Last day to apply for switching HP tracks. Strong justification and supervisor's approval is required!
December	First Week: Principal photography of production projects begins (students are not allowed to borrow any equipment from the technical office without an approval signature from their supervisors and any projects without approval won't be graded even if students use their own equipment to finish them)
May	First Week: Submission due day.
	Second Week: Screening and grading

Should any of the above due dates fall on a public holiday, the due day will be pushed back by one day.

With supervisor approval, students on scriptwriting or thesis track can work on their honours projects while in exchange. However, students in exchange, even just for one semester, are not allowed to choose production track. Application for special approval will be processed case by case, based on feasibility and fairness.

Notes on equipment approval and postproduction schedule for production track:

- Production projects will need supervisors' approval of the following before getting equipment approval:
 - 1) Story
 - 2) Step outline
 - 3) Full script
 - 4) Teaming up
 - 5) Locations
 - 6) Casting
 - 7) Production Design

- A certain amount of postproduction time will be assigned to each project. Students will have to stop using postproduction facilities when time is up.

II. Proposal

Researching and writing for a project proposal for screen production or studies.

- Production Track :

- 1) Fiction or non-fiction?
- 2) Director's statement: Why do you want to do this project? What is the theme or idea you want to explore?

- 3) Story (for fiction): the main storyline.

Topic (for non-fiction): the subject matter.

- 4) Treatment: tell the complete story in detail as well as in a cinematic way, indicating the method(s) and style(s) you are going to use.

▪ Scriptwriting Track (8 – 10 pages):

- 1) Synopsis: 200 words
- 2) Story outline: 1000 words
 - ❖ An extended, detailed description of the project, including a rough structure of the actual screenplay
- 3) Value and significance
 - ❖ The significance of the story
 - ❖ Expected response from readers or production companies
 - ❖ Commercial, educational, artistic value?
- 4) Sample scene breakdown
 - ❖ Provide a sample scenario, i.e., time, place, action, dialogue and an overall setup
- 5) Work schedule
 - ❖ Number of days involved in researching
 - ❖ Number of days involved in constructing the structure
 - ❖ Number of days involved in drafting, revising and finalizing the screenplay

▪ Thesis Track (10 – 12 pages):

Develop a research question related to film and television studies. Conduct research on that question and prepare the research prospectus.

1) Cover Page

2) One page abstract

- ❖ Briefly summarize the nature of your study, what the research is about, its objective(s) and the methodology employed

3) Research problem

- ❖ What is the problem, issue, or critical focus to be researched?
- ❖ Any important terms to be defined?
- ❖ What is the significance of the problem?

4) Literature review

- ❖ What does previous research reveal about the different aspects of the problem?
- ❖ What research questions or hypotheses have emerged from the literature review?
You may establish the significance of your topic by arguing that the research fills a gap in the literature or provide possibility for fruitful exploration.

Tips for writing good literature review

- Cohesive not choppy (Organized by topical order/chronological order/problem-cause-solution order etc)

- The reader should see how the research helps clarify a specific aspect of the problem.
- 5) Method
- ❖ What is the theoretical or analytical framework for the investigation?
 - ❖ What will be used to conduct the research?
 - ❖ What are the limitations of this methodology? What sources of bias will exist? How will they be controlled?
- 6) Chapter outline
- 7) Working bibliography and filmography/videography
- ❖ Reference list of secondary sources (15-20 entries of scholarly and critical relevance) and a list of primary sources (e.g. films) useful for the investigation
 - ❖ Use either *The MLA Handbook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (consult your supervisor for reference)
- 8) Work schedule

Possible types of film criticism for your research project (John E. Moscovitz, 2000).

- Cinematic technique/Cinematic element-driven critique
- The idea/topic-driven critique
- The character/actor/auteur-driven critique
- The movie-to-movie comparative analysis

III. Submission

- Due: first Friday of May

- Late Policy: If you submit your project after deadline, the final grade of your honours project will be marked down by one sub-grade (e.g., from A to A-); projects that are submitted on Saturday (only if Technical Office opens, which is not guaranteed) will be marked down by one letter grade (e.g., from A to B); projects that are submitted on or after Monday will receive an F grade.

- Your work must comply with the following regulations to be accepted.

- Production Track:

1) Length of the finished project:

- ❖ Production project (group or individual): 15-30 minutes (+/-10%)

Projects exceeding the maximum length will not be screened or graded.

- 2) English and Chinese subtitles are compulsory.
- 3) A synopsis with no more than 500 words in both Chinese and English.
- 4) Ten selected production stills must be sent to the Technical Office at the time of submission.

- 5) Credits: for official honours project screenings, opening, closing credits and acknowledgements to the supervisor and all the other teaching and technical staff members must be inserted at the end of your project, including the HKBU logo. A standardized version will be sent to students via email. However, for any other screenings, offline or online, without AF's approval, you CANNOT use any of the above in your credits. So you're advised to have two versions of your film, with two different sets of credits. Please refer to AF's copyright policy.
- 6) Submission to the Technical Office.
- 7) The Student Committee of FTV Honours Projects should also collect all final works after the last official HP screening and send the copies to Academy of Film (Technical Office)
- 8) Selected works will be uploaded to HKBU Heritage (<https://heritage.lib.hkbu.edu.hk>). Selected students will need to fill in a consent form before providing their works to the HKBU library.

▪ Scriptwriting and Thesis Track:

1) Length:

a) Screenplay: 10000 words or above.

b) Thesis: 8000 to 10000 words in English, 12000 to 15000 in Chinese (if accepted)

2) Language of writing:

a) Screenplay: Chinese or English

b) Thesis: English. Chinese is also acceptable if approved by supervisor.

3) All works must be submitted in two hardcopies and/or softcopies (in both PDF and Word format).

4) Style, cover page, acknowledgements and binding Style: Use MLA, APA or Chicago Manuel Style for citation and documentation (i.e., bibliography, filmography, endnotes etc.). Consult your supervisor as which style to use if necessary.

5) Cover page and acknowledgements (see Appendix 1).

6) Library release form (see Appendix 2).

7) Submission to AF Office and email to af-ctv@hkbu.edu.hk.

IV. Grading

A grading panel of at least 3 members will be formed for each track. It's preferable to have at least 1 external member on both the production panel and the scriptwriting panel. Production projects should be screened on high quality big screen with decent sound system, such as CVA 104. All panels should meet with students to ask questions and give feedbacks.

- Production Track:

- In an individual project, the director will receive the grade.
- In a group project, no more than 4 group members are allowed, and they will receive the same grade, unless in some special cases the panel deems it necessary to differentiate the grades. Students can choose from the following 7 positions (positions that receive the grade should not be shared, for example, you cannot co-direct or co-write) :

Scriptwriter.

Director.

Cinematographer. Cinematographer must be camera operator.

Editor. Editor must be a real editor with major creative input in editing, instead of being director's editing assistant.

Producer. Producer should keep all the producing documents for further assessment.

Production designer. Production designer should also be art director.

Sound designer. Sound designer should also be production sound mixer, post-

production sound editor and mixer.

- No grade will be given until the student returns all equipment, including equipment borrowed for non-honours projects, to the Technical Office. Should there be any loss of or damage to the equipment, students must settle the replacement/repairs before the final grade can be submitted to AR. Those who fail to do so will fail their projects.

- If you return the equipment late, the final grade of your honours project will be marked down by one sub-grade (e.g., from A to A-) every 24 hours. If the equipment is damaged, you should return the equipment by deadline for TO's inspection first, and then settle the replacement/repair by providing TO purchase/repair order within 7 days, you will face the same consequence of grade deduction. Honours Project Committee may further reduce the grade according to students' behavior and influence on other honours projects.

Rubrics:

- Idea and concept generation - 20%

- Creativity – 30%

- Overall organization of completed artifact, event or program - 20%

- Technical competence - 30%

▪ Scriptwriting or Thesis Track:

Rubrics (Scriptwriting):

- Storytelling – 40%
- Originality and Creativity – 40%
- Technical competence (writing and structure) – 20%

Rubrics (Thesis):

- Research quality – 40%
- Argument/Analysis – 40%
- Writing and format – 20%

V. Remarks on Production Track

- 1) In response to the student request, the quota of individual projects has been cancelled, and the maximum number of production projects per year is set to 25. If the total number goes beyond 25, individual projects have to be cut down and cGPA will be the only criteria of selection. Those who cannot do individual production projects will have to either join a group project or change track. This guideline was effective from the Academic Year 2018-2019.
- 2) A “Special Request” form for extra shooting quota is available for download at TO website for extending their bookings with reasonable justifications. However, under no circumstances an approval will be given if it will affect other students’ check-out schedule. Students should submit the form to the Technical Committee at least 3 working days before check-out date. For final decision, please contact the Technical Committee.
- 3) Any change of shooting schedule will not be allowed, unless the students involved can come to an agreement.
- 4) Two working days’ notice is required for change of shooting schedule, even if no student will be affected.
- 5) As hard disk space is limited in video editing, any video file stored in hard drive will be subjected to removal by the next group of users of that priority period.
- 6) For safety precaution in the event of computer failure, you are advised to save your project and back up your work on a frequent basis. In the event of computer or hard disk failure unrelated to students’ misuse, extra time will be rescheduled for making

- up the loss hours of usage.
- 7) Under no circumstances may students of the Academy utilize professional crew on their production projects, except for actors.
 - 8) Students may not associate their projects with outside production company, including production and post-production facilities, personnel or funding.
 - 9) Students are responsible for clearing all copyright used in their films prior to screenings.
 - 10) Students can book no more than ONE TV studio for Honours Project production shooting and should be under the condition that no other courses will be affected.

VI. Remarks on Thesis Track

- 1) Posing and developing a problem needing a solution (thesis) or an idea to be expressed in either a dramatic (story in a film, commercial, television episode or a screenplay), conceptual (image-sound rendition such as an animation or a music video) or non-fiction (documentary or news report) form.
 - ❖ Make sure what it is that you want to study and express
 - ❖ Choose and narrow your topic, concept and subject matter
- 2) Literature review: Reviewing past research/writings (scholarly articles, books and reviews) about that problem and works (films, screenplays, commercials, music videos, TV programs, animations etc.) about that subject or concept.

- ❖ It helps you to clarify the current state of knowledge about the topic before formulating new research questions or artistic investigation to guide the whole project
- 3) Identifying worthy questions, concepts and subject matter that previous investigators, filmmakers and storytellers haven't answered and explored
 - ❖ Suspect the validity of the previous investigations?
 - ❖ Any new diversity of knowledge to the problems and concepts addressed?
 - ❖ New information, method or style that may alter previous findings, depictions or storytelling?
 - 4) Devising the best method, form or style to seek answers to these questions
 - ❖ The question itself may suggest the most suitable approach
 - ❖ Past research in the literature may also suggest suitable research method
 - 5) Gathering the necessary information to answer the research questions and organize stories, portray characters and situations
 - 6) Analyzing that information to decide whether they are useful to the project
 - 7) Presenting the results of the inquiry by means of writing or image-sound making
 - 8) Considering the meaning and implications of the completed project to further knowledge of the field of screen studies and production.

End of Honours Project Handbook