



# One-Year Conservatory *in* SCREENWRITING

*Screenwriting students may collaborate with NYFA filmmakers to bring their scripts to production.*



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## LOCATION

NEW YORK CITY;  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
SOUTH BEACH, FLORIDA

*Locations are subject to change.  
For start dates and tuition, please visit [nyfa.edu](http://nyfa.edu)*

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## OVERVIEW

*The One-Year Screenwriting Program offers a comprehensive look at the art of screenwriting through writing courses, as well as courses in film studies and screenplay analysis.*

In the first half of the program, students will be introduced to the tools and skills necessary for writing successful screenplays. Students are encouraged to be creative, but are also taught to think of the screenplay as the definitive industry tool for articulating ideas or concepts to a production team, including producers, financiers, and directors. Students will also study acting.

Clarity can be as important as creativity. Standard formatting and industry expectations will be studied and analyzed during writing workshops and lectures. Students will also study the Business of Screenwriting and how to navigate the entertainment industry.

In the second half of the program, the curriculum challenges students to develop their craft artistically and technically, and to progress beyond their earlier experiments with the feature-length screenplay. They will also write, direct, and edit their own short films to achieve a better understanding of how the written word translates to the screen.

*Please Note: curriculum and projects are subject to change and may vary depending on location. Students should consult the most recently published campus catalog for the most up to date course information.*

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Students will achieve the following learning goals upon the successful completion of the One-Year Screenwriting Program:

- In-depth study of classic screenplay structure, character arcs, theme, conflict, dialogue techniques, subtext, style, tone, and genre studies.
- Entertainment industry methods, practices, and players.
- WGA format and copyright law.
- In-depth look at treatment writing.
- Standard conventions of TV writing and the TV industry.
- Camera and Lighting Techniques.
- In-depth study and practice of the pitch.
- Screenplay Analysis and Genre Studies.
- Theory and practice of acting.
- Half-Hour sit-com and 1-Hour drama writing.
- Original television series pilot writing.

## WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

- Write 1 treatment and Revised Treatment for a feature film.
- Write a first draft of a speculative (“spec”) feature length screenplay.
- Write a first draft of a second feature length screenplay.
- Write a TV spec script for either a one-hour drama or a half-hour situation comedy (sit-com)
- Revise a draft of one of the two screenplays generated up to this point.
- Direct a short film.
- Write an original television series pilot script.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### FEATURE WRITING WORKSHOP I & II

This course is the centerpiece of our screenwriting program. Students will learn how to tell stories in a visual manner and to translate the story ideas that exist in their head into written feature film scripts. Instructors introduce students to basic cinematic language and strategies, which will aid students in building their visual storytelling skills. Structure is essential to any good story. This course provides students with tools that allow them to create two coherent and structurally sound first drafts of full-length narrative screenplays. Through a series of writing exercises done both in-class and in the screenwriting lab, the students will be given the opportunity to apply the concepts they learn in class to their own stories.

### ELEMENTS OF DRAMATIC NARRATIVE I & II

Students will explore screenwriting theories that will help them strengthen the first drafts they will produce in Feature Writing Workshop I and II. The goal is to aid students in creating three-dimensional characters and compelling narratives through the introduction of different storytelling tools and the completion of various screenwriting exercises. Viewing and analysis of film clips will assist the students in their comprehension and application of screenwriting concepts to their own work.

### ACTING FOR WRITERS I & II

This hands-on and very collaborative course introduces students to the theory and practice of the acting craft, using Stanislavsky's Method, improvisation, and scene and monologue work as starting points. By exploring how actors build characters and performances based upon the information provided in a film script and studying techniques for directing actors in a way that will evoke strong performances, writers will learn how to write more powerful dialogue, develop more memorable characters, and create more effective dramatic actions. Concepts that will be taught in the course include: improvisation, monologue and scene study techniques.

### CINEMA STUDIES I: GENRE STUDIES

By challenging students to examine critical concepts in film history and culture, this course will allow students the opportunity to engage deeply with individual films. Through case studies the students will learn the specific "rules" of different genres and through discussion and written assignments they will determine how to apply these concepts to their own work. The goal of the course is to increase each student's understanding of film history and culture so that they can build on this knowledge to improve the quality of their own screenplays.



**CINEMA STUDIES II: ADAPTATION**

This course introduces students to the craft of adapting narrative material from other media into feature screenplay structure. By examining source material and viewing the feature films that were adapted from that source material, students will learn about the tools necessary to transform other narrative material into feature-length screenplays.

**MASTERING THE PITCH**

Students will explore all aspects of the pitching process from the conception of a “pitchable” idea, to creating and delivering an engaging pitch for an original idea or a pitch derived from existing source material. Students will learn concrete tips on how to get comfortable pitching to other producers, agencies, managers, filmmakers, actors, financiers, and other industry executives. Through a series of pitching exercises, students will translate this knowledge into solid practical experience by developing and delivering pitches to their instructors and peers during their classes.

**TELEVISION WRITING WORKSHOP I**

Students will study the craft of Television Writing. They will prepare for every phase of TV Storytelling, from pitching their ideas to outlining their stories to writing their spec teleplays. Each student will complete a polished spec script, in either the Half-Hour Sitcom or One-Hour Drama format. Topics covered in this class include anatomy of the Sitcom, anatomy of the One-Hour Drama, teleplay formatting, and differences between network and cable shows.

**TELEVISION WRITING II:  
ORIGINAL TV DEVELOPMENT**

This course is designed as the companion course to Television Writing Workshop I and it will augment each student’s knowledge of television writing. Students will pitch their own TV series ideas and develop a series bible—a proposal including the setting, characters, conflicts, and episode ideas that indicate the show is viable as a series. Students will also write a pilot script for their original TV series idea. The goal at the end of the course is to complete the key elements included in a series bible and to have a pilot script that the writer can then use to pitch the series to producers and/or television executives.

**SCREENPLAY REVISION**

During this course the instructor will introduce students to techniques for revising a screenplay. The classes will enhance the students’ knowledge of advanced storytelling elements including identifying the theme, heightening the stakes of the story, and plot restructuring. Each student will complete a revised draft of his or her screenplay by the end of the course. Topics that will be covered include first draft analysis, next-level scene writing, advanced character development, and creation of a revised beat sheet.

**SCREENPLAY ANALYSIS I**

This course builds on the knowledge gained in the Feature Writing Workshops I and II and in Cinema Studies I: Genre Studies. Students will read eight screenplays and compare and contrast them with the films that were made from them. The instructor will assist the students in examining elements of storytelling such as narrative style, theme development, and tone. Students will explore ways to cultivate their own narrative voice through screenings, interactive class discussions, written assignments, and analysis of professional samples.

**SCREENPLAY ANALYSIS II:  
ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES**

Most of the focus in the One-Year Screenwriting Program is on traditional, three-act, narrative structure. However, there are a handful of successful and highly inventive films that deviate from this traditional storytelling method. This course offers students the opportunity to explore these atypical storytelling techniques. Through lectures, screenings, group discussions, and written exercises, students will analyze these alternative storytelling structures and explore whether these concepts can be applied to their own work.

### **BUSINESS OF SCREENWRITING I: TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

Writing the script is just the beginning of the process of bringing a creative project to market. This course will equip students with the tools necessary to package and promote a creative idea with industry executives. This course will cover advanced pitching techniques, creating and developing a treatment, and crafting a coverage report.

### **BUSINESS OF SCREENWRITING II**

This course is designed to give students an insight into what they can expect once they leave the program. It provides students with an overview of how the film and television industries work and the tools necessary to take a creative project to market. Industry guests will be scheduled based on their availability.

### **DIGITAL CAMERA & LIGHTING**

Understanding how the camera works and how to light a scene effectively will help the students to improve their visual storytelling skills. This course provides a hands-on immersion in digital camera and lighting techniques.

### **DIRECTING FOR WRITERS**

This course introduces screenwriters to the language and craft of film directing. A basic understanding of film directing aids the screenwriter in conceptualizing the film from script to screen. By the end of the semester each student will write, direct, and produce his or her own short film project. Additionally, they will serve on other crews in the capacity of either assistant director, director of photography, gaffer, or actor.



### **EDITING FOR WRITERS**

This course will cover editing theory, an introduction to Avid Media Composer, and data storage options.

### **SUPERVISED SCREENWRITING SKILL LAB**

This lab provides an opportunity for students to practice the techniques that they learn in their workshop classes. The lab is supervised by a licensed instructor who provides the students with input and further instruction on their projects when needed.

In this course, students will work on character development for their first and second feature scripts, create a sequence list and beat sheet for their scripts, write first and second drafts of their TV pilot script, and create a sequence list for their revised feature scripts.