

A student with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt with "NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY" printed on it, is operating a large professional motion picture camera. The camera is mounted on a dolly and has various attachments, including a microphone and a red viewfinder. The student is looking through the viewfinder. In the background, another person is partially visible, also wearing a black t-shirt with "NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY" on it. The setting appears to be a film set or a studio.

Two-Year Degree Program ASSOCIATE OF FINE ARTS *in* SCREENWRITING

A Screenwriting student works with a directing instructor as she prepares to shoot her original screenplay.



LOCATION

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Location is subject to change.

For start dates and tuition, please visit nyfa.edu

OVERVIEW

Screenwriting plays a critical role in the creation of every film and television show. Screenwriting is a learned craft, and a writer must write every day to train for the demands of this field, and to truly understand the elements that make a screenplay or teleplay functional, as well as engaging.

In NYFA's Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) program in Los Angeles, students work with our world-class faculty to learn how to develop an original idea into a fully fleshed-out working script. Over the course of the two-year, four-semester program, students devote themselves exclusively to mastering the craft of screenwriting.

Ultimately, while many people are born with the gift of storytelling, transferring that talent to the craft of screenwriting is not something that comes naturally to most people. Guiding an idea through to a treatment, then an outline, a rough draft, and ultimately a shooting script takes skills and a discipline that requires instruction and the honest feedback from one's instructors and classmates.

It is the goal of the AFA in Screenwriting program to train students with hands-on instruction and constant practice to master the craft of creating a feature-length screenplay or television script.

Offering the most extensive and substantive screenwriting curriculum, students are given myriad avenues by which to study and hone their screenwriting abilities. In addition to learning the craft, students learn the unique set of business skills needed to sell their scripts, including the art of the pitch.

AFA students are given the support and structure to write and meet deadlines. Students write intensively throughout the course and complete feature-length screenplays and television scripts with the assistance of constructive critique from instructors and their peers.



While writing is the core of the program, students explore related areas of filmmaking that help to improve their screenplays and put them into a real-world context. Thus, in addition to writing classes, students study film craft, acting, pitching, and cinema studies as these topics apply to screenwriting. In each semester, a Business of Screenwriting course prepares students to enter the industry, covering subjects from copyright registration to financing and pitching.

In addition, the Academy's AFA in Screenwriting program features a faculty of accomplished professional screenwriters who instruct students in the fundamentals and nuances of screenwriting. Having written scripts for big-budget blockbusters, hit TV shows, and independent productions, our faculty boasts a varied background that allows them to offer a range of insight and guidance on the path towards professional fulfillment.

Although the AFA in Screenwriting program is offered exclusively at our Los Angeles campus, **QUALIFIED STUDENTS HAVE THE OPTION OF COMPLETING COURSE WORK AT THE NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY IN NEW YORK CITY IN A ONE-YEAR NON-DEGREE PROGRAM AND THEN APPLYING THEIR COURSE WORK TO BE ACCEPTED FOR ADVANCED STANDING IN THE AFA SCREENWRITING DEGREE PROGRAM.**

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.



Screenwriting students work together in class to workshop and critique each other's scripts. This very important in-class feedback forces students to push the boundaries of their own creativity to develop their best possible work.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Upon finishing the AFA Screenwriting Program at the New York Film Academy, students are expected to possess and demonstrate the following skills and know-how:

- Cinematic storytelling principles.
- Tools and techniques for plotting and writing feature films.
- Creating vivid characters with clear goals.
- Creating a portfolio of material that reflects their unique writing voice.
- Writing episodes for existing half-hour and one-hour television series.
- Creating an original television series idea.
- Creating a story world for a transmedia franchise.
- A writing methodology for meeting deadlines and handling revisions.
- Story analysis and the art of constructive feedback
- Collaboration with directors, actors and editors and the basics of their roles.
- The trends and expectations of genre and storytelling.
- Writing professional script coverage.
- Finding and securing an internship.
- Personal branding and networking skills.

WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

SEMESTER ONE

At the end of Semester One, students will have produced:

- A feature length film screenplay.
- A one-hour television drama spec script.
- A half-hour television comedy spec script.

SEMESTER TWO

At the end of Semester Two, students will have produced:

- Story and character ideas for future feature screenplays and television series.
- A treatment for a feature length film.
- A rewrite of OR revision blueprint for their Semester One feature screenplay.
- A second original screenplay OR a beat breakdown for that idea.
- A digital film of a short scene.
- A pilot script and a series proposal/bible for an original television series.

SEMESTER THREE

At the end of Semester Three, students will have produced:

- An outline and first draft of thesis feature OR a proposal for an original TV series and the script for the pilot.
- A treatment for an original adaptation based on non-cinematic source material.

SEMESTER FOUR

At the end of Semester Four, students will have produced:

- A revision and rewrite of their thesis feature or TV pilot.
- A concept for an original transmedia franchise.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

In their first year, AFA Screenwriting students learn the tools and skills necessary for writing successful screenplays and are challenged to develop their craft artistically and technically, while writing original film and television scripts.

SEMESTER ONE

ELEMENTS OF SCREENWRITING

Utilizing lectures, in-class exercises, outside readings, classroom discussions, and film viewings, this course introduces students to the craft of screenwriting. Screenplay formatting will be a major focus, and students will learn how to write scene descriptions, to describe characters and locations, and to develop action sequences.

Students will explore topics including: Classic Screenplay Structure, the Elements of the Scene, Developing the Character, Character Arcs, Antagonists, Dialogue, Writing the Visual Image, Introduction to Final Draft, Theme, Conflict, Flashbacks, Fantasy Sequences and Dream Sequences, Voiceover, Text and Subtext, Developing Your Writing Style, Tone and Genre, Visualization, Revealing Exposition, Creating a Compelling Second Act, Climaxes and Resolutions, and Scene Beats.

WRITING FOR TELEVISION I: SPECS

This television workshop is a fast-paced, intensive course that introduces students to the fundamentals of the TV world and TV writing. The classwork consists of individual writing, reading aloud of student work in class, and workshop discussions. By the end of the course, each student will have written a draft of both a one-hour television spec script and a half-hour spec script, each for an existing show.

Students will be encouraged to write through difficult spots with the belief that getting to “The End” is more important than polishing along the way. Workshop sessions will simulate a TV writers’ room, and will be an environment in which students evaluate their own and their classmates’ work. Students will guide and encourage each other in a constructive, creative, and supportive atmosphere.

WRITING THE FEATURE FILM SCREENPLAY I

Writing the Feature Film Screenplay I is a fast-paced, intensive workshop that introduces students to the fundamentals of screenwriting. The classes consist of in-class writing exercises, individual writing, reading aloud of student work in class, and workshop discussions. Students will apply knowledge gained from Elements of Screenwriting and apply it to the creation of their own feature-length scripts. By the end of the course, students will develop and write a first draft of a feature-length screenplay.

GENRE STUDIES

Genre Studies is a critical studies course focused on exploring different genres of film. Through out-of-class screenings, lectures, and in-class scene breakdowns, students will begin to identify the models and audience expectations of different genres, starting from broad categories like comedy and drama, and then moving into more specific genres like adventure, horror and romantic comedies.

THE GREAT SCREENPLAYS

The Great Screenplays is a critical studies course focused on exploring Academy Award-winning American and foreign movies from the past eighty plus year. Through in-class screenings, readings of screenplays, lectures, and discussions, students will gain a deeper understanding of how the art of screenwriting has evolved since the 1920s.

SEMESTER TWO

WRITING THE FEATURE FILM SCREENPLAY II

This course is divided into two components. In the first half, students will build a detailed breakdown of a new story idea – learning the value of plotting in detail before writing. They will also build a blueprint to revise their semester one feature screenplay, learning the key tools of revision and rewriting. In the second half, students will take either the new breakdown or the revision blueprint and write a draft of that script or rewrite.

THE BUSINESS OF SCREENWRITING I

This class introduces students to the practices and players of the entertainment industry from a historical perspective. Students learn about the birth of film as a dramatic medium and how the major studios—the juggernaut of a new industry—grew out of this development. By studying the roots of the film industry, students will also learn how the business works today. This class explores the role of the screenwriter in the process and business of filmmaking. In-class lectures and primary-source research projects are supplemented with guest lectures from prominent figures in the entertainment industry. Students also explore internships and the tools and techniques to get one at a film or television production company, film or television studio, management company, or talent agency. In anticipation of Business II & III, where they will have the opportunity to participate in internships, students will develop a plan for finding an internship in those later semesters that fits their career strategy.

WRITING FOR TELEVISION II: PILOT

In this advanced television workshop, students will create an original episodic television series, including completing a series proposal and the script for the pilot episode. The workshop portion of the class will be constructed to simulate a TV writers' room, with students reading, evaluating, and assisting each other from “breaking story,” building outlines, all the way to a completed draft.

The primary goal of the class will be for students to leave with a series proposal and a full draft of a television pilot script for an original show, either one-hour or half-hour. Students will also generate additional series ideas that they will take with them into the second year of the program.

SCRIPT TO SCREEN

Script to Screen is designed to help writing students see what happens to their words when they go into Production. The class is divided into two components: Acting for Writers and a fifteen-week Filmmaking Seminar. Acting for Writers introduces students to the theory and practice of the acting craft. By exploring how actors build characters and performances based upon the information provided in a film script, writers will learn how to write more powerful dialogue, develop more memorable characters, and create more effective dramatic actions.

The Filmmaking Seminar trains students in the fundamentals of film directing, which in turn facilitates an understanding of the filmmaking process as it relates to screenwriting. It is our belief that a student who actually picks up a camera, blocks a scene and directs actors from a script is far better prepared to then write a screenplay.

STORY GENERATION

Story Generation is designed to help writers become what the film industry needs most: prolific sources of story ideas. Through in-class exercises and out-of-class projects, students will develop skills for generating viable stories for various genres and mediums, from film to television and emerging media like comics or web series. They will workshop ideas in class in order to come up with the best possible version of their stories. The idea is to become versatile, adaptable, and creative, providing the best “product” to the industry when called upon to generate new ideas to fill various needs.

YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

During Year Two, AFA candidates begin working on their Thesis Project, a feature-length screenplay or episodic television series pilot. Coursework in Year Two will focus on refining writing techniques and clarifying each student's artistic voice, as well as preparing students for a professional life after the AFA.

SEMESTER THREE

THE BUSINESS OF SCREENWRITING II

The Business of Screenwriting II picks up where the first year left off. The core of the class is mastering the “Art of the Pitch” in preparation for a major industry pitch fest with agents, managers, and producers. A heavy emphasis on guest speakers will illuminate every corner of the industry.

ADVANCED WRITING SEMINAR I: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

This course will focus on teaching students to write compelling characters and relationships that help to create more effective screenplays and teleplays. Combining lecture, analysis of movies and television episodes, and a series of character exercises designed to work in tandem with the development of the thesis project, this class aims to allow students to access story at a deeper level, via true engagement with protagonists, antagonists and other secondary characters.

ADAPTATION WORKSHOP

In today's Hollywood, adaptation is everywhere – it's extremely common to see a “based on” credit ahead of the screenwriter's name. Historically, novels, short stories, plays, magazine articles, and even old films have served as underlying source material; but in the last decade, comic books, graphic novels, TV shows, board games, and theme park rides have increasingly become fair game. In this course, we will identify the challenges that surround translating a non-cinematic art form into a cinematic story by studying existing adaptations. Students will also select a work to adapt or update and generate a 10-15 page treatment for the material.

DRAMATIC WRITING

This is an introductory course in dramatic literature stressing the influences of the past upon modern theatre, the commonalities and differences between theatrical and filmed drama, and the process of how the written script becomes a live or filmed production.

ART & SOCIETY

The class will explore the role of art and the artist in society, both in a historical context and in the world today. It will look at the impact artists' works have—or do not have—in the cultures in which they live, and will explore the concept of artist as celebrity, ambassador, and spokesperson. The course will focus on a distinct art form each time it is offered (art, music, theatre, film). Visits to museums, concerts, films and theatres will form an integral part of the course.

ADVANCED THESIS WORKSHOP I

This course builds on existing student knowledge about screenwriting and takes it to the next level. Students will choose an idea for a Feature Film or Television Series from their work in Story Generation and Writing For Television II that they will write over the course of their final year, and take that idea through a first draft, and in the following semester, through a rewrite, and a polish or blueprint for future revisions. As a whole, the course will mirror the majority of the writing deals being given in Hollywood today.

SEMESTER FOUR

INTRO TO TRANSMEDIA

Intro to Transmedia is a semester-long course that introduces students to the process of Transmedia development, and how content providers design Transmedia “worlds” or franchises, which can include various forms of new media and traditional cinematic media, such as comic books or graphic novels, games, web series, television series, and feature films.

The course will introduce students to each of the new forms (sequential art, game design, webseries). Topics for the Introductory Course will include the concept of the “Immersive World,” the history of Transmedia, Branded Content, and Brand Integration. Guest speakers will help students gain a deeper understanding of the current state of the Transmedia Industry and where it is heading as well as an understanding of the individual media discussed.

THE ART OF THE PITCH

In order to launch a career in Hollywood, a writer must be “good in the room.” That is, they must be able to pitch their ideas – and themselves – in a compelling and engaging way to agents, managers, producers and executives. This semester long course – a capstone of the AFA curriculum – teaches students how to craft a professional-level pitch. Students pitch every week and receive notes from the instructor and peers. The class builds to a pitch event at the end of the semester, where students present their ideas to the faculty, with a chance to join NYFA’s MFA Pitch Fest, where they’ll be able to pitch to experts and industry professionals.

ADVANCED WRITING SEMINAR II: SCENE STUDY

This is the class in which students get to leave behind the big picture for a while and pull out the microscope to study their scenes in great detail. Using short excerpts (3-5 pages) from screenplays they have already written—preferably from their thesis scripts—students will focus on emotional progression, dialogue, action, character logic and motivation, scene beats, tone and tonal shifts, writing style, subtext, events, and transitions, in order to revise their material. A different type of scene will be covered each week, and sessions will consist of a combination of reading scenes aloud, critique, in-class assignments, lecture, and watching and analyzing scenes.

ADVANCED THESIS WORKSHOP II

This course continues where Advanced Thesis Workshop I left off. It will focus entirely on the rewriting process. This course will teach students to dig deeper into their stories than most of them ever have. Through workshop and discussions, students will gain the insight they need to execute a Rewrite and Polish of the scripts (and, if working in television, series outline) they wrote last semester. Upon completion of this course, students will learn how to spot the things in their scripts that aren’t working, develop a game plan for fixing them, and execute that game plan. The class will focus on identifying and fixing structural problems as well as problems on the scene level. This semester is designed to build the skills of self-criticism, arguably the writer’s most important tool. At each step, the student will explain their creative choices to their thesis committee and work with the notes given during the committee process. By the end of the final semester, each student will have a final, polished draft of their feature screenplay or pilot.



Write. Rewrite. When not writing or rewriting, read.

I know of no shortcuts. ””

- Larry L. King