

# Bachelor of Fine Arts

Three or Four-Year Degree Programs

*Students have the option of completing in three or four years,  
depending on the number of terms they take each year.*

Filmmaking | Acting for Film | Photography  
Producing for Film & TV | Screenwriting | Graphic Design  
Illustration | 3D Animation & Visual Effects | Game Design

***“Anyone who can make a film I already love.”  
- John Cassavetes***







*BFA Filmmaking student working the Steadi-Cam during the industry lab.*



Three or Four-Year Degree Program  
**BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS**  
*in* **FILMMAKING**

*Students have the option of completing in three or four years, depending on the number of terms they take each year.*

---

## LOCATION

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA;  
SOUTH BEACH, FLORIDA**

*Locations are subject to change.*

*For start dates and tuition, please visit [nyfa.edu](http://nyfa.edu)*

---



Each Bachelor of Fine Arts student writes, shoots, directs, and edits 10 films in the most intensive hands-on program in the world and works on the crew of at least 30 additional films.



It used to be that filmmaking was a pursuit limited to a select number of auteurs and films could only be seen in the local movie theater. These days, films can be seen in more places than ever could have been imagined: on computers, on television, in planes, on phones, and pretty much anywhere in the world.

As technology has made film more accessible, this has been met by a rapid increase in the number of aspiring filmmakers who dream of having their film, television series, web show, and more reach audience members around the world.

To meet this ever growing demand by aspiring filmmakers to learn the technical and artistic skills necessary to create films, the New York Film Academy's Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Filmmaking employs a total immersion approach to the subject through which students develop a powerful arsenal of skills in directing, screenwriting, cinematography, editing, and producing. This approach ensures that graduates from the program are fully equipped to be valuable participants on any film set.

*Students work in all formats from 16mm and HD to 35mm and RED Digital, as they write, direct, shoot, and edit their own films. A strong grounding in the Liberal Arts and Sciences serves to inform students' work and give them a well-rounded undergraduate education.*

The New York Film Academy's BFA in Filmmaking program is unlike any other; it is an accelerated and intensive nine-semester degree program that can be completed in three years without taking summer breaks. If a student wishes to take summer breaks, the program takes four years.

One benefit of this accelerated program is that students may begin internships or professional work a year earlier than they would in a standard bachelor's program, and, of course, save a year of tuition and expense. It requires a rigorous schedule whereby students are in class or production for eleven months of the year.

This program is offered at our Los Angeles and Miami Campuses. **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 BFA FILMMAKING DEGREE PROGRAM.**

A Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) is distinguished from a standard Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree by its in-depth study of professional training in the arts. In the BFA, two-thirds of the degree is devoted to study and practice in fine arts and one-third to general Liberal Arts and Sciences, allowing the BFA students the opportunity for deep exploration and mastery of their art.

Our BFA Filmmaking program offers a well-rounded collegiate education in the Liberal Arts and Sciences with a comprehensive study of, and practice in, the art and craft of filmmaking. During the three or four years of study, each student will write, shoot, direct, and edit up to twelve film projects of increasing complexity. In addition, students work in key crew positions on their classmates' films.

Graduates will complete the program with a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences with an in-depth understanding of and experience in film production. This specialized degree will prepare them to pursue their own paths in film and related fields as creative professionals.

*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.*



*Student camera operator and assistant camera riding the dolly for a smooth tracking shot.*

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Upon graduating from the Academy's BFA in Filmmaking program, students will exhibit the following skill sets and knowledge:

- Students will understand the fundamentals of visual storytelling.
- Demonstrate capabilities with video production and digital editing.
- Exhibit confidence with acting and directing actors.
- Demonstrate advanced filmmaking craft including directing, screenwriting, producing, sync-sound production, cinematography, and digital editing.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the various stages of film production, including pre-production, physical production, and post-production.
- Apply the fundamentals of sound design.
- Identify and produce films in alternative formats, such as music videos and commercials.
- Examine enhanced directing, camera, and producing techniques.

## WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

### SEMESTER ONE

- Write, direct, and edit four short nonsynchronous projects, one on 16mm and the others either 16mm or video.
- Direct or DP a short group project exploring pacing.
- Write, produce, direct, and edit a short nonsynchronous film of up to 10 pages.
- Crew as Cinematographer, Gaffer, and/or Assistant Camera on up to 12 additional projects.

### SEMESTER TWO

- Direct two short projects, with dialogue, emphasizing Point of View and Subtext.
- Explore acting and directing through Instructor-supervised Digital Production Workshops.
- Write, produce, direct, and edit a short film with dialogue of up to 10 minutes in length.

### SEMESTER THREE

- Direct, Assistant Direct, or serve as Cinematographer on at least one Synchronous Sound Production Workshop.
- Serve as crewmember on three other production workshops, shot on various formats ranging from 16mm to HD.
- Shoot exercises on 35mm film as part of Cinematography II.

### SEMESTER FOUR

- Direct and produce an Intermediate Film of up to 15 minutes (shot on 16mm film, 35mm film, or High Definition Video).
- Participate as a principal crew member on fellow students' films.

### SEMESTER FIVE

- Edit the Intermediate Film.
- Create a treatment for a feature screenplay.

### SEMESTER SIX

- Pitch, develop, produce, and direct a Spec Commercial through instructor-guided Advanced Production Workshops. Students who do not direct a commercial, will direct an Advanced Music Video next semester.
- Write a rough draft of a feature screenplay.

### SEMESTER SEVEN

- Pitch, develop, produce, and direct an Advanced Music Video, if a Spec Commercial was not created in the previous semester.

### SEMESTER EIGHT

- Write, produce, and direct a thesis film that can be up to 30 minutes in length.
- Serve as principal crewmember on classmates' projects.

### SEMESTER NINE

- Edit the thesis project.



## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

During the first year, students learn the foundations of the art and technique of visual storytelling. Students study the requisite skills to write, direct, film and edit a number of short films. **The following courses comprise the filmmaking portion of a student's curriculum; their required Liberal Arts and Sciences classes are listed at the end of the BFA and BA section of the brochure.**

### SEMESTER ONE

#### DIRECTOR'S CRAFT I A

The core of the first semester, this course introduces students to all major aspects of filmmaking. Students will learn concepts to help achieve maximum psychological impact on their audience by studying the director's decisions in camera placement, blocking, staging, and visual image design. Students will take part in several in-class workshops and will be challenged to think comprehensively about their film projects in terms of the economic realities of low-budget student production. This course will be the forum for preparing, screening and critiquing four short films.

#### CINEMATOGRAPHY I

In this course, students undergo intensive training in the use of the 16mm non-sync motion picture and video cameras and their accessories. Through hands-on workshops and film tests, they will also learn fundamental lighting techniques and learn how to support the mood of the story with lighting choices and experiment with expressive lighting styles.

#### DIGITAL EDITING I

This course presents students with multiple aesthetic approaches to editing film and video. Students will learn how to apply concepts such as temporal continuity and spatial continuity, as well as less traditional discontinuous editing techniques, to their work. Additionally, students will learn to operate nonlinear editing software, which they will use to edit their own films.

#### SCREENWRITING I

This course introduces the established tools and language used in writing a film project. Students will take a story from initial idea, treatment, and outline to a rough draft and finally a shooting script. Instruction focuses on the fundamentals of visual storytelling.





I have found it always the best policy to allow the film to speak for itself. ””

- Stanley Kubrick

---

## SEMESTER TWO

---

### SCREENWRITING II

In addition to providing an in-depth study and exploration of dialogue in film, Screenwriting II focuses on the writing, rewriting and polishing of the Digital Dialogue Film scripts.

### DIRECTOR'S CRAFT I B

Through production workshops and the completion of three short film projects, students are exposed to proper set etiquette and the implementation of the basic aspects of cinematic storytelling.

### DIGITAL PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

Students stage and shoot complex dramatic exercises under the guidance of the instructor. They design shots to heighten the emotion of a sequence and then shoot the sequence on digital video in a supervised environment.

### DIGITAL EDITING II

This course teaches students to edit their sync-sound projects, expanding upon previously mastered techniques to establish a consistent editing design, dialogue rhythm, and sense of pacing and continuity that compliments the story as a whole.

### ACTING FOR DIRECTORS

This course adheres to the philosophy that, in order to direct actors, one must understand and experience acting as art and methodology as Directing students become actors.

### PRODUCING I

This course leads students through the entire process of pre-production, including scouting and securing of locations, permits, and casting. Using script breakdowns, students learn how to plan and keep to a schedule and budget for their productions.

---

## SEMESTER THREE

---

### DIRECTOR'S CRAFT II

This course is a concentrated examination and analysis of the aesthetic elements of the director's toolkit as it applies to shot choice, composition, setting, point-of-view, character, and camera movement. Students learn how to cover complex dialogue scenes with a series of shots and practice different approaches to coverage by breaking down scenes from their own scripts. Students are encouraged to develop their own directorial style.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY II

This class immerses students in the technical and creative demands of cinematography. They will learn to go beyond simply "getting an image" and focus on the nuances of visual storytelling. Topics include: Arriflex 16SR cameras and accessories, High Definition Cameras, Use of Color and Light, and 35mm cameras.

### COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

A course designed to further expand upon the etiquette of the film set, students explore the importance of the actor/director relationship required for a successful and professional film shoot. Filmmaking and Acting students come together for a series of audition technique, rehearsal, and screening classes, in addition to a series of full-fledged production exercises. Students film these production exercise scenes on 16mm film and HD with the guidance and critique of their instructors. These practice scenes are fully pre-produced and planned during elaborate crew meetings prior to the start of each production.

### SCREENWRITING III

A further exploration of the narrative form, this course focuses on the writing and rewriting of the Intermediate Film Script. Narrative lessons learned from the production of the Digital Dialogue Film are incorporated into the more refined and nuanced Intermediate Film Scripts.





Students learn the classic filmmaking discipline by shooting on 35mm film.

## YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

In the second year, students focus on the production of their intermediate film while also learning more advanced equipment packages and beginning preparation for their upcoming thesis films.

---

### SEMESTER FOUR

---

#### SHORT FILM DIRECTING I

This course examines the director's challenge in directing the short film, specifically their Intermediate Film. Through a series of lectures and exercises, the tools available to implement the Director's vision in the unique narrative structure of the short film are examined in depth.

#### INTERMEDIATE FILM PREP

This course prepares students for their final presentation of their Intermediate Film production book. Through a combination of lectures, exercises, and individual mentoring sessions, the skills required to produce a detailed production presentation, including both aesthetic and production goals, will be taught.

#### INTERMEDIATE FILM PRODUCTION

All students are challenged to incorporate lessons from all other courses in the design and execution of original films. These projects may be up to 15 minutes in length of any genre style and may be produced either on 16mm film, 35mm film, or HD Video.

#### INTERMEDIATE FILM CREW PARTICIPATION

Students are required to work as crewmembers on four of their classmates' Intermediate projects. This collaboration is monitored through a crew participation class, in which students meet to discuss upcoming projects and debrief and review recent productions.

## SEMESTER FIVE

### FEATURE SCREENPLAY I

The goal of this workshop is to fully immerse each student in an intensive and focused course of study, providing a solid structure for writing a feature film treatment. Students will learn the craft of writing by gaining an understanding of story, structure, character, conflict, and dialogue. With strict adherence to professional standards and self-discipline, students will complete a treatment of a feature-length script that will be further developed.

### INTERMEDIATE FILM POST-PRODUCTION

In this course, students will apply the knowledge gained so far through editing and post-production courses to finish their Intermediate Film. They will be assessed on their ability to take a film from rough assembly to locked picture to a finished product with sound mix and titles. Excellent problem-solving skills will be necessary to steadily improve each cut of the film on the way to achieving one's vision.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY III

Class sessions are designed to help students master many elements of cinematography using professional HD cameras and the RED Epic Dragon camera system. Proper use of advanced lighting and grip equipment such as HMI lights and dollies is taught in this course. In preparation for their upcoming projects, students learn lighting techniques of increasing complexity, building up their arsenal of skills through shooting tests and experimentation.



## SEMESTER SIX

### FEATURE SCREENPLAY II

This class is designed as a creative and academic safe haven for students to develop, write, and polish a feature film script. In order for a student to successfully pass this class, each script must be completed and revised by the end of the term.

### DIRECTOR'S CRAFT III A

Students study the language and craft of film directing from the perspective of the last thirty years. Students will increase their comprehension of visual expression and directorial style through a series of in-class exercises, assignments and lectures.

### SCREENWRITING SHORT THESIS A

Building upon the narrative short film screenwriting skills developed in semesters one and two, this course focuses on advanced narrative storytelling techniques to be applied in the Thesis Project scripts.

### PRODUCING COMMERCIALS & MUSIC VIDEOS

Students will learn the fundamentals of commercials and music videos in order to expand their production knowledge and apply these lessons to producing their own Thesis Project. This class continues to examine the role of the producer by matching tasks and challenges with ways of approaching them. As students produce their own projects, the challenges will become clear, and some class time will be devoted to specific production "hurdles."

### SYNC SOUND COMMERCIAL WORKSHOP

Students stage and shoot fully-produced commercials under the supervision of the instructor and film using the advanced equipment package. This experience gives students an arsenal of techniques and practical tools, which they can use to successfully complete their Thesis Project.



## YEAR THREE OVERVIEW

*The overall goal of the third year is to challenge students to grow as artists by exposing them to skills, techniques, and approaches to filmmaking that are more specific and complex than those learned in previous terms.*

---

### SEMESTER SEVEN

---

#### **DIRECTOR'S CRAFT III B**

Students build upon skills learned previously, which provide them with the foundation required to direct a sophisticated music video using the advanced equipment package. Students will direct their own projects in addition to collaborating as crew on their classmates' projects. Later stages of the class will focus on advanced scene work, performance, and production of the director's notebook for the upcoming Thesis Film Projects.

#### **SCREENWRITING SHORT THESIS B**

A continuation of Screenwriting Short Thesis A, this course takes students through multiple drafts, ultimately leading to the final draft of the thesis project. Workshop and instructor feedback, in addition to class exercises and assignments, will provide crucial insights as these projects become production ready.

#### **PRODUCTION DESIGN**

This workshop helps students prepare for the design requirements of their thesis film projects. Topics covered in this hands-on workshop include the collaboration between cinematography and design, set construction, creating the visual language of the film, costume design, and prop choices.

#### **SOUND DESIGN**

Students receive instruction in fundamental post-production sound techniques such as Sound Effects and Sound Mixing. In the process, they learn the significance of sound design in improving the quality of their Intermediate films.

---

### SEMESTER EIGHT

---

#### **SHORT FILM DIRECTING II**

This course examines the director's challenge in directing the short film at a more advanced level. Higher-level concepts such as control of tone and style will be pursued in depth as they relate to the unique short film format.

#### **THESIS FILM: PREP**

Similar in nature to Intermediate Film prep, this course prepares students for the final production of their Thesis Film through a combination of lectures, exercises, and individual mentoring sessions.

#### **THESIS FILM: PRODUCTION**

Semester eight culminates in the production of the Thesis Film. This film project is the capstone project of all previous terms. Students are challenged to incorporate lessons from all other courses in the design and execution of these films.

#### **THESIS FILM: CREW PARTICIPATION**

By participating as crewmembers during their classmates' Thesis Films, students will gain further on-set experience and become more intimate with the nuts-and-bolts aspects of filmmaking.

---

## SEMESTER NINE

---

### THESIS FILM: POST-PRODUCTION

In this course, students apply the knowledge gained through editing and post-production courses to finish their Thesis Film. They will be assessed on their ability to take a film from rough assembly to locked picture to a finished product with sound mix and titles.

### ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY SEMINAR

Students will examine filmmaking from a business perspective as well as the breadth and diversity of the industry today. Topics include the history of the studio system, the roles of production companies, post-production companies, professional guilds, financing, film festivals, agents and managers.

---

## SEMESTER NINE ELECTIVES

---

### MARKETING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Every great filmmaker has also been an excellent self-promoter, using their storytelling skills to convince people to support their next great project. This class examines all of the twenty-first century tools that can be put into service of self-promotion. Various projects will help prepare the students to promote themselves in the real world after graduation.

### NEW MEDIA

Documentary producers/directors must keep abreast of evolution in New Media technology and the many New Media outlets for distribution that continually emerge. In this course, students develop an introductory sense of the filmmaking challenges and opportunities presented by new/digital/viral media—including podcasting, marketing films, and producing for the web.

# FILM PROJECTS

### MISE-EN-SCÈNE

Each student will make a short film of fifty seconds to one minute. This project emphasizes how the relationship of the subject to the camera creates drama. Students should do their best to tell a story that has a beginning, middle, and end.

Students should pay close attention to their choice of lenses, distances, and angles. Since students will tell their story in only one shot (utilizing no more than one roll of film), they should be sure the shots they compose expresses as much as possible about the characters and their actions. It is also important to thoroughly rehearse their film for blocking in order to get the most out of their footage.

### CONTINUITY

Students shoot a dramatic scene to create a feeling of continuous action. The scene unfolds utilizing a variety of shots (10-15) with a consistency of physical detail between shots intended to match (no jumps in time or action). This will challenge students to produce a clear, visual scene while maintaining the truthfulness of the moment. It is essential that the audience believes in the reality of the scene.

Students should not shoot without thoroughly pre-planning the following elements: script, storyboard, script breakdown, production schedule, location scouting, and floor plans.

### THE PURSUIT/ GROUP PACING EXERCISE

As a group, students shoot a “pursuit” story told in “real time”. Students use multiple shots to establish a constant flow of action and they should time out your shots during filming in order to achieve a dynamic sequence. Be sure to utilize the basic principles of screen direction, rhythm, time, and space.

This project will be created, designed, and produced as a group to explore pacing through editing.



**MONTAGE**

Students choose one short selection of music and plan and shoot this exercise with the music in mind. Students are encouraged to use montage-style editing to move the story or idea forward. Students may not use multiple songs on this project or edit the selection of music that they do choose.

Montage can be used to great effect in the compression of time and to create visual collisions or unexpected continuations between shots. In the editing room, students should cut the images to work in concert with or in counterpoint to the music. Students should experiment with rhythm and pacing.

In addition to storyboards, students may use a still camera for pre-planning their coverage. It can help them in the choice of locations, distances and angles, lighting, etc.

**THE NON-SYNC FILM**

The goal of this project is to create a longer narrative film that incorporates all of the directing techniques learned thus far (Mise-en-scène, Continuity, Pacing, and Montage), along with sound effects and score, into a complete story of no more than 10 minutes.

It is best to keep the production to one or two locations with two to three characters. The goal is to tell a concise story that demonstrates students' directing abilities. Please remember that less is often more and that the quality of a film is never determined by the amount of money spent. There is no substitution for creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and above all, pre-production.

Students make a shot list, storyboard, and floor plan for their project, as well as scout locations. They create a production book with tabbed dividers including their script, floor plans, shot lists, shooting schedule, script breakdowns, and permits. Lastly, they must rehearse with their actors prior to shooting.

A student's final film may have up to two tracks of sound that incorporates music, sound effects, and/or ambient sound where appropriate. However, voiceover is not allowed for this project. You will have an opportunity to screen your film in front of the class and receive notes from your instructors.

**POV**

Students create a short scene with minimal dialogue and no more than three characters that have conflicting objectives, while presenting the viewer visually with a clear and distinct point of view.

Through experimenting with eyelines, framing, graphic control (composition and staging), and narrative control (often editing choices), the audience should have a clear understanding of which character's story a student trying to tell. Even though the project is called the POV, true POV shots are not necessary.

**CHEKHOVIAN – TEXT & SUBTEXT**

Based off of the work students have done in Digital Production Workshop, they direct a scene without expository dialogue, exploring subtext through characters they have created for their upcoming Digital Dialogue Films.

The scene should be an original, stand-alone piece (written by students' classmates, then redistributed); separate from their Digital Dialogue script, yet exploring the people, ideas, and story that their Digital Dialogue Film will present. This is a great opportunity to flesh-out situations, scenarios, and backstories to get a better sense of who a student's characters are, and how they interact with the people and environment around them.

**DIGITAL PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS**

Filming a neutral dialogue scene with the class as assigned crew, this scene should be complete with subtext, backstory, conflict, objectives, beats, actions, and be contained within one location.

Expand upon given dialogue. Turn it into a script complete with locations and actions.

## THE DIGITAL DIALOGUE FILM

Students write a script of up to 10 pages in length. The Digital Dialogue Film will test a student's abilities as a director to tell a clear and concise story in three acts, complete with an inciting incident, crisis and climax, and finally a resolution.

This project should serve as a culmination of students' experiences throughout the semester. Successful projects will utilize many of the ideas and concepts explored over the past 16 weeks.

## COLLABORATION PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

All students must choose one of the 6 SSPW Scenes, present a director's proposal (to the class, as well as a written 1-2 page document), and pitch their approach of the scene to their Directing and Camera instructors. During the pitch, students create excitement for the project by clearly defining their purpose/message, look/style, and logistics (where, when, how). After the pitching is completed, the instructors will green light the best proposals, as well as come up with a production schedule, assign crew positions, and assign cast. All students will be required to either direct, DP, or AD.

## INTERMEDIATE FILM

This project is the culmination of the filmmaker's work thus far. Each student's goal is to produce a fully realized short film that demonstrates his or her own artistic vision and point of view. Student's work with larger crews and with more time allotted for pre-production, production and post-production than the previous projects. Students prepare for this project with the assistance of all classes in the third and fourth semesters, which are specifically designed to guide students through the preproduction of this project. Students must prepare detailed production books and receive a "green light" from the faculty to check out for their shoots. Each student can choose to shoot this film in one of three formats - high definition digital video, 16mm film or 35mm film.

## ADVANCED COMMERCIAL WORKSHOP

Students must film either a commercial in the Advanced Production Workshop or a music video the following semester.

All students must film one or the other, and it is up to the instructors to divide up the class however they see fit in order to make this happen as long as every student has the opportunity to produce and direct either a commercial or a music video.

## ADVANCED MUSIC VIDEOS

Students who do not direct a commercial will film a music video, which is subject to instructor approval. The video will be a demonstration of a student's ability to integrate music and image through casting, locations, cinematography, and editing. Music videos may or may not include a performance element, depending on the nature of the video. However, all videos must be centered around an original piece of music.

## THESIS FILM

Students direct and edit a short film up to 30 minutes in length, and fill essential crew positions on short form films directed by fellow students.

The final capstone project of the BFA program, this film combines all of the skills learned thus far into a single project of up to thirty minutes in length. These thesis films function as the calling card project for BFA Filmmakers enabling them to demonstrate their creative vision and professional skills to the world of film festivals and the larger community of the entertainment industry. Filmed using the entire advanced equipment package that includes, RED Epic Dragon cameras, HMI lighting, and industry standard dollies, these projects have the necessary equipment and longer production period to allow filmmakers to work on both a more detailed and nuanced level and with a larger scope.