



*A BFA Screenwriting student supervises a scene while collaborating with Filmmaking and Acting students to bring her script to life on the Backlot of Universal Studios.*



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

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

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**LOCATION**

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

*Location is subject to change.*

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

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## OVERVIEW

**W**hile actors and directors often receive the lion's share of mainstream praise for a film's success, it is the screenwriter's ideas and story that are the foundation of an outstanding movie. The screenplay is the heart of a film and the spark that attracts producers, directors, and actors who want to bring the story to life.

Over the past several decades, screenwriters have garnered significantly greater respect and the accolades they deserve as the entertainment industry has come to view them as essential to creating a superior film or television series.

*Successful screenwriting requires discipline, perseverance, and training. One of the most difficult aspects of screenwriting is simply getting started. It's one thing to have a great idea for a story, but acquiring the discipline to develop an idea into a treatment, an outline, a rough draft and finally a shooting script is just not something that comes naturally to most aspiring screenwriters.*

*After years of stopping and starting, many writers find that by dedicating themselves to an intensive, top-notch BFA Screenwriting program, surrounded by other new writers, screenwriting can take on a life of its own and become second nature.*

In the BFA In Screenwriting Program at the New York Film Academy, students work with a world-class faculty to learn how to develop an original idea into a fully fleshed out working script. To help students master the craft of screenwriting, the Academy's curriculum requires constant practice through writing and re-writing numerous feature film and television scripts. In addition to the craft of writing, students are taught the demands of the business, including intensive, practical training in the "art of the pitch" - the necessary ability to engage potential buyer's through a short, verbal presentation of a visual narrative.

Screenwriting is a unique and demanding art form, and students at the Academy must be ready to make a full commitment to their writing. Students will receive ongoing critique from faculty and fellow students to help hone their material and skills, and they should be prepared to engage in the analysis of their classmates' material as an equally important part of the learning experience. It should be understood that the program demands significant hours outside of class time to complete the required projects.

The screenwriting faculty is comprised of accomplished professional screenwriters who instruct students in the fundamentals and nuances of screenwriting. **Having written the 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 to students and guide them on the path towards professional fulfillment.**

The BFA in Screenwriting program is an accelerated eight-semester, full-time undergraduate program that can be completed in three years. Students can also compete the program in four years if they choose to take summer breaks.

Two-thirds of the program consist of the focused study and practice of screenwriting skills across an array of styles and genres while the remaining third provides students with a full curriculum in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. **This combination of hands-on education in screenwriting with a foundation in critical studies helps students to push themselves in their educational and artistic development, providing them with skills that will prove invaluable in the real world.**

The BFA Screenwriting program is offered exclusively at the Academy's 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 BFA SCREENWRITING DEGREE PROGRAM.**





## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Upon finishing the BFA 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.
- Writing for comic books, graphic novels, or English language manga.
- Creating a proposal for a game that expands an original story world.
- Writing, directing and editing a webseries pilot.
- 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:

- Story and character ideas for future screenplay, television series and transmedia ideas.
- A treatment for a feature length film.

### SEMESTER TWO

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

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

### SEMESTER THREE

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

- A second original screenplay.
- A digital film of a short scene.

### SEMESTER FOUR

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

- A concept for an original transmedia franchise.
- A first draft of a pilot episode for original web series.
- A proposal for an original comic book, graphic novel or manga.
- A script for the first issue or chapter of a comic book, graphic novel or manga.

### SEMESTER FIVE

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

- A treatment for an original adaptation based on non-cinematic source material.
- A Game Proposal for a board, video, roleplaying, card or other game.
- A fully produced webseries pilot.
- A Transmedia Bible that includes their game proposal, comic proposal and webseries bible.
- A pilot script and a series proposal/bible for an original television series.

### SEMESTER SIX

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

- A rewrite of OR revision blueprint for their Semester Two feature screenplay.
- A rewrite of OR revision blueprint for their Semester Five pilot script.
- A first draft of the screenplay for their adapted project.

### SEMESTER SEVEN

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

- An outline and first draft of thesis feature OR a proposal or an original TV series and the script for the pilot.
- An original one-act play.

### SEMESTER EIGHT

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

- A revision and rewrite of their thesis feature or TV pilot.
- An action plan for career strategies.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

*During the first year, students will develop a foundational understanding of cinematic storytelling and the tools required to create a story while writing their first feature-length script and sample episodes of a current one-hour television drama and half-hour comedy. The following courses comprise the screenwriting 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.*

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### SEMESTER ONE

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#### 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 description, 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.

#### 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. Students will commit to one of their story ideas and develop it into a treatment for a feature film to be used in their second semester Feature workshop.

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### SEMESTER TWO

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#### 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 class consists of in-class writing exercises, individual writing, reading aloud of student work in class, and workshop discussions. Students will utilize knowledge gained from Elements of Screenwriting and apply it to the creation of their own feature-length script, developing and writing a screenplay from the treatment they developed in Story Generation. By the end of the course, students will write a first draft of a feature-length screenplay.

#### WRITING FOR TELEVISION I: SPECS

This television workshop is a fast-paced, intensive workshop program that introduces students to the fundamentals of the TV world and TV writing. The class work 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.

#### 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.

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## SEMESTER THREE

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### WRITING THE FEATURE FILM SCREENPLAY II

Writing the Feature Screenplay II builds upon knowledge gained in Writing the Feature Screenplay I, in which students loosely plotted and then wrote a feature-length film script. 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, the students will take either the new breakdown or the revision blueprint and write a draft of that script or rewrite. Each week, students will bring in a sequence of their scripts to be workshopped, and will adjust their breakdown as they go to reflect the changes that happen to a plot when writing begins.

### 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. Through in-class acting exercises and writing, as well as filmed exercises, students will learn what truly makes for great dialogue, characters, and action writing.

The Filmmaking Seminar trains students in the fundamentals of film direction, 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. If a writer has actually translated a shot on the page into a shot in the camera, then the writer has a much sharper perspective on the writing process. Hands-on classes in directing, editing, cinematography, and production give an overview of the creative and technical demands of telling a story with moving images. Students will edit their footage on Avid Media Composer.



## YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

*In the second year, students will expand their writing skills by exploring the current New Media landscape and continue their practice of television writing while further refining their rewriting skills.*




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## SEMESTER FOUR

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### NEW MEDIA I

New Media is an intensive two-semester course that introduces students to the process of Transmedia development. In this introductory course, students will be given an overview of the concept and current state of Transmedia, as well as the concept of Franchises or Story Worlds. In the introductory portion of the class, topics 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. Then students will begin to build their own Story World, creating their own original Transmedia concept or franchise, which will be further developed in Sequential Art, Interactive Narrative, and New Media II. At key points within all Transmedia courses, students will consult with the Transmedia faculty about their Franchise idea, and their progress and choices in creating the various components.

### SEQUENTIAL ART

For generations, sequential storytelling in America was the domain of the costumed superhero, but with the expanding field of Japanese manga and a wide array of publishers selling graphic novels of all genres, the field is now wide open. This study provides a complete introduction to the medium and to the craft of writing stories for comics in all their many forms. Students will learn the various styles of formatting and story structure as well as how to tell a story visually and pace it. Their comic will be part of their Transmedia Franchise, and will be developed in class from pitch to proposal and from outline to breakdown to completed script. As with the entire Transmedia track, students will meet with key Transmedia faculty to discuss how this comic effects and fits within their larger Franchise.

## SEMESTER FIVE

### INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE

The video game industry creates a billion dollar product and while blockbuster genre films spawn games, films created from established games are increasingly the norm. In modern Hollywood, games are even created and sold as part of studio pitches. The primary objective of Interactive Narrative is to explore key aspects of gaming, game development, and design. Students examine the history, theory, mechanics and storytelling techniques of various types of game play including board games, card games, casual, console, MMO, mobile, and emerging forms.

### ADAPTATION I

In today's Hollywood, adaptation is everywhere. Historically, novels, short stories, plays, and magazine articles have served as underlying source material, but in the last decade, comic books, graphic novels, TV shows, board games, theme park rides and even old films, have increasingly become fair game. As a tremendous number of potential jobs for new screenwriters involve adaptation, students will identify the challenges that surround translating a non-cinematic art form into a cinematic story by studying existing adaptations.

### NEW MEDIA II

As the final part of their year-long New Media course, students will learn about the process of integration to ensure their videos can connect with and enhance their Transmedia concept. After taking classes in producing, camera, and directing, students will shoot their web-series pilot. Their pilots will then be presented in-class and critiqued by the panel of Transmedia instructors as well as the rest of the class.

### 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 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 third year of the program.

## SEMESTER SIX

### ADAPTATION II

Having studied adaptations of original source material into films in Adaptation I, students will now select a work to adapt or update and generate a 10-15 page treatment based on the material. They will maintain the essence of the original story while making sure to imbue the new screenplay with its own dramatic impact. From this treatment, students will write a complete draft of the screenplay.

### REWRITING WORKSHOP

The art of writing is really the art of rewriting. A successful writer must know how to take notes on their story and their writing, and find something useful in every note. In this class, students will revisit one of the scripts written in previous workshops, and take the feedback they have received up until now, and new feedback from this class, and build a revision blueprint—a plan to address the notes and improve the story and how it is told. Lectures will develop key concepts in rewriting and exercises will teach vital skills in revision. And then students will build a blueprint to guide their revision, and finally rewrite the script in a way that addresses the feedback yet still serves the writer's vision and voice.



A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end... but not necessarily in that order. ”

- Jean-Luc Godard



## YEAR THREE OVERVIEW

*In Year Three, students will begin and complete their Thesis Projects—to develop, write, revise, and polish an original feature film screenplay or original television series and pilot episode script.*

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### SEMESTER SEVEN

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#### **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. Upon successful completion of this course, students will leave armed with increased “backstory” for their thesis project: character biographies and multimedia materials on the world of their story and a rewrite plan for at least one of the relationships in their script.

#### **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. The core of this class is mastering the “Art of the Pitch” in preparation for a major industry pitch event with agents, managers, and producers. In addition, a heavy emphasis on guest speakers will illuminate every corner of the industry.

#### **PLAYWRITING**

Ever since the advent of the motion picture camera, the Great White Way of Broadway has served as an express lane to Hollywood. Many modern screenwriters—including David Mamet, Kenneth Lonergan, and Neil LaBute—have spent their time in a darkened theater watching their words come alive on the stage. Playwriting will give our screenwriting students a chance to hone their dialogue and scene writing, while creating an original one-act play to add to their portfolio.

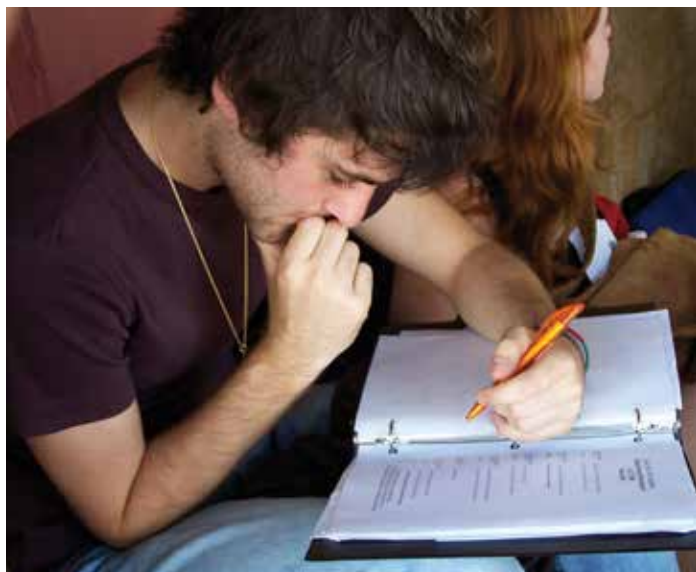
#### **ADVANCED THESIS WORKSHOP I**

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. Each student starts by working up a detailed Feature Treatment or Series Proposal for his or her idea. From there students take it to a First Draft of either the Feature or the Series pilot. In the following semester they will do a Rewrite of that draft and a Polish.

#### **THE GREAT PLAYWRIGHTS**

Unable to rely on spectacle to entertain, well-written stage plays make the most of the fundamental elements of dramatic writing: character, conflict, relationships, and theme. Stage dramas, when done well, are tight, focused, lean, exploring a central question deeply rather than broadly. This sort of storytelling is often the most compelling, and screenwriters should strive to achieve this kind of dramatic action. This class will make use of filmed plays, in-class table reads, at-home reading assignments, and in-class and homework analysis and writing exercises.



### **THE BUSINESS OF SCREENWRITING II**

After The Business of Screenwriting I, screenwriters should be skilled in the creation of log lines and the writing of coverage. While they have been introduced to the five-minute pitch, they have not yet perfected it. This will be the primary focus of Business Of Screenwriting II. 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. As part of this course, in the fourth and final semester of the program, students will take part in an industry internship or may instead choose to write an industry-related research paper.

## **SEMESTER EIGHT**

### **SCREENWRITING DISCIPLINE & METHODOLOGY**

Goal-setting, project planning, time management, and project management skills are essential for the creative artist. It is crucial for screenwriters, and all creative artists, to have the discipline to meet deadlines (especially self-imposed deadlines) and the tools and skills to complete the tasks they set. This course will explore different methodologies and the best resources for students to uncover the tools they need to meet and exceed their goals.

### **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. During the first half of the course, 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 film clips. Actors will be brought in for the second half of the course to do cold readings of scenes and to provide their unique perspective on character development, motivation, and beats.

### **ADVANCED THESIS WORKSHOP II**

This course will focus entirely on the rewriting process and 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. By the end of the final semester, each student will have a final, polished draft of their feature screenplay or pilot.