



One-Year Accelerated
MASTER OF ARTS
in **SCREENWRITING**

LOCATION

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Location is subject to change.

For start dates and tuition, please visit nyfa.edu



OVERVIEW

While actors might command the attention of the press and the director is credited with bringing a production together, it is the screenwriter who possesses what might be the most memorable element of all: the story. After all, it's the story that keeps us binge-watching our favorite TV shows and it's the story that allows us to invest in characters and what is happening on screen.



The One-Year MA Screenwriting Program at New York Film Academy was designed to train screenwriters in the best storytelling and writing practices, teaching them how to take a single idea and transform it into a compelling story that will resonate with audiences. To better understand the elements that work together to make a great movie or show, students examine the conventions of storytelling in Hollywood feature films through close watching of classic films across numerous genres, studying the storytelling tools associated with each.

By the time a student completes the MA Screenwriting Program, he or she will have written a feature-length film screenplay, engaged in constructive critique with his or her classmates regarding one another's scripts, and created ideas and sample scripts for various film genres and forms of television. Students will even look beyond the screen to other media platforms, such as video games, comic books, webseries, and prose storytelling.

In all, students who enroll in and successfully complete the Academy's MA Screenwriting program graduate uniquely prepared to navigate the entertainment industry and achieve their goals.



SEMESTER ONE OVERVIEW

In semester one, students are introduced to the foundational skills necessary to research and understand cinema, and the tools to write successful screenplays. Students are also taught to examine the conventions of storytelling in Hollywood feature films by examining classic films across multiple Hollywood genres and studying the storytelling tools and expectations associated with each. They will examine the history of cinema as both an art form and a storytelling method and learn how this history affects their craft today. They will deepen their understanding of storytelling by examining the great screenwriters and playwrights throughout history. At the end of the semester, students will have a basic knowledge of the form and the role of the screenwriter and will be ready to start telling their own stories.

SEMESTER TWO OVERVIEW

In semester two, students will take the skills they've learned in Semester One and start to apply them to their own stories and ideas. They will write a paper on a celebrated screenwriter and his or her journey with a career-defining screenplay. Students will learn the tools needed to adapt stories from other forms and sources into a treatment for a professional-caliber feature film. Students will also examine the source of stories themselves and begin to keep a storyteller's journal, tracking the ideas they encounter and the stories they generate. Their studies of Genre expand beyond Hollywood to look at storytelling and film history across the globe, and they will gain a richer understanding of genre through in-depth work on their own screenplays. At the end of the semester, the students will have taken their study of the form and conventions and generated story ideas across several media, and developed two of these ideas into full-length treatments, one of which they will write as a feature film screenplay.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SEMESTER ONE

SCREENWRITING CRAFT

Screenwriting Craft is an exploration of the role of the screenwriter and the tools available. Through lectures, out of class reading, and in-class exercises, students will learn screenplay format, and the dramatic and comedic tools used for crafting a story for the screen. Students will put these tools to use writing practice scenes, learning the elements of a successful scene and how to write different types of scenes.

THESIS DEVELOPMENT I

In Thesis Development, students will study the work of screenwriters and build an academic paper that will be the first part of their thesis in Semester Two. The early part of the semester, students will study the life and career path of a screenwriter. They will study the industry and its practices. Through these studies students will write academic essays and learn what is required for a Master's level paper. This will develop the students' skills in proposing, researching and drafting an academic thesis. In the second half of the class, they will write a paper examining the career path of a professional screenwriter they admire, and in particular, that writer's path towards creating a specific, defining, screenplay. Students will pick an established screenwriter, do presentations on the writer, and compose a paper analyzing that writer's journey with one individual screenplay. They will research the writer and their creative process as well as their setbacks and advances. This paper will become the basis of their full Thesis in Semester Two. Students will also construct a journal, tracking the stories developed in their classes and their own path during their first semester.

PRINCIPLES OF ADAPTATION

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, 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, even old films, have increasingly become fair game. The end result is this: A tremendous number of potential jobs for new screenwriters involve adaptation. 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 learn about the legal aspects of copyright, trademarks and public domain. Students will also select a work to adapt or update and generate a 10-15 page treatment for the material.

MASTER'S STORY GENERATION

Story Generation is designed to help writers become what the film industry needs most: prolific sources of movie ideas. Through in-class exercises and out-of-class projects, students will develop skills for generating viable stories for feature films of various genres. 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. In the second half of the course, students will commit to one of their story ideas and develop it into a treatment.

MASTER'S GENRE STUDIES

Genre Studies is a critical studies course focused on exploring eleven different genres of Hollywood films. Through out-of-class screenings, lectures, and in-class scene breakdowns, students will begin to identify the models (and audience expectations) of these different genres and will understand the evolution and historical role of each genre.

CINEMA STUDIES

Cinema Studies introduces students to the evolution of the motion picture art form as a visual storytelling medium and the motion picture industry from their inceptions. Students will be given a thorough creative, technological and industrial view of the filmmaking art. Students will be prepared for more advanced academic and production related studies and practice of filmmaking. The approach is historically developmental. Students will understand why a film creatively works or doesn't work and why. The course considers primarily American film development though the impact of international filmmakers is given due analysis.



SEMESTER TWO

FEATURE THESIS WORKSHOP

The Feature Workshop builds upon knowledge gained in Semester One. Students take a treatment or breakdown developed in Story Generation or in Adaptation Workshop and write a feature-length film script. Students work closely with their instructor and classmates in a workshop environment to take their treatment and write a draft of that script as well as a rewrite based on class notes. Through the act of workshopping each other's stories, students will build further skill in story analysis and revision for their own work.

THESIS DEVELOPMENT II

This course builds upon the paper developed in Thesis Development I. The student works with their Thesis Advisor to rebuild the paper presented in Semester One, and compare the journey of the screenwriter they wrote about in that paper to the student's own journey. They will explore their own journey through the program and in Thesis Workshop, to bring their own idea to the page. This thesis is the capstone of their MA Program and is meant to go hand in hand with the Feature Screenplay they write in workshop and the story journal they have been constructing both in Thesis Development I and in this class.

WRITING FORMS

Storytelling options for writers are more diverse than ever. Television is a creative medium on a par with and often exceeding feature film as an outlet for creative narratives, but it is also only one of the media available to writers beyond feature films. Writing Forms examines the many shapes narrative can take. Through lectures, out-of-class screenings and readings, and in-class scene or story analysis, as well as through writing exercises in these media, students explore television in its many formats (half hour, hour long, fifteen minute animation), as well as other media in which they can write, from visual narratives (short films, video games, web series, comic books) to non-visual narratives (novels) to non-traditional narrative forms (marketing or advertising).

TOPICS IN GENRE STUDIES

Building and expanding upon the lessons of Genre Studies, this course expands the students' view of genre to make it global, examining genres outside of the Hollywood Studio system. It also allows students to explore, in depth, any one genre from either Genre course, based on the genre of film the student is currently crafting in their other classes.

MEDIA & CULTURE

In the twenty-first century media is constantly in transition. New narrative formats are emerging almost daily and content producers must not be left behind in this dynamic environment. This course examines these new forms in depth and the unique requirements that they place upon narrative storytellers. Creating content for webisodes, mobile and alternative viewing platforms, branded entertainment, as well as commercials and the music videos are discussed in depth in this class.