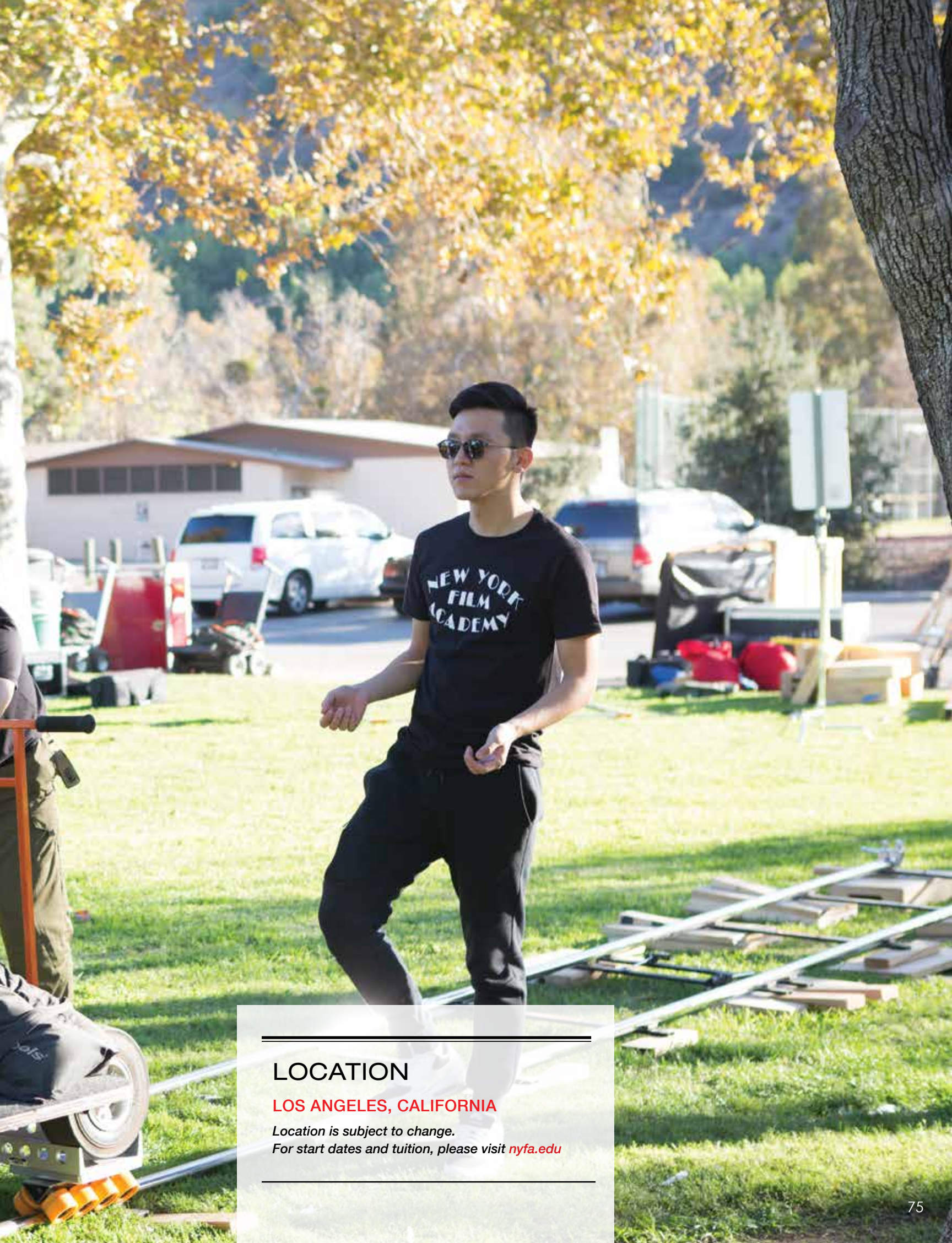


# Two-Year Accelerated MASTER OF FINE ARTS *in* CINEMATOGRAPHY



*MFA Cinematography students gain hands-on experience filming as a crew using a dolly and a RED camera.*



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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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**C**inematographers are the visual poets of the film industry. The cinematographer works with the director to design a visual approach that best translates the words written on the page into a series of compelling shots and sequences. Using light, lenses and a variety of production and post-production tools, the cinematographer paints the director's vision. Often, it is the powerful imagery created by the cinematographer that touches viewers and stays with them forever.

At the New York Film Academy's Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Cinematography graduate degree program, our curriculum is designed to immerse students in both the technical and artistic demands of shooting films, television shows, and projects for emerging media such as web series.



***“You make the movie through the cinematography - it sounds quite a simple idea, but it was like a huge revelation to me.”***

***- Nicolas Roeg***

Students follow a rigorous program of classroom study, self-directed projects, instructor-led Production Workshops, and school-facilitated collaboration that teaches them how to work constructively with crew members and a project's director to best realize a story visually. As a result, students gain extensive experience learning how to overcome the many technical challenges they will encounter on set.

This two-year, four-semester graduate program is designed to instruct gifted and hardworking prospective Directors of Photography in a hands-on and professional environment. Offered exclusively at our Los Angeles campus, the MFA in Cinematography program provides a unique setting for the development of both the creative vision and technical mastery necessary to be a professional cinematographer.

In our MFA cinematography program, students gain a working knowledge of the full range of film and digital formats by mastering a wide range of camera systems (16mm, 35mm, HD, and RED) and professional lighting packages used by today's working cinematographers. Upon graduation, students are able to confidently supervise the creation of sophisticated lighting schemes and work with a variety of cameras and lenses that are required for particular projects. Most importantly, they will be able to effectively harness the visual tools of cinema to tell meaningful stories.

Students study under and work with the Academy's award-winning faculty of professional cinematographers who assist students not only mastering the technical and artistic skills required of a Director of Photography, but also provide insight into the current industry trends and professional realities of the industry to best prepare students to achieve their goals after graduation.

**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 MFA CINEMATOGRAPHY 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.*



*As part of their training, Cinematography students learn to operate and shoot with 35mm professional film cameras*

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## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

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Upon completion of the MFA Cinematography program at the Academy's campus in Los Angeles, students will demonstrate the following skills and know-how:

- Demonstrated mastery of lighting techniques for both soundstage and practical locations including ability to convey a time of day, location, and mood in service of telling the story.
- In-depth knowledge of post-production workflows for various imaging systems, including knowledge of the elements required for final delivery.
- A working knowledge of the current state of the industry in all of its permutations, including emerging forms in the television and internet markets.
- Excellent collaborative skills in working with directors of all experience levels.
- A competitive reel demonstrating a body of work that is of professional quality in its content and presentation.
- Demonstrate both the creative capacity to pre-visualize a complete narrative film and the technical ability to execute this vision consistently over the course of a production.

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## WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

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### SEMESTER ONE

- Photograph a 35mm still photo project, two short 16mm films, and an HD music project.
- Crew on colleagues' films as Gaffer, Camera Assistant, Key Grip and Camera Operator.
- Photograph either a Semester One Film or a Filmmaking Collaboration.

### SEMESTER TWO

- Photograph a showcase project using 35mm film, and the Sunrise/Sunset project making use of only available light.
- Photograph a Semester Two final project using the Red Dragon digital cinema camera.

### SEMESTER THREE

- Photograph a short showcase project using the Arriflex Alexa camera.
- Photograph the Semester 3 film in a format of the student's choice.
- Crew in key position on classmates' films.

### SEMESTER FOUR

- Photograph a thesis film.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

*In Year One, MFA Cinematography students are immersed in a concentrated schedule of classroom learning, teacher-supervised workshops, and outside projects. This regimen presupposes no prior knowledge of Cinematography, but aims to have students confident in the fundamentals of exposure, composition, set-etiquette and lighting by the end of the year.*

### SEMESTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION TO MOTION PICTURE CAMERA TECHNIQUE

In this class, students will learn best practices for building and utilizing the cameras in the NYFA cinematography curriculum, including the Arri-S, Arri-SR, Canon 5D, and RED Scarlet cameras.

#### FUNDAMENTALS OF LIGHTING

Students will be introduced to the basic tools and techniques of motion picture lighting. Topics including high-key vs. low-key lighting, bright and dark scenes, indoor day/night, and outdoor day/night will all be explored from both an expressive and practical approach.

#### CINEMATOGRAPHY PRACTICUM I

In this course, students test all of the camera, lighting, and storytelling techniques they have been learning. Under direct faculty supervision, students will be given the opportunity to shoot and edit several short projects which may include short narratives and scenes, commercials and music videos.

#### POST-PRODUCTION FOR CINEMATOGRAPHERS

This course familiarizes students with editing, post-production workflow, and color correction in order to maintain integrity of a creative vision from pre-production to the final release. Students learn the basics of digital editing, color correction, image effects, and proper workflow for handling digital media.

#### DIRECTING FOR CINEMATOGRAPHERS

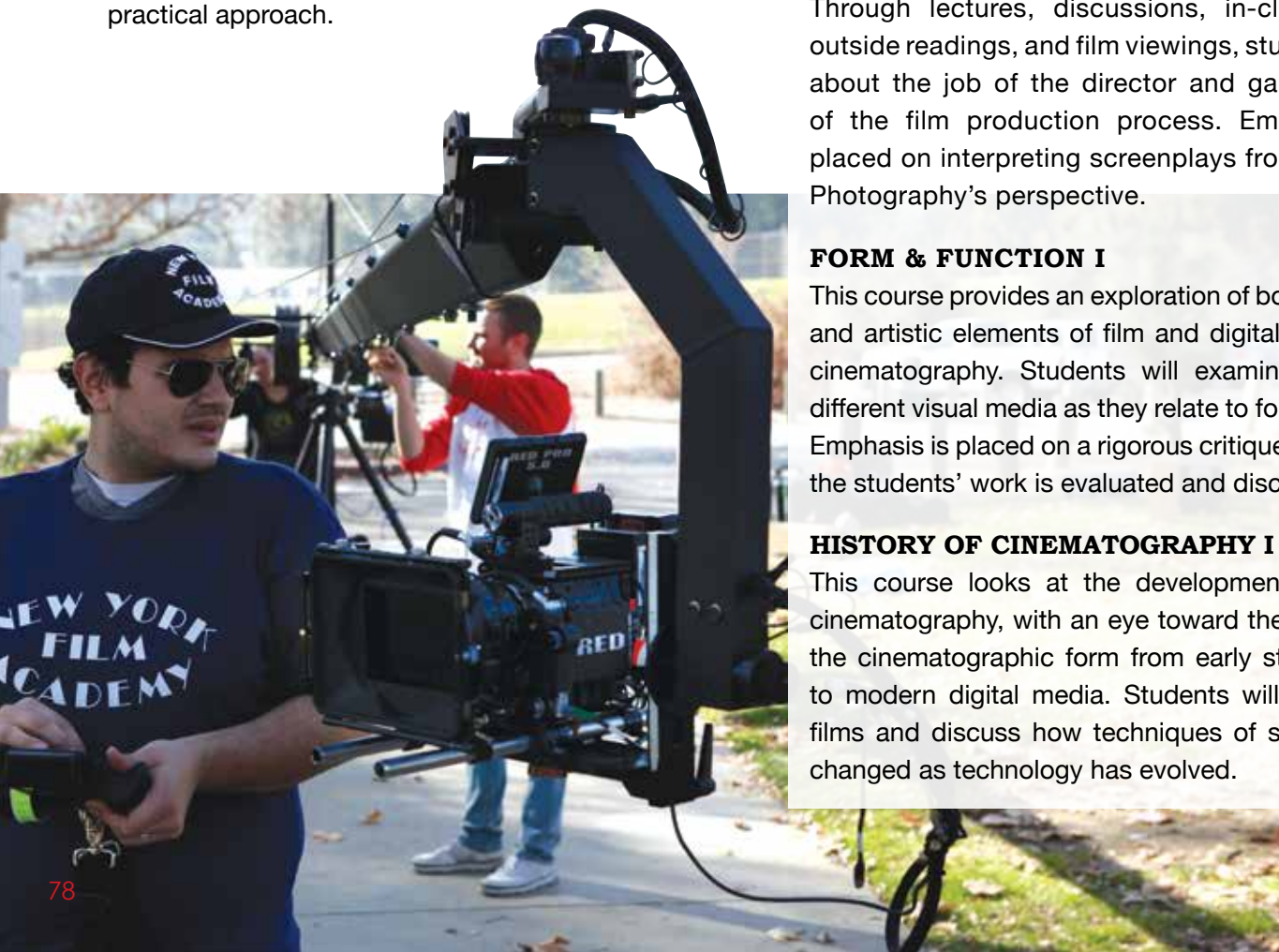
Through lectures, discussions, in-class exercises, outside readings, and film viewings, students will learn about the job of the director and gain an overview of the film production process. Emphasis will be placed on interpreting screenplays from a Director of Photography's perspective.

#### FORM & FUNCTION I

This course provides an exploration of both the technical and artistic elements of film and digital motion picture cinematography. Students will examine images from different visual media as they relate to form and content. Emphasis is placed on a rigorous critique process where the students' work is evaluated and discussed.

#### HISTORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHY I

This course looks at the development of the art of cinematography, with an eye toward the progression of the cinematographic form from early still photography to modern digital media. Students will screen classic films and discuss how techniques of storytelling have changed as technology has evolved.



## SEMESTER TWO

### 35MM CINEMATOGRAPHY

Students are trained in the proper use and operation of 35mm cameras and accessories, applying the skills they have learned in 16mm and digital photography to this classic high-resolution format. This class will demystify the process of designing, shooting, and editing scenes on 35mm.

### ADVANCED LIGHTING

Building upon the basic skills of exposure, composition, and shot design learned in the first semester, students expand both their skills and toolsets. Working with new equipment such as HMI Lights and fluorescent fixtures, students will learn how to create sophisticated and nuanced lighting setups that serve a storytelling function.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY PRACTICUM II

Combining together all the elements of the second semester program in a practical hands-on workshop, these production exercises allow students to shoot scenes with a NYFA Instructor serving as Director. Students rotate through crew positions, allowing them to cultivate real world experience with the 35mm and RED camera packages.

### POST-PRODUCTION FOR CINEMATOGRAPHERS II

Students explore the world of post-production from a cinematographer's perspective by examining post-production workflows for emerging formats (including the RED Epic Dragon) as well as participating in a professional color correction session of their 35mm footage. Students will learn advanced techniques for color correction, and the process for creating different looks.

### STAGE LIGHTING WORKSHOP

Focusing on the specific craft of set lighting, students will learn the fundamentals of designing shots and lighting in a sound stage environment. Under the supervision of an experienced Director of Photography, students gain first-hand experience with designing daytime and nighttime interior lighting schemes inside the controlled environment of a soundstage. Advanced dollies are incorporated into the workshop, expanding the students' ability to move the camera.

### STEADICAM AND CAMERA ASSISTANT SEMINAR

This course examines the critical and challenging vocations of both the Camera Assistant and Steadicam Operator. Led by experienced professionals from both crafts, the seminar exposes students to the best practices of the trade, including managing professional film and video camera checkouts, advanced focus pulling, calculating for speed ramps, and best practices for film inventory and paperwork. Students learn the proper setup and operation of the Steadicam system and explore the theory and practice of effectively moving the camera in a narrative context.

*“A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.”*

*- Orson Welles*

### ADVANCED MOTION PICTURE CAMERA TECHNIQUE

Students learn the 35mm and RED Epic Dragon camera systems before they have the opportunity to use them in their individual projects.

Topics include setting up the cameras in multiple configurations, lens selection, workflow and relationship of the camera operator, dolly grip, and focus puller.

### FORM & FUNCTION II

Continuing to function as a "home room" for cinematography students, this course remains the forum for students to prepare and screen their individual projects, evaluate the work of professional cinematographers, and examine contemporary issues in the world of professional motion picture photography.

### HISTORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHY II

Continuing from the first semester, students focus on studying the masters of cinematography. Students will screen the work of the great DPs and examine how certain pivotal cinematographers have influenced the art form over the years. Assignments and discussions will analyze the elements of visual style employed in both classic and contemporary films.

## YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

*Second Year MFA candidates in Cinematography continue to strengthen their cinematographic skills, building their reels and developing their creative voices. There is an increased emphasis on collaboration with other filmmakers as the MFA candidate prepares to enter the profession.*

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### SEMESTER THREE

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#### FORM & FUNCTION III

Continuing from the first two semesters, this course provides the central venue for preparing and screening individual projects, examining the work of other cinematographers, and investigating contemporary issues in the world of professional cinematography. A rigorous critique process of students' work forms a cornerstone of this class as students begin their preparation to shoot thesis films in semester four.

#### REALITY TELEVISION, DOCUMENTARY, & WEB CONTENT

Students apply their skills as cinematographers to the increasingly popular formats of reality television, webisodes, and more traditional documentary productions. Students receive formal instruction in the etiquette and ethics of covering real life events, fast methods for setting up interviews, filming for the small screen and web content, and techniques in covering an event with multiple cameras. Students will be able to put this training into practice by filming a documentary project and preparing a collaborative web series.

#### MASTER'S CAMERA TECHNIQUE

Building on their knowledge of digital cinema cameras, students work with cutting-edge camera technology. They complete shooting tests to compare numerous professional cameras and formats, as well as the latest developments in lenses and filters. Additionally, the students are introduced to advanced camera movement devices including jibs, cranes, and remote "hot head" control systems. Students use geared heads and advanced dollies, constructing intricate camera moves that require precise camera operating. Intensive class exercises will prepare students to apply these skills in a narrative context on their future projects. Through a greater understanding of both camera and grip equipment, cinematography students will be further prepared to fulfill their role in production.

#### MASTER'S LIGHTING

Students continue to explore the latest lighting technology, working with larger lights including 10K fresnels, 4K HMI PAR lamps, and multi-bank Maxi Brutes. They will be taught the safe assembly and operation of the power distribution systems required for these powerful lights, including the use of motion picture generators. Emphasis is placed on electrical safety and crew organization within the Hollywood system. Using their own projects as templates, students are encouraged to experiment and plan out shooting and lighting designs for upcoming projects.

#### CINEMATOGRAPHY PRACTICUM III

Students continue photographing projects helmed by a member of the NYFA faculty. Building upon the fundamentals of cinematography acquired in previous semesters, these projects will be far more challenging and demanding. Students should expect rigorous schedules and projects that will push them to continue growing as artists. Emphasis is placed on the student's ability to pre-visualize a look for the project, and then execute this look during the workshop.

#### CINEMA STUDIES

This class challenges students to examine a film by studying its formal content, historical context, narrative form, and larger directorial leitmotifs. Students will be introduced to the main contemporary themes and lexicon in the Cinema Studies discipline. While addressing the core issues in the field, the course will also investigate the place of the cinematographer in film history. Each student completes a final paper and oral presentation.

## SEMESTER FOUR

### THESIS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

This course focuses on preparing the student to shoot the thesis project. Students serve as a cinematographer on a NYFA MFA Filmmaking or Producing student's Thesis film or on a self-produced project. Students research, plan and present their thesis preparation process, and shoot and screen photographic tests for their upcoming thesis projects. The look book detailing every visual dimension of the Thesis will be researched and critiqued in this forum and in Thesis Committee meetings. Towards the end of their graduate program, students will be critiqued on their reels and websites.

### HISTORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHY III

This course explores the cinematography in films outside the traditional canon. Short films, documentaries, low-budget, and experimental films will be studied, each one paired with a more prominent movie that was informed by their aesthetic. Students will engage with this broader palette of films, providing a breadth of techniques and narrative forms to add to their repertoire. Informed by the Cinema Studies class, students will analyze a film of their choice for their final written paper.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR DIGITAL EFFECTS

Designing and integrating production photography with CGI elements is becoming more essential to the modern cinematographer. Students will design lighting and compositions for integration with multiple layers of computer graphics, and address how to photograph green screens in a variety of situations including moving shots. Students explore the history of visual effects photography up through modern digital practices.

Topics include lighting for miniatures, special lighting effects such as fire and lightning, and creating professional visual effects on a restricted budget.

### NAVIGATING THE INDUSTRY

As students prepare for their transition from the academic environment, this course provides practical guidance on the different ways that cinematographers function in the entertainment industry. Students build their professional skill set, addressing topics including promotion and networking (traditional and social media/web presence), career advice, etiquette in collaboration, and emerging opportunities in new media. This course includes guest lectures, as well as guidance in preparing a final reel for emerging cinematographers to use in beginning their careers.

### CINEMATOGRAPHY PRACTICUM IV

Building on their experiences from previous semesters, students will now be expected to work at a professional level. Projects are designed to challenge talented cinematographers. Students must plan on working with demanding directors at a fast pace. Work should be of a high photographic quality and provide material that can be used on a student's reel.

### OPTICS OF LENSES AND CAMERAS

This course explores the practical applications of mathematics in cinematography. The nature of light is thoroughly discussed along with the important fields of photometry and radiometry. Various formulae used in cinematography, such as those used to calculate focal length, f-stop, thin lens formula, depth of field, circle of confusion, and others, are all investigated in detail and fully derived to ensure the student's thorough understanding of these fundamental concepts. Laboratory exercises involving Lens Design software and practical investigations of cameras and lenses are also integrated within the course.

