

Master of Fine Arts

Two-Year Accelerated Programs

Filmmaking | Acting for Film | Producing for Film & TV | Screenwriting
Photography | Documentary | Cinematography | Game Design



Students prepare to shoot a scene on location using the RED digital camera.





Two-Year Accelerated
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
in **FILMMAKING**

As part of their production classes in Los Angeles, our students shoot on the back lot of Universal Studios.



LOCATION

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

Locations are subject to change.

For start dates and tuition, please visit nyfa.edu

OVERVIEW

Each Master of Fine Arts Filmmaking student writes, shoots, directs, and edits 7 to 9 films and works on 28 more in the first year.

Learn filmmaking in the heart of Hollywood at the Academy's Master of Fine Arts in Filmmaking Program. **Over the course of the two-year accelerated program, students gain the extensive filmmaking experience needed to create their own original films.**

In our intensive graduate program, students receive over 2,000 hours of hands-on instruction and actual production experience through both creating their own films and serving in a wide variety of crew positions on their fellow classmates' films.

Offered at both our Los Angeles and South Beach campuses, the New York Film Academy offers aspiring filmmakers an unparalleled education in both the fundamentals and advanced facets of filmmaking. **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 FILMMAKING DEGREE PROGRAM.**

Students have the option to complete the MFA program in either six or seven semesters, with the optional seventh semester allowing them to complete a feature-length film as their thesis project.

The Academy provides students with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, and students in the MFA program become familiar shooting with a wide variety of cameras and film, including 16mm film, 35mm film, HD, Super 16mm, and the RED EPIC DRAGON camera system. In addition, students edit their projects using Avid Media Composer, the industry standard software for professional video editing.

In the Academy's MFA program, students not only learn the theory of film, but learn all aspects of the filmmaking process through our project-based curriculum that challenges students to work on a series of original film projects of increasing difficulty, preparing them to create their final thesis film. **After all, to learn filmmaking, one must actually make films, and the philosophy of learning by doing is at the heart of the Academy's academic mission.**

Therefore, students undertake an intensive course load that integrates intensive study in all the major filmmaking disciplines, which include directing, cinematography, screenwriting, producing, and editing. In addition, our filmmaking students have access to students in our acting school, which allows them to gain the invaluable experience of mastering the craft of directing actors and running an entire set with a full crew.

While no prior filmmaking experience is required, students should possess self-discipline, a passion for filmmaking, and the ability to collaborate with their fellow classmates as they plunge headfirst into the thrilling and challenging world of filmmaking in a program where they are behind the camera from day one. **The New York Film Academy encourages students to take creative risks and find their own voices as visual artists.**

At the end of the MFA program, students graduate with developed skills in all of the filmmaking crafts, an enormous amount of production experience, a reel with their eight to ten original films, and an expanded awareness of themselves and their abilities as creative artists.

Students' final films are celebrated in school screenings open to cast, crew, friends, family, and invited guests.

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.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Students will be able to demonstrate the following skills and abilities upon graduation from the Academy's MFA Filmmaking program:

- Develop a unique voice and vision through the creation of professional level film and HD productions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of advanced cinema techniques and concepts.
- Exhibit a grasp of the newest in editing techniques and technology.
- Master production management skills needed for successful film and multi-media productions.
- Demonstrate ability to write narrative scripts.
- Exhibit effective directing skills necessary to realize convincing performances from actors.
- Showcase proper use of critical analysis and leadership skills to determine the best method of on-set crew management and the ability to collaborate with others.
- Demonstrate knowledge of professional conduct and industry practices.
- Show an appreciation and understanding of cinematic history to inform one's own work.



WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

SEMESTER ONE

- Write, direct and edit five short films, including a project emphasizing a character's Point of View.
- Direct or DP a short group project exploring pacing.
- Work with actors exploring subtext through Instructor-supervised Digital Production workshops.
- Crew as Cinematographer, Gaffer, and/or Assistant Camera on approximately 20 additional projects.
- Write a short film script with dialogue.
- Write, produce, direct, and edit a short film with dialogue of up to 10 minutes in length.

SEMESTER TWO

- Direct, Assistant Direct, or DP a Synchronous Sound Production Workshop.
- Serve as a crewmember on four other production workshops, shot on various formats ranging from 16mm to HD.
- Develop proficiency with the one-ton intermediate film equipment package.
- Shoot exercises on 35mm film as part of Cinematography II.

SEMESTER THREE

- Direct, produce, and edit an intermediate film of up to fifteen minutes in length (shot on 16mm film, 35mm film, or High Definition Video).
- Serve as a principal crewmember on classmates' projects.
- Determine a course of study an option for Year Two.
- Workshop a concept for a feature screenplay.

SEMESTER FOUR (OPTION A)

- Produce a short exercise focused on film style and performance.
- Produce a short exercise using advanced cinematography techniques.
- Develop proficiency with the 3-ton thesis film equipment package.
- Create a treatment for a feature screenplay.

SEMESTER FOUR (OPTION B)

- Put into practice advanced directing techniques.
- Begin pre-production of the feature film.

SEMESTER FIVE (OPTION A)

- Present a full production notebook to a thesis committee.
- Develop advanced abilities to collaborate and lead on a film set.
- Produce and direct a sync-sound final thesis film of up to 30 minutes in length OR serve as a crewmember on at least two classmates' projects.
- Write a up to act II of a feature screenplay.

SEMESTER FIVE (OPTION B)

- Put into practice advanced cinematography design.
- Put into practice production design concepts.
- Continue pre-production of the feature film.

SEMESTER SIX (OPTION A)

- Produce and direct a sync-sound final thesis film of up to 30 minutes in length OR serve as a crewmember on at least two classmates' projects.
- Edit the final thesis project.
- Complete a full draft of a feature screenplay.

SEMESTER SIX (OPTION B)

- Construct and workshop scenes from the feature film.
- Finalize pre-production of the feature film.
- Begin principle photography of the feature film.

SEMESTER SEVEN (OPTION B)

- Complete principle photography of the feature film.
- Begin and complete post-production of the feature film.
- Compile a complete inventory of film deliverables.

YEAR ONE OVERVIEW

Over the course of the first three semesters of our MFA Filmmaking program, students undergo a thorough regimen of class work and film production that lays the groundwork for a professional life in the film arts. From the first day of class, students are immersed in a hands-on education and an environment that empowers them to artfully tell stories.

SEMESTER ONE

FILM AESTHETICS I

In this course, students begin to learn the language and craft of film aesthetics from a director's perspective by studying the director's decisions in camera placement, blocking, staging, and visual image design. This course requires that students challenge themselves not only to become competent directors, but also become compelling storytellers by utilizing advanced expressive visual tools to tell their stories.

CINEMATOGRAPHY I

Through intensive in-class exercises, students shoot 16mm film and learn the complexities of film exposure, the psychological effect of focal lengths, and the use of advanced lighting techniques to evoke a story's mood and tone. As students incorporate dialogue, they also learn the technical nuances of shooting and lighting high definition video.

EDITING I

Students are taught multiple aesthetic approaches to editing film and video. They learn how to apply concepts such as temporal continuity and spatial continuity, as well as less traditional discontinuous editing techniques to their work. Students study the nuanced effects of editing on storytelling and then apply them to their own films. The results allow students to apply the psychological and emotional effects of editing to their overall stories.

PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

Designed to demystify the craft of filmmaking, students work alongside directing and acting instructors to apply the complex techniques from class as they articulate the objectives of a given scene. This applies to the use of lenses, lighting, and editing. Students also work with actors in order to understand the critical significance of complex performances.

SCREENWRITING

This course introduces students to the format and structure used in writing a visual story. Students take a story from initial idea, treatment, and outline to a rough draft, and finally a shooting script. Students intensively workshop their ideas with classmates and instructors, providing constructive criticism while accepting critiques of their own work. The scripts they write become the basis for all projects in the first semester.

ACTING FOR DIRECTORS

This course adheres to the philosophy that, in order to direct actors, one must understand and experience acting as a methodology. Directing students become actors and learn how to identify a screenplay's emotional "beats" and "character objectives" in order to improve their actors' performances, and their own ability to direct them.

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 since their inceptions. Students will be given a thorough creative, technological, and industrial view of the filmmaking art and be prepared for more advanced academic and production related studies and practice of filmmaking.

SEMESTER TWO

FILM AESTHETICS II

This class further explores the aesthetic elements of mise-en-scène while students practice different approaches to coverage by breaking down scenes from their own scripts and applying sophisticated visual approaches to establish believable performances. Students submit detailed proposals for their Year One Intermediate Films.

CINEMATOGRAPHY II

This class immerses students in the more advanced technical and creative demands of cinematography. Students work with 16mm cameras before transitioning to the RED Scarlet to continue studying HD cinematography. In addition, students deepen their understanding of camera formats by completing a 35mm filmmaking component.

COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

The experience of working on a film set allows students to explore the importance of the actor/director relationship required for a successful film shoot. Filmmaking and Acting students come together for a series of audition technique, rehearsal, and screening classes alongside full-fledged production exercises.

EDITING II

Students sync and edit with dialogue, and learn advanced techniques in sound mixing and color correction. They make creative discoveries as well when they compare the very different versions that are edited from the same material, preparing them to undertake the challenge of picture and sound editing their Intermediate Year One Film.

SCREENWRITING II

This class is an intensive workshop aimed at developing, writing, and polishing scripts for the students' Year One Intermediate Films. Students critique each other's screenplays through table-reads and engage in lively roundtable discussions and rewrites to develop sophisticated visual stories.

PRODUCING I

Students are led through the entire process of pre-production and learn how to make creative choices from the producer's point view, identifying target audiences, exploring audience expectations, and crafting realistic budgets for their films. Using script breakdowns, students learn how to plan and keep to a schedule and budget.

SEMESTER THREE

INTERMEDIATE FILM PRODUCTION

Students start their third semester with a finished script of up to 15 pages, having fully developed their ideas and prepared the scripts for production. Working with instructors to develop a production schedule, students make final preparations for their film shoots, resulting in a production period that is as intense and demanding as a professional feature film shoot.

INTERMEDIATE FILM POST-PRODUCTION

After the production period, students build their films in the editing room. They screen rough-cuts of their films for their directing and editing instructors and receive feedback from their peers before presenting their finished films to an invited audience at the end of the semester.

ELEMENTS OF FEATURE SCREENWRITING

This course introduces students to the craft of feature screenwriting through lectures, in-class exercises, outside readings, classroom discussions, and film viewings. By the conclusion of this course, students will develop a feature film script idea that will be fully realized in the second year of the MFA program.

SOUND DESIGN

As students edit their own films, they learn that good sound improves the overall production value of their films. Receiving instruction in sophisticated sound design topics, students build sound effects, integrate music and orchestration, add atmosphere, and create a polished sound mix for their Year One Project.

MASTER'S THESIS DEVELOPMENT

Through roundtable discussion with classmates, under the guidance of writing and directing instructors, students consider their second year Master's Thesis Projects. As they discuss the various thesis options available to MFA students, they will workshop their ideas. By the end of the semester, students will declare to a Thesis Committee which option they plan to pursue in their second year:

A) Directing a short film, B) Directing a feature film.

YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

Year Two is designed to immerse students in advanced directing and cinematography techniques. Students learn the skills necessary for more mature filmmaking while familiarizing themselves with sophisticated equipment packages and High Definition RED Epic Dragon cameras. Students begin the process of writing both a short thesis script and a full-length feature screenplay.



SEMESTER FOUR: THESIS OPTION A

ADVANCED DIRECTING

This class is an exploration of film style and the process of directing performance. Students study the stylistic choices of great film masters and apply the same styles to an assigned scene. They receive a selection of pre-published texts and workshop and film the scenes with actors from the MFA Acting for Film program and/or local industry professionals.

ADVANCED CINEMATOGRAPHY

This intensive course expands students' knowledge of cinematography and introduces them to the full capabilities of the RED Epic Dragon Camera and complex grip and lighting packages. Students learn mastery of contrast, composition, and camera movement.

PRODUCING II

Students work on advanced concepts of scheduling and budgeting, and learn about the nuances of legal contracts, deal memos, and working with guilds and unions. Instructors use case studies to help students hone group problem-solving skills and develop students' pitching skills.

FEATURE SCREENWRITING I

This workshop fully immerses each student in a focused course of study in which to write a feature film treatment and first act. Students will learn the craft of writing and draft a feature-length script that will be further developed throughout the second year of the program

SCREENWRITING SHORT THESIS I

The focus of this class is for master's students to begin writing their short thesis scripts. Emphasis is placed on a more advanced understanding of character development and dramatic arcs as students prepare a story with greater depth and nuance.

PSYCHOLOGY OF FILM

This course examines various facets of film narrative and filmmaking from a psychological perspective. Through case studies, students learn about the psychology of the filmmaker, audience, and characters while studying their own approaches and recurring themes.

SEMESTER FIVE: THESIS OPTION A

DIRECTING THE THESIS FILM

An intensive examination of the visual style of film, this class helps students assess their directorial approach. Students workshop scenes from their thesis scripts, and prepare a thorough and detailed presentation of their thesis films for a thesis committee where their projects will be given a final faculty review.

PRODUCING THE THESIS FILM

As their thesis scripts are polished and completed, students will apply their knowledge of production management to their projects. Under the guidance of their producing instructors, students will thoroughly prepare their scripts for production, and complete all of the necessary planning and paperwork.

FEATURE SCREENWRITING II

The ideas from Feature Screenwriting I will be further developed into a full feature draft. Students work with instructors both in class and in consultations to complete the script, continuing to workshop ideas in class with their peers.

SCREENWRITING SHORT THESIS II

Under the guidance of screenwriting instructors, students continue to workshop and polish their scripts through table reads, using rehearsals and scene exercises from other classes to finalize their scripts in the weeks leading up to production.

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Production design plays an important role in the success of any production, providing visual clues and enhancing the production content. Through lectures and exercises, students use set design and construction, costume design, prop choices, and advanced aesthetics of color and shape to create their thesis films' visual approach.

MASTER'S THESIS PRODUCTION I

The final capstone project of the MFA program, the thesis film combines all of the skills learned thus far into a single project of up to thirty minutes in length. These thesis films enable MFA filmmakers to demonstrate their creative vision and professional skills to the world of film festivals and the entertainment industry community. These projects provide the necessary equipment and a longer production period to allow filmmakers to work on a more detailed and nuanced level and with a larger scope. Each project is greenlit by the students' directing and producing instructors, who evaluate the students' creative and business choices as they are presented in each student's production notebook.

Prior to production, all candidates must pass a final evaluation by the Thesis Committee and faculty chair, ensuring that all academic requirements and standards for the previous semesters have been achieved.

SEMESTER SIX: THESIS OPTION A

MASTER'S THESIS PRODUCTION II

Every two weeks during the production period, students reconvene with their directing and producing instructors to discuss each production, and prepare for the upcoming projects. Students are required to participate as crew on three thesis projects.

THESIS FILM POST-PRODUCTION

It is often said that the edit is the final rewrite of the script and this class helps guide the students through that process. Extensive notes are received from classmates and directing and editing instructors that must be analyzed and either incorporated, interpreted or set aside, helping students to gain a more objective perspective and edit that "final rewrite" more effectively.

FEATURE SCREENWRITING III

Using the drafts of their feature scripts, students lead table reads with actors and workshop scenes, further refining the idea as it develops into a more fully realized future project. The goal is for students to graduate with a feature script that will accompany their thesis film.

MASTER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NAVIGATING THE INDUSTRY

A broad cross-section of the film community is represented in this lecture series, exposing students to multiple pathways into the film industry. Mentors work individually with students to discuss the next step in their careers, and students are presented with a realistic, yet hopeful vision of a future in the industry.

SEMESTER FOUR: THESIS OPTION B

ADVANCED DIRECTING

This class is an exploration of film style and the process of directing performance. Students study the stylistic choices of great film masters, and then apply the same styles to an assigned scene. They are provided with a selection of pre-published texts and rehearse and film the scenes with actors from the MFA Acting for Film program and/or local industry professionals.

FEATURE PRODUCING I

Students begin the process of organizing their feature film productions and develop a timeline for putting together their teams. Students assess crew needs by department, minimum departmental budget levels, and determine the impact of the SAG Agreement on their budget range. Students will meet regularly with the Thesis Committee to review their progress.

WRITING THE FEATURE SCREENPLAY I

In a workshop setting, students will develop and write the first draft of their feature screenplay. Students will learn the craft of screenplay writing by gaining understanding of and putting into practice the elements of structure, story, style, character development, conflict and dialogue.

FEATURE SCHEDULING & BUDGETING

Feature film scheduling and budgeting practices will be introduced and explored in this course. In a hands-on setting, students train on industry standard software used by producers and filmmakers and learn to assess scheduling and budgeting factors when reading and analyzing feature scripts.

PITCHING & BUSINESS PLANS

Students develop a brief and effective pitch of their feature projects, and through practice, they gain fundamental pitching skills. Through lectures and analysis of case studies, students develop effective feature film business plans.

BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Students analyze and discuss legal topics such as contract negotiations, marketing projects to financiers and distributors, and audience and research testing.

SEMESTER FIVE: THESIS OPTION B

ADVANCED CINEMATOGRAPHY

This intensive course expands students' knowledge of cinematography and introduces them to the full capabilities of the RED Epic Dragon Camera and complex grip and lighting packages. Students gain sophisticated mastery of contrast, composition and camera movement, using professional equipment and shooting on a studio soundstage.

MASTER'S PRODUCTION DESIGN

Production design plays an important role in the success of any production, as it provides the audience with the visual clues that establish and enhance the production content. Through lectures and exercises, students use set design and construction, costume design, prop choices, and advanced aesthetics of color and shape to create the visual approach of their thesis films.

FEATURE PRODUCING II

Students continue to organize their feature film productions and revise as necessary while executing the timeline for hiring their teams. They research and explore payroll service options, the most suitable legal entity to form for their productions, and insurance policies needed and their costs. Students will meet regularly with the Thesis Committee to review their progress.

WRITING THE FEATURE SCREENPLAY II

Students undertake a substantial revision of their first draft screenplays and complete their second drafts. Throughout this course, students will delve deeper into their stories, critically assess their characters' development and motivations, and identify and find solutions for characters and scenes that are not effective.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

This course provides an overview of production budgeting and accounting functions specific to the film industry, with application to other areas of media production, including television. Students analyze techniques and control procedures for accurate preparation and presentation of budgets and financial statements.

MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION MODELS

In this course, students analyze successful financial, marketing and distribution models for independent films, focusing on micro-budget models. Marketing strategies, including viral campaigns and other low to no cost methods of developing public awareness will be discussed. Other topics include current and emerging distribution models, film festival strategies and deliverables to prepare.

SEMESTER SIX: THESIS OPTION B

DIRECTING THE FEATURE

Through in-class exercises and scene study of numerous classic, popular, and arthouse (niche-market) films, students analyze a wide range of effective directing styles and techniques. Students will each workshop the construction and shot breakdown of one scene from his or her feature film.

FEATURE THESIS DEVELOPMENT

In this course, students further advance their development and fundraising efforts. Topics include monitoring fundraising milestones and back-up contingency planning. Students will meet regularly with the Thesis Committee to review their progress.

FEATURE LOGISTICS & WORKFLOW

Students finalize production workflow between departments, including handling all pertinent paperwork required or generated during production and spending, authorization and reconciliation. On-set and production office protocol will be addressed. Students will schedule and hold a full cast and crew production meeting, including a timed table read, cast and crew introductions, completing final deal memos, and general discussion of on-set protocol.

FEATURE THESIS PREP

In this course, students finalize their pre-production and green light preparation. Topics include contingency scenarios for last-minute location changes and handling crew or cast scheduling or personality conflicts. Students will meet regularly with the Thesis Committee to review their progress.

SEMESTER SEVEN: THESIS OPTION B

FEATURE THESIS PRODUCTION

With supervised set visits and daily review of production documents, students begin and complete principal photography of their feature films. Through weekly check-ins, students de-brief and troubleshoot the prior week's shooting days and work through the upcoming week's production demands.

FEATURE THESIS POST

With supervised editing lab visits and regularly scheduled reviews, students complete the post-production phase of their feature films. Picture, ADR, and sound editorial, as well as music scoring sessions will be discussed and analyzed. Final picture lock, sound mix, color correction, and main and end titles will be reviewed.

FEATURE DELIVERY

Students will prepare the non-visual elements that are required of the producer/filmmaker in a distribution deal. Each student will learn the process of organizing a complete and detailed archive of his or her production for the purpose of delivery along with the film to a distributor upon execution of a distribution deal. Topics include errors and omissions (E&O) insurance, final and prior cost reports, a detail of all expenditures including itemized petty cash tallies and receipts, pertinent production documents including all agreements, and the standard methods used to inventory these documents.



Telling me to take a vacation from filmmaking is like telling a child to take a vacation from playing.

- Stanley Kubrick



FILM PROJECTS



Students in the MFA Program write, direct and edit their own films. Nonetheless, it is essential that filmmakers understand the importance of collaboration. Therefore, in addition to directing their own films, students are required to rotate among principal production positions.

During the first semester, these positions are:

- Director
- Director of Photography
- Assistant Camera
- Gaffer/ Grip
- Sound/Boom (depending on project)

From the second semester on, the crews expand to six or more and may include the roles of Assistant Director, Sound Mixer, Boom Operator, Production Manager, and Key Grip. Crews are required to meet each week with the directing instructor to review scripts, shooting, and production plans.

The Film Academy designed the following film projects to build students' technical and creative skills. They are intended to instill in each student a degree of confidence in visual and dramatic storytelling and to provide a strong foundation in film craft. Those new to filmmaking begin to understand how the disciplines of writing, cinematography, sound, and editing work together, while those with experience can practice and refine specific craft skills.

All students should seize this opportunity to experiment freely in order to develop their ability to engage and entertain an audience.

MISE-EN-SCÈNE

Each student will make a short film of thirty seconds to one minute. This project emphasizes how the relationship of the subject to the camera creates drama. Students should 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, they should be sure the shots they compose express as much as possible about the characters and their actions. It is also important for students to thoroughly rehearse their films for blocking in order to get the most out of their footage.

CONTINUITY

Continuity is one of the fundamental principles of modern filmmaking. By making a “continuity film,” students learn the way cuts can advance the story while sustaining the reality of the scene. They learn the difference between “film time” and “real time.” Students are challenged to make a film that maintains continuity in story, time, and space. The action in these films unfolds utilizing a variety of shots (10–15) in a continuous sequence (no jumps in time or action). In the continuity films, students must produce a clear, visual scene while maintaining the authenticity of the moment. It is essential that the audience believe in the reality of the scene. Students write, direct, shoot, edit, and screen a film of up to three minutes.





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 time out their shots during filming in order to achieve a dynamic sequence. Students should 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 as a way to explore pacing through editing.

MONTAGE

Students choose one short selection of music and plan and shoot this film of up to four minutes with the music in mind. Students 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, and compositions.

POV

Each shot in a film expresses a point of view, and in narrative film, the point of view changes often, sometimes with each new shot. For the most part, point of view—which is often called narrative stance—is largely invisible to the audience; though the accumulated effect of the changes profoundly affects the way the audience interprets any scene. 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 the filmmaker is telling. Each student will write, direct, and edit a short POV film of up to five minutes.



Students learning to operate a Steadi-Cam to achieve floating tracking shots.

MFA PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS

These instructor supervised productions occur regularly throughout the program. They are designed to compliment and reinforce lessons learned in class. Production workshops may be filmed in the classroom, on location, on a studio back-lot, or sound-stage depending on when they occur in the program. In earlier semesters, these exercises help the students learn the basic techniques of visual storytelling that will allow them to effectively express their ideas. Aligned with the curriculum, Production Workshop provides students the opportunity to practice with the tools and techniques they will use on their own film projects.

As their program progresses into later semesters, these hands-on courses challenge students to interpret and apply the cinema theory and practice they have learned in class to a series of sync-sound production exercises. Students shoot complex dramatic scenes with the guidance and critique of the instructor. Students must determine what adjustments to make to their scripts and shooting plans before entering into production. These projects are expected to be fully pre-produced (storyboarded, cast, scouted, rehearsed and pre-lit) and executed at a professional level.

SEMESTER ONE FILM

Students write a script of up to 10 pages in length. The final project of the semester, this film will test students' abilities as directors to tell a clear and concise story in three acts, complete with an inciting incident, crisis and climax, and finally a resolution.

YEAR ONE INTERMEDIATE FILM

This project is the culmination of the year's work. 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 second semester, including the producing class, which is 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.

Thesis Project

OPTION A: SHORT 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 MFA 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 MFA 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 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.

OPTION B: FEATURE FILM

Students direct and edit a feature-length film in a seventh semester of study at the end of Year Two, and fill essential crew positions on short form films directed by fellow students.

Due to the extremely demanding nature of this thesis option, students must pass a rigorous review by faculty before being granted entrance into this track in semester three. This option requires that students enroll for a seventh semester with an additional tuition payment.

In semester six, students must achieve specific milestones in order to maintain active status in the feature film program. If these milestones are not met, students will revert back to Option A and make a short thesis in semester six.

These milestones will include a clear template of delivery dates for script deadlines, casting calls, production meetings, budget breakdowns, location lockdowns, and a demonstration of financial responsibility to obtain approval to shoot. Students must receive a "green light" before beginning production on their feature thesis films.